



Participant Moment with Carol D. April 2025

To say Carol D. is infatuated with the late great actor John Wayne would be an understatement.

When he was on his deathbed, for instance, she sent flowers to his hospital room with instructions for the nurses to tell him "My name is Carol...and I am his Number One fan and I enjoyed all his movies and I love you."

Since his death, Carol has embraced a constant dream of "becoming Mrs. John Wayne and living with him in a log cabin and going every day for hot air balloon rides because anything is possible in heaven!"

The Duke, however, is just one of many stars of the silver screen that Carol entertains in her imagination, as she's a serious student of the silver screen.

She's been known to rattle off the titles of movies and its stars with ease, talking in one moment about Maureen O'Hara and Gene Kelly and, in the next, anyone from Mel Gibson to Olivia Newton-John and dozens of others.

"I've been watching TV all my life," she says with a smile.

Carol was born in Chicago in 1946 and lived as an infant in foster homes. At 2, she contracted a very serious case of whooping cough and was moved to the Coldwater State Home and Training School, an asylum that by 1960 was hosting nearly 3,000 patients. She lived there until she was 26 and has mostly fond memories of attending school and participating in gym classes, learning to ride a bicycle, attending dances, swimming in the pool there – and watching countless movies.

While living in an adult group home in Battle Creek, she worked in housekeeping at a nearby hospital and also served as a babysitter. In 1973, she moved to an apartment in Grand Rapids and worked in retail and at a mental health facility.

"I always loved taking care of people," she says, recalling how when she was at Coldwater, she would help people with physical challenges into the pool for a relaxing swim.

Carol says her nearly fatal bout with whooping cough left her with brain and speech-related issues. "When I talk fast, I stutter," she says, "and I have a learning disability."

For more than a decade, Carol has lived independently in her own GR apartment, but leans on Care Resources for medical care and socialization. She enjoys playing bingo and participating in trivia contests – and she’s tough to beat when the questions revolve around movies and movie stars!

“I didn’t know much about Care Resources until my friend Matt told me, and that was about 12 years ago. I come here on the bus on Mondays and Wednesdays, and sometimes I get to enjoy a movie – and sometimes I just like to dance or be in the talent show.”

She smiles that smile again. “I can’t sing,” Carol says, “but I do a pretty mean polka!”

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