

Spotlight: Melanie Pederson

By Nancy Hendricks

At the suggestion of President Jack, the subject of this month's Spotlight feature is Melanie Pederson.

Born in the town of Ladysmith, Wisconsin, Melanie met Rose Kennedy in the early 1960s while attending grade school at St. Lawrence in Jefferson, Wisconsin. Mrs. Kennedy lived in a cottage at St. Colletta, where Melanie's class sang Christmas carols to Rose and others who lived there.

Melanie attended Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin, specializing in Customer Service and Project



Management. After college, she worked as a project manager at the State of Wisconsin's electronic management system for Department of Corrections offender records. Along the way, she became a Class 'A' racquetball player. Among her other athletic feats, she also zip-lined the Maui rainforest in Hawaii.

Melanie and her husband built their house in Hot Springs Village during 2006. She says they made the decision to move to the Village "primarily because of the golf and other amenities as well as low property taxes." Her husband moved here first, with Melanie following in 2010 after taking early retirement and completion of cancer treatment in Wisconsin.

In October 2016, she was sponsored for Rotary by Donna Aylward. Melanie states that she joined Rotary to network and serve the community. She has taken a leading role in doing both.

Since joining our club, she has become a Paul Harris Fellow and has been our Mother's Day Co-Chair for four years, as well as serving on the Grants Committee for the same length of time. After being elected to the club's 2020-2021 board of directors as Fundraising Chair, she stepped forward in 2020 to take on a role as the Satellite Club Committee Chair, serving in that position from that time through the present.

Her list of current community activities is lengthy. Many people know Melanie for her work as chair of the Village Walk for Cancer Research. She serves as Secretary for the board of the Village Loan Closet, is a board member and Membership Chair for the HSV Community Foundation, and is a volunteer and fund raiser for the Faith Fellowship Food Pantry.

Melanie is a volunteer greeter for the HSV Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center and is a SCAT volunteer, where she schedules transportation for Villagers in need of a ride. As a charter member of the HSV Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association, she serves as event coordinator. In addition, she is a Wish Granter and Airport Greeter for Make-A-Wish MidSouth.

Four-legged friends also benefit from Melanie's energy and compassion. She is a volunteer for the Hot Springs Village Animal Welfare League (AWL), where she helps the canine residents get some fresh air and exercise as a dog walker. In her "spare time," she is a member of the civic group Altrusa, responsible for the chapter's newsletter.

Melanie was an integral part of making the recent Arkansas Heritage Festival a huge success. Along with coordinating our club's participation at the ice cream booth as a fundraiser, she also "attended" Festival committee meetings from Wisconsin via Zoom as well as generating current spreadsheets by e-mail for the group of tasks needing to be done.

At the *HSV Voice* Readers' Choice Awards this year, Melanie was a well-deserved finalist for Woman of the Year.

It has been said that it's not enough to attend Rotary Club meetings, but to strive for being a *Rotarian* through Service Above Self. For her tireless efforts benefitting our club, our community, and our world, it's an honor to have a *True Rotarian* like Melanie as one of our members.