

Our Generation

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Ann's not ready
for a curtain
call yet **Page 12**

Stuff

THE DOMINION POST



Draw her curtain career to a close?

When Ann Murphy's daughter asks whether she'd rather retire and do crosswords or run her business and do quotes, the answer is always the same writes Debb Tapp.

'Why would I want to stop?'

The 75-year-old owner of Wellington-based window treatment business The Curtain Issue says "It's a no-brainer".

"My children are concerned I shouldn't be climbing ladders and that I should be slowing down, but I don't want to!

"My passion is fabrics, my passion is people and my passion is making their homes look nice, why would I want to stop?"

At a time when many would be considering retirement, at 68 years old Ann reinvented herself by establishing The Curtain Issue.

Having spent most of her career owning and running retail stores, firstly in dressmaking then window coverings, she and daughter Sheree do everything from measures and quotes through to the installation of custom-made window coverings.

"At 65 I was still raring to go and at 68 everyone said they hoped I wasn't

going to stop doing curtains - I thought I'd just do a few jobs from home as a little part-time thing.

"I've had clients for 20-odd years through my previous businesses and instead of just doing a few jobs I'm doing huge volumes," she laughs.

Working from her Whitby home, Ann is passing on her 40-plus years of knowledge to Sheree but her seven-day-a-week operation still requires her to climb ladders to measure up window treatments, traipse up the steps of houses on Wellington's hills and drive anywhere from Palmerston North to Wairarapa and Wellington's south coast.

"Pushing my body up and down hills, and up and down ladders, keeps my body going, and as long as I'm doing all of the maths to work out quotes and putting together job sheets for my makers and the installers, those figures are keeping my brain going."

Right now Ann has 20 jobs in progress, which she sees through right from the initial consultation and quotes to enlisting her curtain makers and installers.

Technology doesn't faze her either - she completes quotes and job sheets, navigates her way around her suppliers' ordering systems and does all her own accounting via Xero.

"Some people become scared of technology as they age, but I've embraced it and I'm learning more and more every day."



The Porirua Probus Club member admits to suffering from a few aches and pains, but she says she just pushes through.

"I'm still running around like a 50-year-old," she laughs, "if I sit around and feel sorry for myself it will only get worse".

Family and travel are integral for Anne and pre-COVID she incorporated both when seeing her US-based son. She is pictured with him at Graceland (right) and in Memphis' famous Beale Street (above).



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Ann Murphy - 'I'm learning more & more every day'



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"I'm a positive person, I just think every day I put my feet on the floor is a good day!"

Keeping herself busy works wonders - she's religiously in her home office by 9am daily, showered, dressed and make-up on as if she was going to walk out the door.

In fact Ann lives by the motto that sits on her fridge - do what you love and love what you do.

"If you can do that, it's not a job - I still get motivated by the challenges, and the people I get to meet every day.

"No day is the same, no job is the same, no house is the same, no family is the same, every scenario is different.

"I get pleasure out of helping people, creating something for somebody that gives them pleasure and the satisfaction of a job done when they say they love it."

With three children, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, family is also an integral part of Ann's life.

So too is travel.

Pre-Covid she'd frequently visit her son in the United States, and now borders are reopen she's planning a trip there next year.

Last year she was part of a tour group to travel the top of the North Island and in August she's finally getting to go on a cruise of the Mediterranean she booked pre-Covid.

"There is work-life balance, I work hard and my reward is travel - I used to travel to trade shows for work and I caught the bug.

"People ask why I don't retire to travel more and get a hobby, I tell them I've got a hobby, my job is my hobby and I have no intention of giving that up anytime soon."