

You & Me

A shared interest in golf and a friendly chat brought together a retirement village resident and manager

Interview **TONYA TURNER**

John Miles, 90, Elanora, retired

Why did you move to Elanora Gardens retirement village?

My late wife Valmay and I were following a pattern a lot of families follow. Our kids moved away as part of their career and when we got old they wanted us to live close to them. We lived in Rockhampton for 46 years where I was a teacher and deputy principal at The Cathedral College for almost 30 years. I loved teaching kids. If you don't love the kids you should get out of teaching. Rocky is still home, but this is a lovely place. I've been here for 10 years now and I've got no complaints.

What do you do to stay active?

I play golf twice a week with a small social club and I still walk the course. I like the social aspect of it, I like it when I hit the ball well, and I like using bad language when I don't. I used to represent Rockhampton in cricket and rugby league when I was young. I busted my shoulder playing rugby when I was 22, so that was the end of that. I kept playing cricket though until I was 28, then I switched to golf. Housework and shopping keep me active too.

How did you and Michael start playing golf together?

Michael is a good manager of this retirement village. He's a good fella. One day he told me he loves playing golf, so I asked him to join our club. I mix with him well. He came to the funeral when Valmay passed away this year. We were married for 64 years. We'd been at Elanora for three years when her health started deteriorating. She moved into the Pineshaven aged care facility next door where we had lunch together every day. It was like another home and I still go there now to visit the other residents and help out.

What's the secret to a long and happy life?

I don't know, I think I've just got good



Village manager Michael Dafel and resident John Miles at Blue Care, Elanora Gardens, Gold Coast. Picture: Russell Shakespeare

genes. For a happy life, if you're talking about marriage, work at it. You're going to have good days and not so good days, so enjoy the good days and work to overcome the bad days.

Michael Dafel, 61, Currumbin, Blue Care retirement village manager

How did you and John become friends?

When I started working at Elanora Gardens three years ago, he was at the resident meeting. We started talking and realised we both liked golf. It's good how it

gets you out and into the fresh air. I'm the baby of the club but I like playing with the old boys. I'm not very good but I'm getting better. John hits a good ball and he walks all nine holes. He's always been a very good sportsman from what I'm told, but he's not the sort of bloke to blow his own horn. He's just a friendly person you can talk to about anything.

What do you enjoy about your job?

I manage four retirement villages including Elanora Gardens, Yurana, Wirunya and Lakeside. I've been in retirement living for

20 odd years now, helping people and getting things done for them. It suits me.

What do you admire about John?

The main thing is the way he is part of that village and gets involved. I just think it's great that he can still do that at his age. He's very involved in the social aspect at the aged care facility and even though his wife has passed, he still goes there regularly and helps the volunteers with social things they do, and he gets involved with the concerts they do. I think it's great he does that. It keeps you going.