

Melissa gets (another) fresh start

Arts Center manager featured in Couric newsletter

Simpsonville Arts Center Manager Melissa Sturgis was drinking coffee on her back deck on New Year's Eve when she read an email informing her that her story would be featured in **Wake-Up Call**, a newsletter by Katie Couric Media - yes, the former **Today** co-host **CBS Evening News** Katie Couric.

"I screamed, and then I started to cry," Sturgis said.

Sturgis's submission was one of 10 accepted out of thousands.

"My parents, both journalists and now deceased, would be so proud."

The story that Sturgis submitted to **Wake-Up Call** was in response to the prompt "Fresh Start." As the spouse of a geologist who worked across the globe for 30 years in the oil and gas industry, Sturgis had a fresh start every two to three years when her husband Doug and she had to pick up and move.

"Every time we moved, I had the opportunity to reinvent myself," Sturgis said.

When living in rural Malaysia where there weren't schools, Sturgis had to homeschool her children via a California program that worked with child actors and athletes and kids who travel, prompting Sturgis to obtain her teaching certification upon moving back to the States. No longer interested in succumbing to societal pressure, Sturgis stopped dying her hair when Doug and she were transferred to Russia in 2013.

"I was tired of dying my hair, and I decided to let it go grey since no one knew me over there," Sturgis said. "I finally embraced the curly grey hair."

Fast forward to spring of 2022 when Sturgis applied for and accepted the Arts Center manager position with the City. Forty years after getting her graduate degree, Sturgis went for her dream job that she always wanted.



The Simpsonville Arts Center is managed by Melissa Sturgis, who was hired by the City in 2022 | Ghost Marketing

"My husband said, 'My job took you away from doing what you love for so long, so why don't you give this a shot?'" Sturgis recounts in her submission to **Wake-Up Call**. "I did — and here I am, age 62, working in my dream job and loving every minute."

Sturgis snagged her dream job soon after the dream of a Simpsonville Arts Center became a reality when it opened in February 2022. Since Sturgis started as manager of the Arts Center in May, three shows have been performed by Mill Town Players, four art exhibitions have been showcased and all six studios have been rented by artists and musicians. And making it into **Wake-Up Call** as a story of inspiration was the finale to Sturgis's latest fresh start.

Sturgis's entry "Get a new job" in the **Wake-Up Call** newsletter can be read at the following link: www.katie-couric.com.



Melissa Sturgis is the Simpsonville Arts Center manager | Ghost Marketing