

UNEXPECTED GIVERS

CASCIA CHRISTMAS WALK

December
2009

TulsaPeople

*"Life is a gift and something
that a lot of people take for
granted. I know I did."*

— EMEKA NNAKA

holiday
fashion
that sparkles

Attitudes of GRATITUDE

How perseverance and positive attitudes helped
local athletes rebound from serious injuries.

TRAVELERS BY TAMMIE DOOLEY

Globetrotters

Sid and Beverly Patterson have passports to envy. Here, they share some of their most memorable experiences and favorite travel destinations.

OUR CONVERSATION jumped from France to Russia to the Netherlands; from food stirred with a shovel on the coast of Spain to an elegant villa in Italy to roads that were nothing but parallel ruts in India.

The enthusiastic and engaging storytellers? **Sid and Beverly Patterson**. Many know these lifelong Tulsans as community volunteers, including Sid's work in founding one of Tulsa's iconic conservation organizations, Up With Trees.

They chose travel as their preferred R&R activity. And they have pursued it with gusto, traveling to more than 100 countries and 49 states.

Sid received his first passport at 45, Beverly at 40.

They took their first trip abroad in 1966 to a Rotary International convention in France, when Sid was president of the Rotary Club of Tulsa.

"Our first passports came shortly before the departure," Beverly says.

This was before European vacations became mainstream, before convention centers were built for handling such large events.

The convention was in Nice, the lodging in Cannes.

"Travel back and forth took over an hour," Sid says, laughing.

Setting a blazing-paced precedent for all future travel, over the two weeks in Europe, they added stamps for Portugal, Spain, France, Monte Carlo, Italy, Austria and England to their passport pages.

A few years later, Beverly and friend **Twila Brown** began volunteering for Philbrook Museum of Art's Travelers Series. The pair led the trips, taking off for far-flung destinations sometimes three and four times a year.

"We saw the world during those 15 years," Beverly says.

Sid was with her on every trip, except

Beverly and Sid Patterson display their highly decorated passports.



Photo courtesy of Tammie Dooley

one. He signed up too late and there was no space left.

The series ended in the 1980s, but the Pattersons had no intention of ending their globetrotting.

"Once you get a taste of it, there's places you just have to see," Beverly says.

Their most memorable international destination? India.

Initially, "India was low on my list," Sid says. "But the things we saw left us speechless."

Along with visiting the breathtaking Taj Mahal, they traveled from New Delhi to the Elephant Caves by bus on roads little more than two ruts. They rode elephants, and Sid saw firsthand what conservation efforts in a third-world country entailed.

As founder of Tulsa's Up With Trees, Sid knows what it takes to coax a sprig into a shade tree.

"In India, the government had installed huge fences around young trees in order to keep citizens from cutting them down for firewood," he says.

Of the places they've visited, many countries' borders have been altered, names have changed, governments have come and gone. In Russia, where the Pattersons have

traveled several times, they saw the country before and after the fall of the Soviet Union.

"When we visited the first time in 1982, someone was always right over our shoulder," Beverly recalls. "They absolutely knew where we were at all times."

Hoorn, Amsterdam, was the most off-the-beaten-path location they have visited, and became a destination through a variety of influences.

Through Rotary, they had befriended a man who told Sid about the Danube and Rhine rivers lock and dam projects. Around the same time, Sid read of the project in National Geographic, and **Pieter Groot**, a young man from Hoorn, began

a work-study program at Patterson Steel, where Sid was vice president.

The pieces all converged. The Pattersons cruised the new river system and stayed at Groot's parents' home in Hoorn.

"Hoorn was a very small town with a beautiful harbor," Sid says. "They were the leading port for the Zuiderzee and the Dutch East India Co."

In addition to seeing a regatta race in the famous harbor, Beverly had a memorable traveler's moment.

"I let a mouse loose in the house (where) we were staying," she says. "The mouse must have been on the ship, got a whiff of the peanut M&Ms I'd packed and made himself at home. When I opened my suitcase, he shot out and disappeared."

Right now, Chicago is their favorite destination — to visit **Austin**, their 13-month-old great-grandson. But when you have the travel bug, who knows? As Sid says, "The best trip is always the last trip." ■

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