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# The Unit's Edge: Exploring the Boundary between Public and Private Domains in Residential Settings for Older Persons

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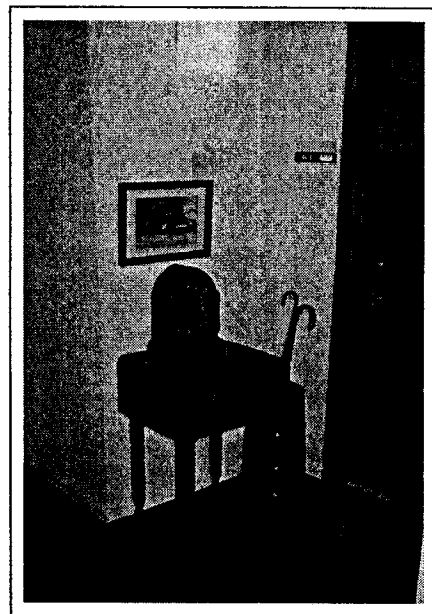
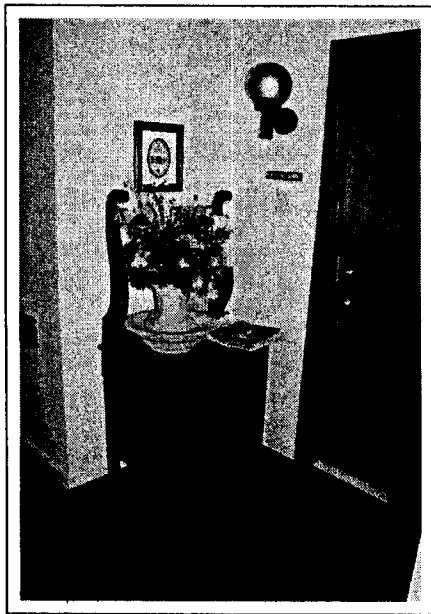
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# T H E U N I T ' S E D G E

EXPLORING THE BOUNDARY  
BETWEEN  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DOMAINS  
IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS  
FOR OLDER PERSONS



Mark A. Proffitt, M.Arch  
Sherylyn H. Briller, Ph.D

## **ABSTRACT**

**This monograph explores the architectural boundary between the private domain in residential settings for older persons. In two retirement communities that encouraged personalization of resident entryways, quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed to compare different dwellings' edge treatments. this exploratory study addressed three major areas: 1) How are these edges used? 2) What factors influence their use? and 3) To what extent did the use of these areas provide a means for resident self-expression and promote socialization with others? Key study findings result in a typology of edge uses and architectural design guidelines.**

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We want to thank the administrators, staff and the residents from both of the participating communities. They welcomed the research with open arms and a great deal was learned in the short time spent in both communities. Key staff members and residents provided invaluable assistance throughout the entire process.

Several people contributed their valuable time to craft the final product. Dr. Rebecca Meehan provided her excellent statistical analysis skills to provide additional credence for the results. We also want to thank our families for their support during the project. Finally, Mark Proffitt wants to thank his old neighbor, Alfred Reingold for his photography skills when he did the first pilot for this study four years ago. Through his lens, he first saw the opportunity.

# MONOGRAPH SUMMARY

# MONOGRAPH SUMMARY

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Every form of housing has an edge that separates public life from private. This edge can take on many forms. In residential housing, it can be as simple as the exterior wall or can include broader spatial zones such as the entire front yard. This edge serves several functions. It is the barrier to the outside world, but also the vehicle we use to let the outside world know who we are. There is extensive, classic literature on how the selection and decoration of our home environment is a strong means of non-verbal communication of expressing who we are (e.g., Cooper-Marcus, 1974; Carp, F.M. & Carp, A., 1982; Altman, 1980). This residential edge plays a key role in this human communication.

However, there are typically fewer opportunities for residents to use this edge in sheltered care environments for the elderly. These environments, which offer both housing and some form of supportive care, are often large, complex interior settings. Frequently, the architectural framework of these settings compresses this very necessary zone to only a doorway and a wall in the hallway. Compressing this edge denies residents an opportunity to use this zone as a means of non-verbal communication, which they have been accustomed to over their lifetimes.

Communication is an important because it plays a key role in social engagement which has long been a central theme in the literature on successful aging (Jacobs, 1975). While housing edges have traditionally served as a means of regulating social engagement with others, the role of the edge in sheltered care environments for the elderly has not been well explored. Moreover, these environments frequently have negative associations (Health Unit, 2001). A part of sheltered care settings' negative imagery is due to the loss of a sense of identity and control for the elderly (Calkins, 1995; Goffman, 1961). This research posits that maintaining that control and identity for elders in sheltered care settings should start at the unit's edge.

As increasing numbers of people move into sheltered care settings, we must understand what we can do to make these settings supportive and promote successful aging. Gaining a more sophisticated understanding of the power of the unit's edge and its proper treatment fits within this paradigm. Today, designers and owners of supportive settings are making assumptions about the best treatment of the unit's edge without research guidance. Accordingly, more descriptive and comparative information is needed on the different uses of the unit's edge in these settings.

## RESEARCH RESPONSE

Entryways are key aspects of the unit's edge that have been manipulated by designers and traditionally have been somewhat under the residents' control in many supportive settings. This exploratory study explores multiple aspects of the design and function of these entryways in two separate continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs). Specifically, the research compares the different doorway display treatments in both independent apartments and assisted living suites to understand what roles they serve in the communities. The five key research questions include:

- 1) How are the edges being used?
- 2) What influences the use of these edges?
- 3) What messages are the use of these edges communicating?
- 4) Does the use of these edges influence residents' perceptions of the setting?
- 5) Does the use of these edges influence socialization?

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study compares four different “settings” (the assisted living and independent apartments in each CCRC). Both retirement communities are accredited by the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission and provide multiple levels of care within interconnected buildings. One community was built in 1979, and the other was built in 1993. Both communities actively encourage resident personalization. Studying the four settings offered opportunities to compare how the use of the edge differs between levels of care, as well as within different architectural frameworks. To address the five research questions, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this exploratory study. The following types of data were collected:

**Photographic Data:** A total of 102 photographs were taken of resident unit entranceways in all four settings. These photographs were analyzed for:

- Number of Items Used.
- Size and Variety of Items Displayed (e.g. plants, photographs).
- Placement of Items, (e.g. shelves, floor).

**Interviews:** A total of nineteen indepth interviews were conducted to gain a more sophisticated understanding of the meaning behind specific personalized displays. The interviews were unscripted, but the key content questions covered during each interview included the following:

- Resident life history.
- What items did the resident choose to display and what is their significance?
- How does the resident feel about the use of this edge?

Each of the interviews was full text transcribed and analyzed for thematic content.

**Apartment Survey:** Sixty-two completed surveys were received from the residents living in the independent apartments in both CCRC's. An assisted living survey was not possible at this time since resources were not available to administer the survey one to one to these more impaired residents. Questions in the apartment survey were both open-ended and closed-ended. The contents of the survey addressed:

- Why did the resident decide to personalize the area?
- What is the significance of the items on the display?
- Do these displays contribute to socialization?
- Do these displays contribute to a positive image of the facility?
- What do these displays communicate to others?

Closed-ended questions were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Open-ended questions were analyzed for thematic content.

**Participant Observation:** Spending time in the four different settings helped to establish rapport, build trust and provided numerous opportunities for cross-checking data. While visiting both communities, informal interviews were also conducted with residents and staff about the use of the unit's edge. These encounters often clarified issues, or provided more information to be followed up on in the indepth interviews.

## **KEY PHOTOGRAPHIC FINDINGS**

Based upon the photographic data, the following findings were derived:

- Whenever space is provided for personalization, residents will use the space. Additionally, personalization will occur on all surfaces available whenever more space is provided.
- A larger spatial area does increase the amount of personalization and the variety of personalization in both the assisted living settings and the apartments settings. Moreover, when no space is provided there still is an inherent need in some residents to create some type of individualization. Doorways in Community One's assisted living setting that primarily had hallway alcoves were still personalized.
- Deeper alcoves in the apartments are often treated like the foyers found in homes or apartments. Therefore, familiar front hall objects are often placed in these areas such as narrow tables, mirrors, coat trees and umbrella stands. Assisted living displays more frequently reflect decorative trends rather than practical items found in a foyer.
- The provision of a shelf does appear to increase the amount of personalization in assisted living settings. It can be assumed that this allows any resident to easily create a display with very little assistance. Whenever space is available and a shelf is not provided, residents will often provide their own horizontal surface in both apartments and assisted living.
- Keeping the floor area clear appears to be a motivator in reducing the amount of larger three-dimensional items in assisted living. For example, there were fewer large pieces of furniture in these displays.
- The number and variety of object categories in displays increased when more space was provided in the doorway alcoves. The most object variety was found in doorways with deep alcoves and a shelf. In assisted living settings (comparing doorways which were approximately the same size), the number of object categories and display variety increased when a built-in shelf was provided.

## **KEY FINDINGS FROM APARTMENT SURVEY**

The following points represent the key findings from the apartment survey:

- The majority of the residents personalize their space. Primary motivators to personalize include sharing interests with others, welcoming visitors, making the building more attractive and storage opportunities. One key reason not to personalize is not having a dedicated space to do so.
- Most of the residents who responded to the survey independently selected the items to display on their own. A few residents had the assistance of relatives with this activity.
- When larger alcoves are provided, residents are more likely to select items based upon the need for storage as well as a reflection of self. Smaller alcoves tend to motivate residents to primarily select items for decorative purposes and self-expression.
- Larger alcoves tend to result in more items being used from a resident's past home. Moreover,

these items are usually part of a resident's past entry sequence. In a few cases, residents mentioned being able to recreate past lifestyle customs in displays such as flying the American flag on holidays.

- Residents are more likely to regularly change their displays when shelves are provided while larger alcoves tend to result in more static displays. Some residents made judgements on others' displays based upon how frequently the displays changed. These judgments of others included whether these residents traveled regularly, were creative, were energetic, and were more aware or happier than others.
- A majority of the residents are able to learn something new about other residents based upon their displays. Residents are able to discern other peoples' interests and hobbies from the displays.
- There is a statistically significant relationship between perceiving the displays to have a positive impact and knowing other people in the apartment building ( $p < .05$ ). Therefore, it can be inferred the displays assisted in this knowledge. Moreover, this relationship is stronger in Community One, which has more space for residents to personalize.
- The majority of the respondents indicated the displays have a positive impact on the living environment of their buildings. There was also a statistically significant relationship between the positive impact of the displays and being satisfied with the building design and décor ( $p < .01$ ). Therefore, the displays have played a positive role in building and décor satisfaction.
- The majority of the study's respondents are older than the average ages found for each community and frequently have lived in the community for long periods of time. Due to these demographic differences, it is not possible to know whether their views are truly representative of their communities as a whole. However, the study respondents did provide a great deal of insightful information about how these communities operate and what the resident dynamics are like in each of the study settings. These data combined with informal interviewing and participant observation support the overall validity of the findings.

#### **KEY FINDINGS FROM THE BIO-SKETCHES**

The primary finding from the resident indepth interviews was that most of the items placed outside the door had significant meaning and were tied to a resident's interests and past lifestyle. These interviews also provided key sources of information on how the doorways are used by individuals, as well as their attitudes about their displays. This information helped to answer some of the questions presented in the key research questions and discussion section of this report.



## KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Several of the key themes that emerged from the study reflect accepted environment and behavior patterns found in the housing literature. Therefore as indicated below, it appears many residents are successfully replicating familiar patterns in their use of the unit's edge within sheltered care settings.

### USE OF THE EDGES

Analyses of the multiple types of data collected resulted in a preliminary typology of edge uses:

#### TYPOLGY OF USES

<i>Utilitarian</i>	<i>Decorative</i>	<i>Communicative</i>	<i>Social</i>
Convenience	Hallway Improvement	Written Communication	Group Membership
Storage	Dynamic Project	Visual Communication	Camaraderie
	Continuity	Self Expression	Similar Interests
	Individualization		

- *Utilitarian uses* refer to the more basic needs that these doorway edges satisfy such as creating a convenience shelf or providing for the storage of transportation devices.
- *Decorative uses* include improving the hallway, setting one's doorway apart from others, and providing continuity with past décor and lifestyle patterns. Furthermore, some residents continually change the décor of their edges for variety, interest, and attention.
- *Communicative uses* include the facilitation of both written and visual messages between the unit's occupant and the other retirement community residents and staff. The edge of the unit also proved to be a strong communicative means for self-expression.
- *Social uses* of the edge included establishing that the occupant belongs to the retirement community, learning about other residents' interests, and using the edge as a means of expressing camaraderie among community members.

#### Influences on Edge Uses

The key influences on edge uses are architectural, administrative, peer review, care level and normalization.

- *Architectural influences* relate to spatial aspects and built-in features such as the presence of a shelf. Having a clearly defined space such as an alcove encourages more personalization in both levels of care. Larger alcoves without shelves offers more opportunity for variety in the apartment settings. In assisted living, providing a shelf and a deep alcove resulted in more personalization. Moreover, the community with the larger alcoves was found to have a strong significant relationship between knowing other people who live in the apartment building and feeling the displays have a positive impact (.562,  $p < .01$ ).

- *Administration influences* include both requests and rules about edge usage established by administrative staff and the resident committees that oversee multiple aspects of residents' lives. Assisted living residents appear to be more influenced by administrative rules; while apartment residents are more influenced by resident committees.
- *Peer review and peer pressure* influenced the personalization of the edges. Residents are frequently motivated by others to create a display and may edit its content based upon their input.
- *Care level* also plays a role in the use of the displays and how they are constructed. Residents in assisted living appear to have more assistance from family members when creating a display. The majority of the apartment residents surveyed selected the items placed on display.
- *Normalization* refers to treating this area in senior housing as a traditional front door and using items, which are typically found in these residential spaces such as coat racks and mirrors.

### Messages these Edges Convey

Apartment survey respondents clearly indicated that not only did they select items to reflect some aspect of self, but other residents also notice these messages. Interviews reinforced that many of the objects placed on display relate to some important aspect of the resident's life. Expressing individuality was prioritized; however, objects were also chosen that conveyed belonging to the socio-economic group that resides in the community.

### Effect on the Perceptions of the Community

The majority of the study findings indicated these edge displays are perceived as positively contributing to the community. Furthermore, there was a statistically significant relationship found between believing the displays were positive and being satisfied with the décor of the apartment buildings for both settings (.324,  $p < .01$ ). Negative aspects were mentioned with much less frequency and were primarily based on issues of clutter. However, the survey sample may be biased towards people in these communities who approved of the doorway displays.

### Effect on Socialization

The use of the unit's edge does assist residents in finding out what common interests they shared. The edge is also used to help establish camaraderie (e.g., bestowing cards and flowers on the occupant's shelf at a birthday). Residents complimented the people who change their displays frequently. Furthermore, in the apartment settings there is a statistically significant relationship found between knowing other residents in the apartment building and thinking the displays were positive (.294,  $P < .01$ ). Further research would need to be conducted to explore this issue in more depth, in different care levels in a single community, as well between communities.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions drawn from this exploratory study indicate that there are several benefits to manipulating the unit's edge that will be elaborated in the body of this monograph. In future research, more sophisticated sampling and comparisons between communities with varying degrees of personalization would help to draw stronger conclusions. Furthermore, more detailed comparative data needs to be elicited from assisted living residents, since the study did not have the resources to conduct a more detailed survey in these settings.

What the study did find was that retirement community residents were interested in and could articulately discuss multiple issues relating to this research topic. The insights that the residents who participated in this exploratory study provided were extremely valuable for designing future research to be conducted in a wider range of settings. Based upon the body of data collected to date and the study's initial conclusions, preliminary design guidelines were created for dwelling units' edges in retirement communities. These guidelines are structured to maximize personalization, resident satisfaction, communication, socialization and physiological needs.

**P R O B L E M   S T A T E M E N T**

**A N D**

**L I T E R A T U R E   R E V I E W**

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

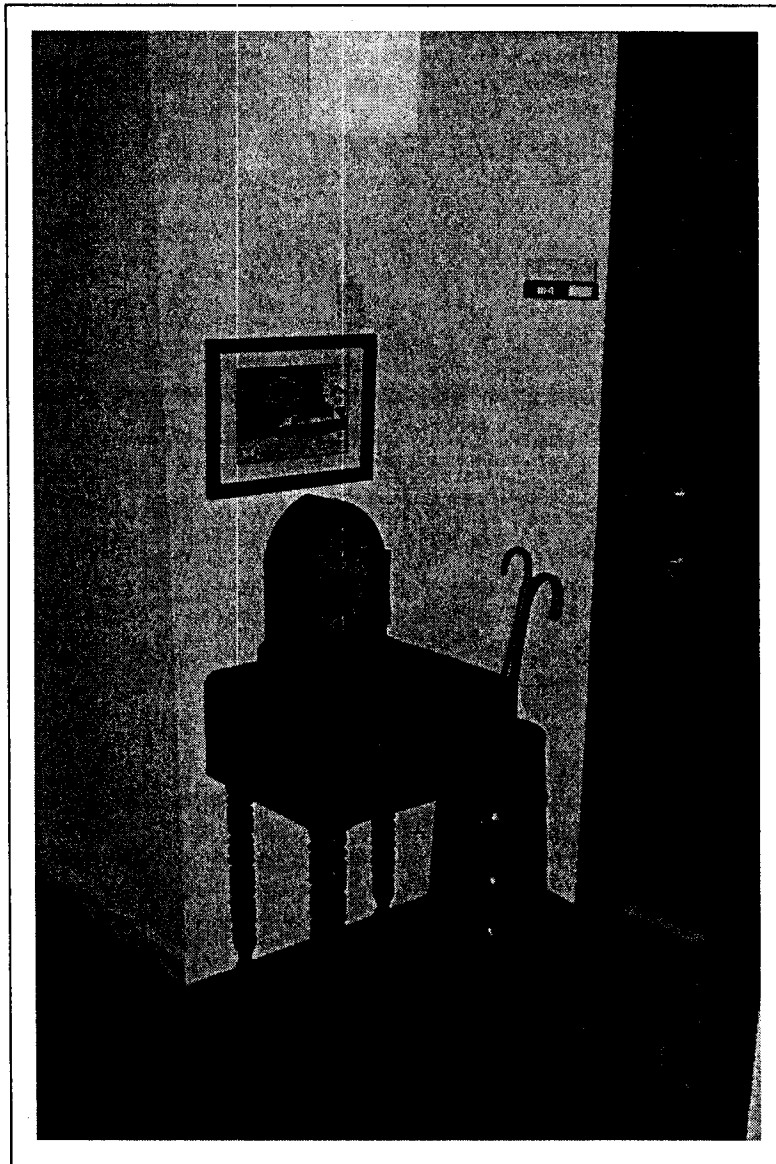
Every form of housing has an edge, which separates public life from private. This edge can take on many forms. In residential housing, it can be as narrow as the exterior wall or can include broader spatial zones such as the entire front yard. This edge serves several functions. It is the barrier to the outside world, but it is also the vehicle we use to let the outside world know who we are. Throughout most of our lives, we manipulate this edge like a theater proscenium. When the curtain is closed, we hide away what is private. When the curtain is up, we display what we want others to see. There is extensive, classic literature on how the selection and decoration of our home environment is a strong means of non-verbal communication of expressing who we are (e.g., Cooper-Marcus, 1974; Carp, F.M. & Carp, A., 1982; Altman, 1980). This edge plays a key role in this interpersonal communication as well as the social milieu.

Despite the documented evidence of the use of the housing edge as a means of interpersonal communication, the role of the edge in sheltered care settings has not been extensively explored. There are typically few opportunities for residents to use this edge in sheltered care environments for the elderly. These environments which offer both housing and some form of supportive care are often large, complex interior settings. Frequently, the architectural framework of these settings compresses this very necessary zone to only a doorway and a wall in the hallway. Compressing this edge denies residents an opportunity to use this zone as a means of non-verbal communication which they have been accustomed to over their lifetimes. At a time of their lives when older people have the most to share with others, they frequently lack the architectural framework to support such self-expression. In settings where we encourage socialization of older adults, few non-verbal means of expressing common interests and backgrounds currently exist. Moreover, the lack of individualization that is negatively associated with sheltered care settings—often begins at the unit's edge.

### Significance

The importance of maintaining social engagement has long been a central theme in the literature on successful aging (Jacobs, 1975). There is substantial literature to suggest housing boundaries play a key role in socialization (Cooper-Marcus, 1974). While housing edges have traditionally served as a means of regulating social engagement, this role of the edge in sheltered care environments for the elderly has not been well explored. These settings are traditionally separate living environments which provide some form of support such as CCRCs, apartments, assisted living and nursing homes. However, these environments frequently have negative associations (Health Unit, 2001). A part of sheltered care settings' negative imagery is due to the loss of a sense of identity and control for the elderly (Calkins, 1995; Goffman, 1961). However, this research posits that maintaining that control and identity can start at the unit's edge.

As increasing numbers of people move into sheltered care settings, we must understand what we can do to make these settings supportive and promote successful aging. Gaining a more sophisticated understanding of the power of the unit's edge and its proper treatment fits within this paradigm. Architects and designers have started to explore the issue of bringing this edge back into these settings by the use of interior front porches, hallway niches, interior windows, display cases and shadow boxes. However, little research has been done comparing the effects of each of these different treatments on resident identity, communication and socialization. Moreover, there is little empirical research available reviewing the use of these edges. This research intends to begin to fill this gap and provide a clearer understanding of how these edges are being used.



**FIGURE ONE** EXAMPLE OF USING THE UNIT'S EDGE  
**PHOTO BY MARK PROFFITT**

## T A R G E T E D   L I T E R A T U R E   R E V I E W

The following targeted literature review was used to establish key concepts for the study. The study of personalization is quite diverse and is found in multiple fields of study, which include environmental psychology, environmental personology, interior design, sociology, and cultural anthropology. This review focuses primarily on key environment and behavior studies, gerontology and architectural design.

### ENVIRONMENT / BEHAVIOR STUDIES

Research has indicated that people make judgments about environments based upon appearances (Carp, F.M. & Carp, A., 1982). Judgments of likes or dislikes have been argued to be based upon our past experiences. For instance, Rapoport (1985) discusses how houses reflect the cultural, regional, religious, and economic factors related to the inhabitants. Cooper-Marcus (1974) in her article, "House as Symbol of Self", argues the exterior of the home serves as a second skin. The home image we select and the decorations we choose reflect our personalities and the identities we wish to portray to others. Furthermore, Altman (1980) argues that personalization of a home fosters social interaction by expressing to others common values and lifestyles. It is these commonalities that strengthen social networks. Rapoport (1985) formed a conceptual framework for evaluating home environment based upon fixed feature elements, semi-fixed feature elements and non-fixed feature elements. Fixed feature elements refer to architectural elements such as the floor and the walls. Non-fixed features elements change rapidly and refer to the inhabitants' spatial relations, gestures and nonverbal behaviors. Semi-fixed features include furniture and artwork. Semi-fixed features can change and are frequently the primary means of inhabitants' expressions of congruence with their home setting. Thus, homeowners frequently have the control to adapt their environment to communicate what they desire. Janz (1992) used this framework to compare two socio-economic neighborhoods in Milwaukee to determine if residents expressed their identities using their home fronts. Her findings supported the use of home fronts as a mechanism for home owners to communicate and reflect group membership. In contrast to home environments, total institutions, such as prisons or nursing homes, have been found to lack personalization (Goffman, 1961). A characteristic of a total institution is the loss of individual identity for only a group identity. Such settings that are uniform in appearance, are negatively perceived in this society. Therefore, it can be inferred for this study that the best home environments allow one to manipulate the appearance of the unit's edge to express one's individuality as well as group membership.

### GERONTOLOGY

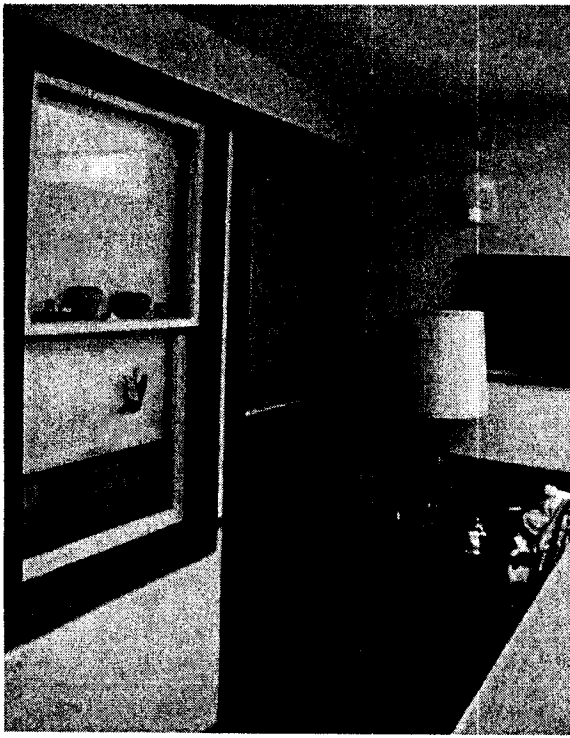
Gerontological research has looked at different aspects of the dwelling for socialization, communication and personalization in various types of settings. Some specific uses of the unit's edge in home environments by the elderly have been documented. Rowles (1981) identified a surveillance zone among the homes of a rural elderly population. This surveillance zone is comprised of the area within view from the window's edges of their homes. Neighbors would informally check on each other by waving or looking for lights at night. The elderly had a higher degree of socialization with people who were included within this zone. This same concept was noted by Hochschild (1973) who studied a mid-rise congregate building with exterior balconies as corridors. Residents of the building would informally check on others as they walked past other residents' units. If the curtain was up, then it was assumed all was well or they would wave to the person inside. If the

curtain was closed, they would check on the person. Similar to the rural social network, the most common friendship was between residents who shared the same corridor balcony and passed by each others' units each day. The importance of personalization of private spaces within congregate care settings has been studied by Kinny et al (1986). The living room walls were studied for the amount of personalization. Their study found that the residents who most personalized these walls had the greatest perceptions that their unit felt like a home. Kamptner (1989) discusses the importance of possessions as a person ages and moves to a new location. He argues that these items represent ties or bonds with others and these possessions assist in helping to maintain personal identities. The introduction of a familiar habitable edge into a nursing home setting, which previously lacked this feature, has also been studied (De Long, 1970). Two semi-private rooms were converted into four private rooms with a small front porch. This new arrangement fostered sociability among the residents because it created a familiar common meeting zone. The use of personalization for orientation and wayfinding has been demonstrated in sheltered care environments for residents with early stage dementia. In one study for example, large display cabinets filled with personal items were found to help four out of ten residents with locating their rooms (Namazi et. al., 1991).

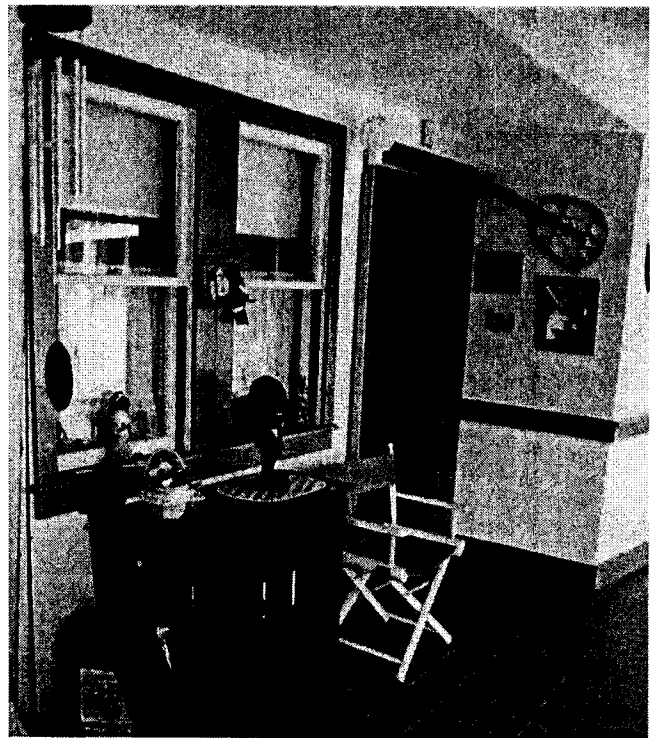
## **ARCHITECTURE**

Innovative housing for older adults has recognized the benefits of manipulating the unit's edge. The primary manipulation has occurred at the doorway to the unit. One of the first innovative uses of the unit's edge is at Captain Eldridge Congregate House (See Figure Two), where each unit has a front porch to place furniture (Morton, 1981). A dutch door and interior window were provided so residents could select the amount of interaction they desired within a two story atrium space. Annie Maxim House (See Figure Three) continued this idea by using a single loaded corridor with entry porches along each dwelling unit's edge (Boles, 1985). A window was provided to view the hall from the kitchen in the unit. At the Corinne Dolan Center for Alzheimer's Care (See Figure Four), the entry area to each unit has a display cabinet and a dutch door (Cohen & Day, 1993). The principal function of these items is to help residents identify their rooms by remembering personal objects. Woodside Place (See Figure Five), another facility for Alzheimer's care, used dutch entry doors and placed a high shelf inside the room for residents to personalize (Hoglund & Ledewitz, 1999).

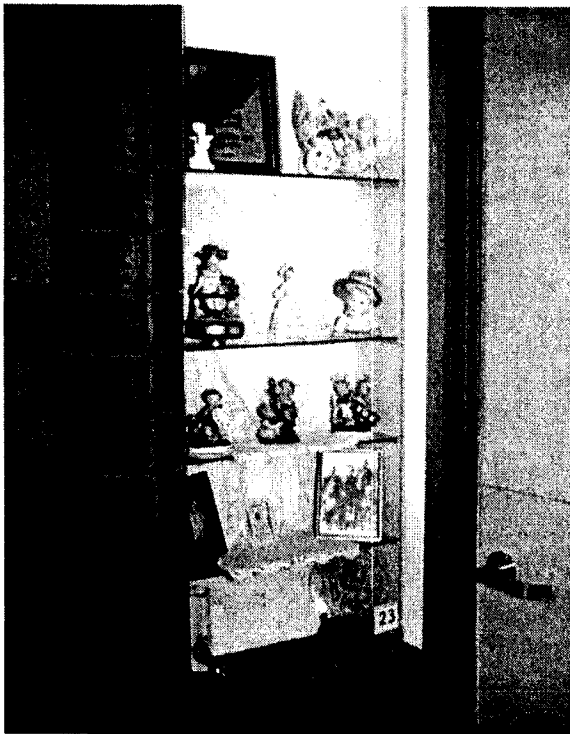




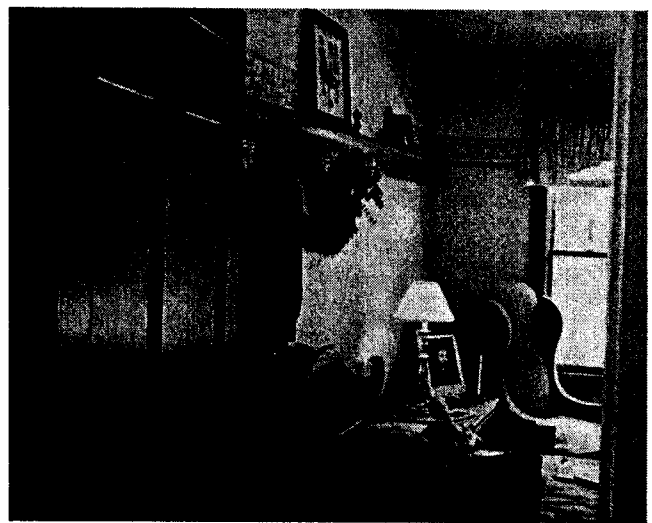
**FIGURE TWO** CAPTAIN ELDRIDGE HOUSE,  
DONHAN & SWEENEY ARCHITECTS  
PHOTO BY MARK PROFFITT



**FIGURE THREE** ANNIE MAXIM HOUSE,  
KJA ARCHITECTS  
PHOTO BY MARK PROFFITT



**FIGURE FOUR** CORRINE DOLAN CENTER,  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL HEALTH SYSTEM /  
HEATHER HILL HOSPITAL AND HEALTH  
PARTNERSHIP, HEALTH CONSULTANTS  
INTERNATIONAL, TALIESIN ARCHITECTS,  
STEPHEN NEMTIN  
PHOTO BY MARGARET P. CALKINS, Ph.D.



**FIGURE FIVE** WOODSIDE PLACE,  
PERKINS EASTMAN ARCHITECTS  
PHOTO BY ROBERT RUSCHAK

# **T H E   S I T E S**

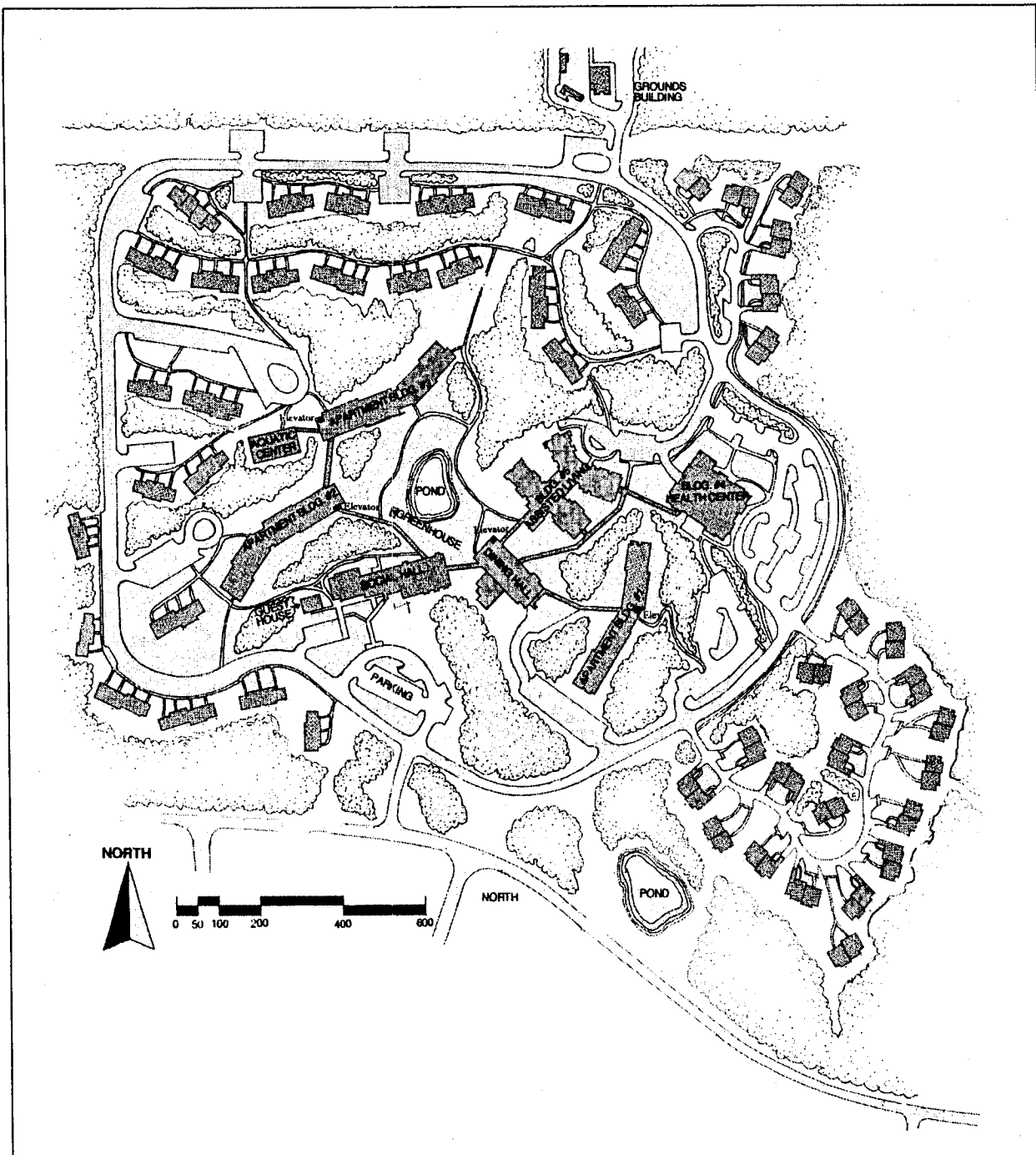


FIGURE SIX COMMUNITY ONE'S SITE PLAN

# COMMUNITY ONE

**TABLE ONE - COMMUNITY ONE RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

Average Age	82.2 Years
Number of Residents	405
Affiliated with Local College	(no records)
Volunteer or Work in the Community	(no records)

## RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

### DESCRIPTION

Built: 1979

#### Envi rons

Suburban Area of Academic College Town in the Southern United States.

#### Campus

A 120 acre park-like campus with mature pine trees and gently rolling hills. The apartment building, assisted living building, the health center, and the social hall are all connected by enclosed pedestrian walkways. The independent cottages have attached garages and are located in a suburban type

**TABLE TWO - COMMUNITY ONE CAPACITY**

Independent Living	280
• Apartment Style	146
• Cottage Style	134
Assisted Living	30
Nursing Care	60

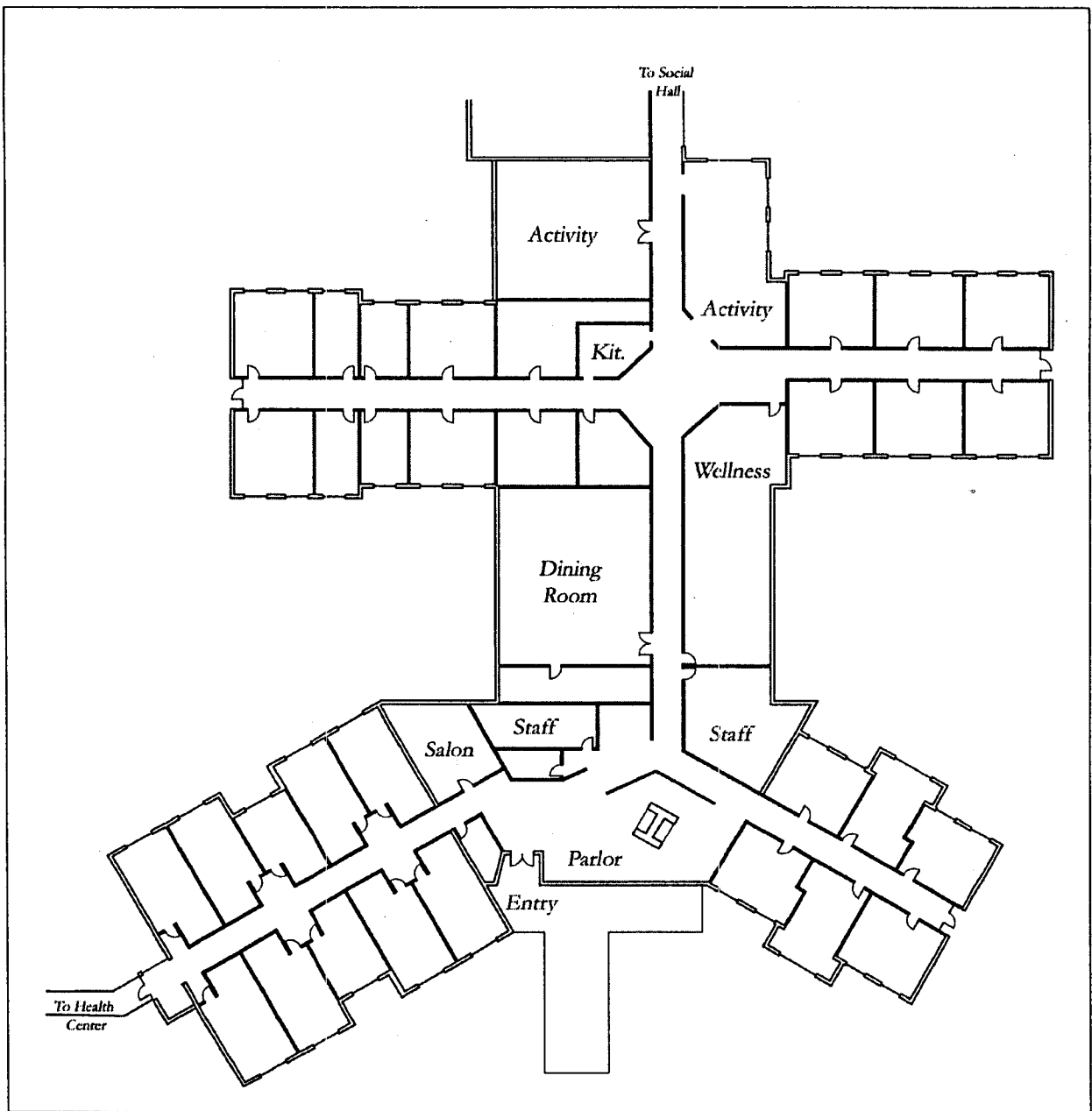
## SETTING AND ENTRANCEWAY DESCRIPTIONS

### Assisted Living Setting

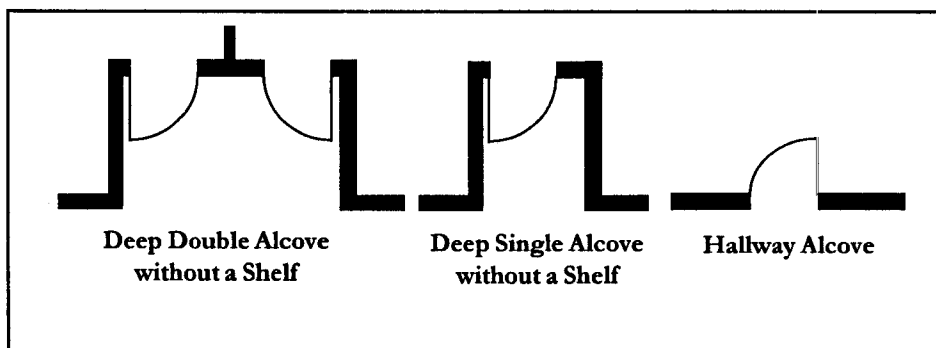
The assisted living building is a converted skilled nursing building that also serves as a primary pedestrian link between the new skilled nursing building and the social hall. The building plan is a modified “H” type with the primary common spaces being located along the central hub (See Figure Seven). Significant alterations were made to the original nursing building to create attractive large units in a variety of floor plans. All units have patios and kitchenettes.

### Assisted Living Entranceways

There are three types of entranceways in the assisted living building (See Figure Eight). Twenty of the thirty entranceways do not have a recessed alcove. These are referred to as “hallway alcoves” in this study. Residents personalize the walls surrounding their entrance doors. Some of the residents who live at the ends of the hallways felt they had the space to place a small table at their doorway even if they did not have a recessed alcove. Ten of the entranceways have a deep recessed entrance with an out swinging entrance door. The out swinging door did limit the available space a resident could personalize. Eight of the recessed doors have a double configuration coupled with an adjoining door and two have a single alcove. Double entranceways do not have any defining vertical element separating the two doorways. None of the doorways in the assisted living building have a built in shelf.



**FIGURE SEVEN** COMMUNITY ONE'S ASSISTED LIVING SETTING



**FIGURE EIGHT** COMMUNITY ONE'S ASSISTED LIVING ALCOVE STYLES

#### Apartment Settings

There are a total of 146 apartments located in three buildings each connected to the central social hall by enclosed walkways. Within the community, there are 27 studios, 84 one bedroom units and 35 two bedrooms units (See Figure Nine). Each of these buildings is a two to three story structure with approximately twenty units per floor. The buildings have six foot wide corridors and a comfortably furnished communal living room on each floor.

#### Apartment Entranceways

Each apartment has an entrance alcove with a switched electric light and an outlet. There are two floor plans for the alcoves (See Figure Ten). The majority of the units have an alcove that is three feet by four and a half feet which is rectangular in shape. At major jogs in the hallway, the units have a larger entrance alcove. These larger alcoves have a 45 degree angled wall, which provides more floor space and more prominent walls for display. Floor plans indicate that these larger alcoves are provided for the studio apartments, which have 447 square feet of space compared to the 635 square feet for a one bedroom and 850 square feet for a two bedroom (See Figure Nine). None of the alcoves at the community has a built-in shelf. A small number of apartments have a tiny shelf that appears to be installed by the occupant after moving into the unit.

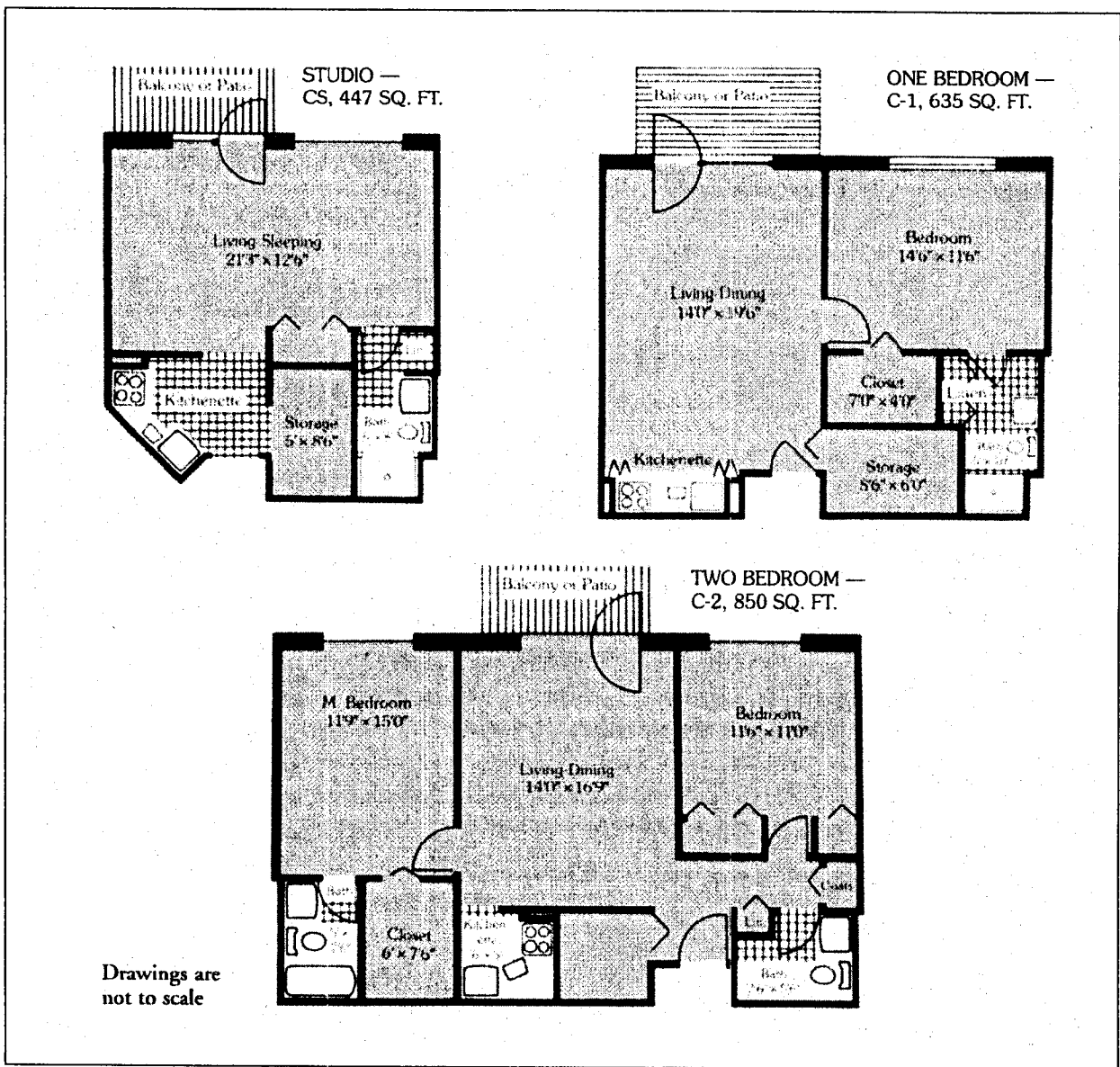


FIGURE NINE COMMUNITY ONE'S APARTMENT UNITS

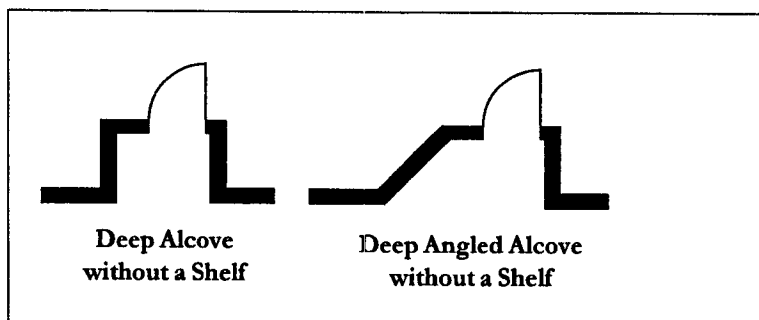


FIGURE TEN COMMUNITY ONE'S APARTMENT ALCOVE TYPES





FIGURE ELEVEN COMMUNITY TWO'S SITE PLAN

# COMMUNITY TWO

## RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE THREE - COMMUNITY TWO RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Average Age	75 Years
Number of Residents	256
Affiliated with Local College	42%
Volunteer or Work in Community	53%

## DESCRIPTION

Built: 1993

### Envi rons

Within an easy walk of the commercial downtown of a small college town in the Midwestern United States.

### Campus

A campus setting located on flat farmland with a natural wetland. All buildings on the campus are interconnected by pedestrian walkways. Cars travel on a ring road, which connects small satellite parking areas. The apartment building, community building and health center are connected by enclosed walkways. Independent living cottages are connected by covered walkways. This community is accredited by the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission.

TABLE FOUR - COMMUNITY TWO CAPACITY

Independent Living	195
• Apartment Style	48
• Cottage Style	144
Assisted Living	24
Nursing Care	42

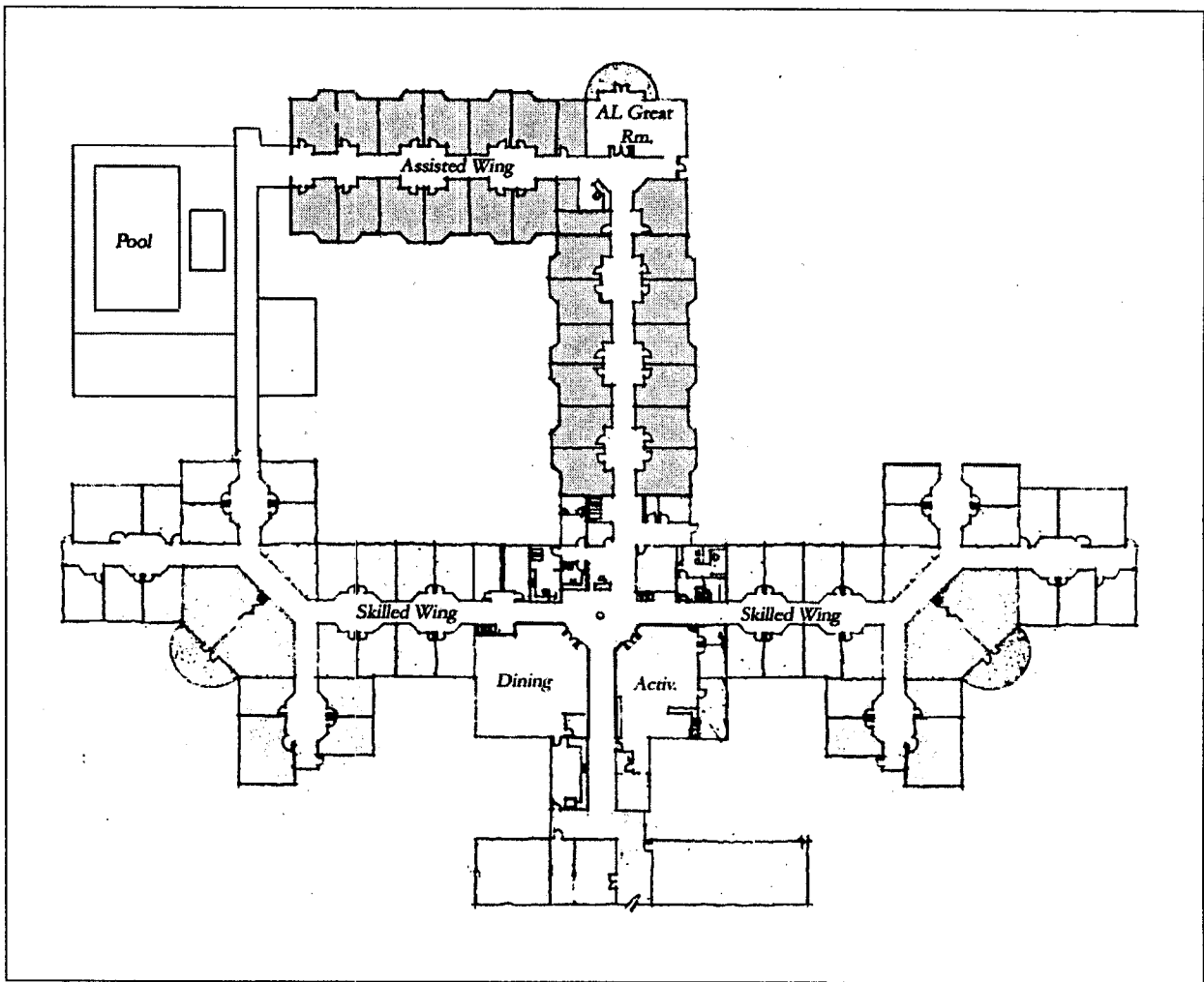
## SETTING AND ENTRANCEWAYS DESCRIPTIONS

### Assisted Living Setting

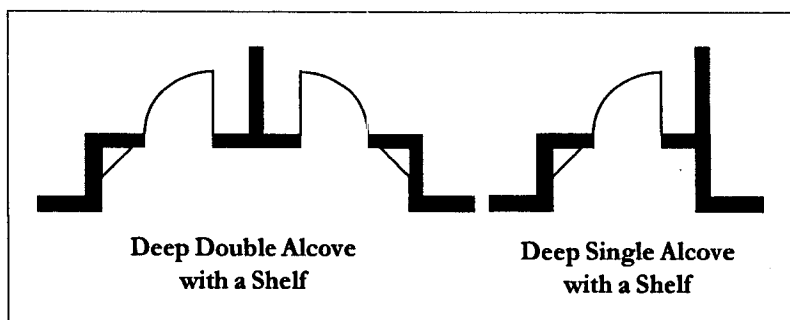
The studied assisted living setting is located in the retirement community's health center, which also contains the skilled nursing facility. The Quaker based philosophy encourages an integrated campus and the architecture supports this philosophy. The assisted living wing (See Figure Twelve) is an "L" shaped configuration with an enclosed great room located in the joint of the "L". One end of the assisted living wing connects to the central activity and dining area, which is shared with skilled nursing. Residents can choose to dine in any dining room they choose, but assistance is only given in the health center's dining room. The other end of the assisted living wing connects to the wellness center with an indoor pool and exercise room. In keeping with the organization's philosophy, the assisted living wing does not have a distinctive appearance to separate it from the skilled nursing portion of the building.

### Assisted Living Entranceways

All doorways in the health center have an entrance alcove with a shelf (See Figure Thirteen). The assisted living entrance alcoves are either in a shared double or single configuration. Each of the alcoves is two and a half feet deep with a triangular shelf in the corner. The width of the double entranceway is twelve feet and the single entranceway is five feet. Double entranceways do not have any vertical element to visually separate the two doorways.



**FIGURE TWELVE** COMMUNITY TWO'S HEALTH CENTER PLAN WITH "L" SHAPED ASSISTED LIVING WING



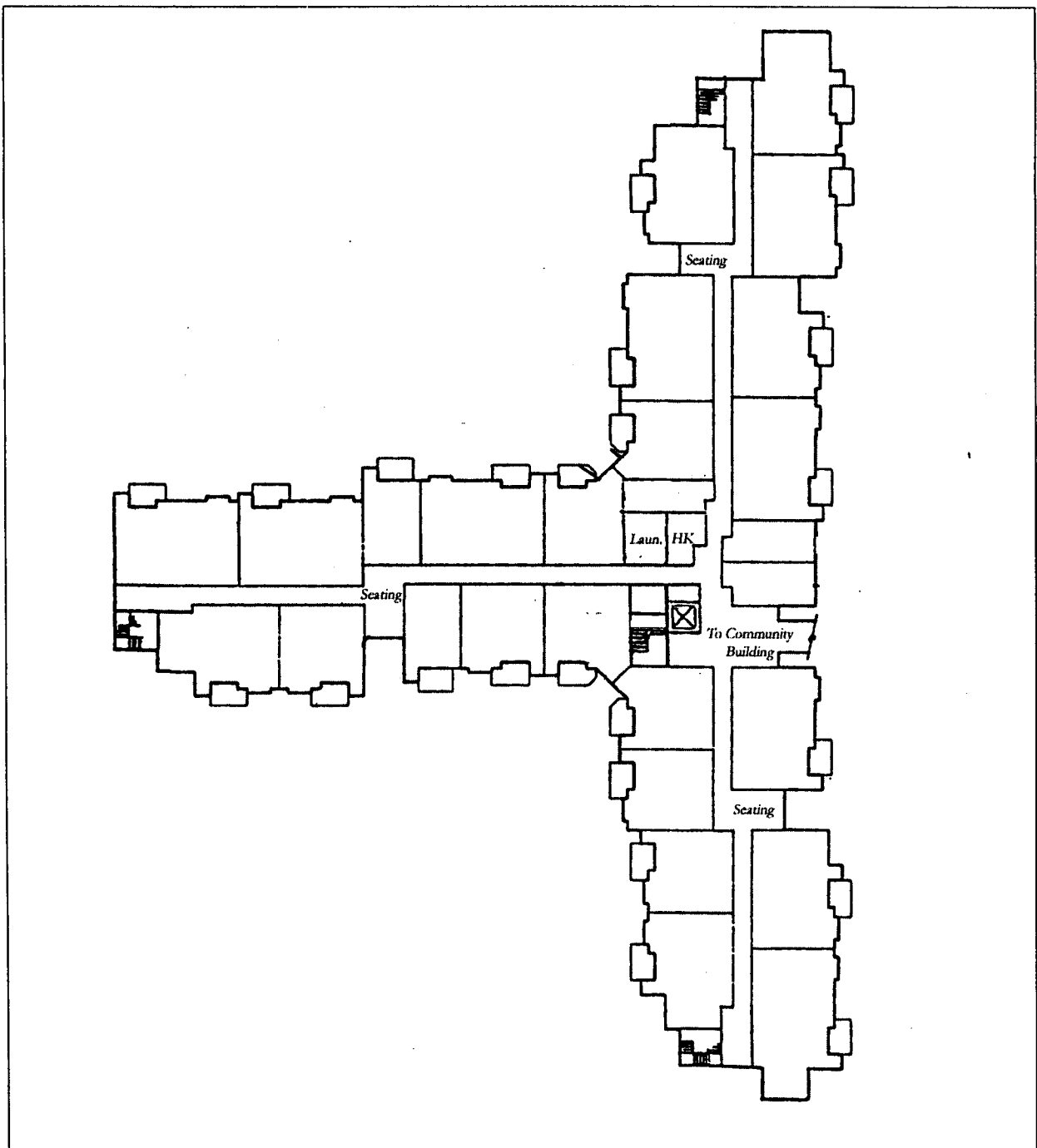
**FIGURE THIRTEEN** COMMUNITY TWO'S ASSISTED LIVING ALCOVES

### Apartment Setting

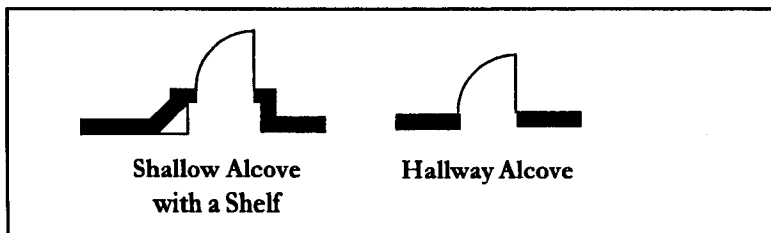
The apartment building is the only two-story structure on the campus. The building has three wings radiating from a central link which connects to the community building (See Figure Fourteen). Two of the wings lead to covered walkways, which connect cottage residents to the main community building. Within the apartment building, there are four guest suites, four studio apartments, sixteen one-bedroom units and twenty-eight two-bedroom units. Each of the forty-eight apartments has an exterior balcony or a patio area.

### Apartment Entranceways

There is one primary entranceway style for the majority of the apartments – a one foot recess with a triangular shelf on the door knob side of the door (See Figure Fifteen). Each door has a built-in light, which is not controlled by the residents. Motion detectors and a timer keep the lights on when needed. The four studio apartments' entranceways do not have a shelf or a recess. Residents who live near the enlarged seating areas in the apartment building or at the ends of the hall appear to take over some of these areas and use them as extensions of their living spaces.



**FIGURE FOURTEEN** COMMUNITY TWO'S APARTMENT SETTING



**FIGURE FIFTEEN** COMMUNITY TWO'S APARTMENT ALCOVE TYPES

# M E T H O D S

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research questions addressed in this exploratory study are the following:

- How are the edges being used?
- What influences the use of these edges?
- What messages are the use of these edges communicating?
- Does the use of these edges affect residents' perceptions of the setting?
- Does the use of these edges influence socialization?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study compares four different care settings located within two Continuing Care Retirement Communities. Both retirement communities are accredited CCRCs with multiple levels of care located within interconnected buildings. These communities were also selected for the study based on positive philosophies towards personalization. This study focuses on the assisted living and independent apartments within each community. The four settings offered opportunities to compare how the use of the unit's edge differs between levels of care, as well as within different architectural frameworks. To address the research questions, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The focus of the study was the treatment of the entrance area to the dwelling unit, since this area is typically under resident control and has been the focus of most architectural manipulations.

### Photographic Data

A total of 102 photographs were taken of representative unit entranceways from both settings. Doorways were photographed based upon the following: a) presence of some personalization and b) to represent a variety of styles of personalization. The following table summarizes the data gathered at each community.

TABLE FIVE - PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA QUANTIFIED

	<i>Community One</i>		<i>Community Two</i>	
	<i>ALF</i>	<i>APTS</i>	<i>ALF</i>	<i>APTS</i>
Number of Units	30	141	24	48
Number of Units Photographed	15	43	12	32
Percent	50.0%	30.5%	50.0%	66.7%

These photographs were analyzed for:

- Total Number of Items Used.
- Types of Items Displayed (e.g., plants, photographs).
- Size of Items (e.g., furniture, small mementos).
- Placement of Items, (e.g., shelves, floor).

Each doorway photograph was coded and entered into a computer database. Frequency and crosstabulation counts were generated using the statistical analysis program SPSS.

### Interviews

A total of nineteen residents were interviewed indepth to assess the meaning behind each of their personalized displays. Residents were selected to be interviewed using a convenience sample in that



they were willing to participate and their doorways had some form of personalization. Residents were asked to sign an informed consent form before participating in the interview. In the assisted living setting, staff were informally questioned to determine if the resident had any cognitive or health concerns that would keep them from participating. The following table summarizes the interview data collected.

**TABLE SIX - INTERVIEW DATA QUANTIFIED**

	<i>Community One</i>		<i>Community Two</i>	
	<i>ALF</i>	<i>APTS</i>	<i>ALF</i>	<i>APTS</i>
Number of Households	30	141	24	48
Number of Interviews	5	7	3	4
Percent	16.6%	5.0%	12.5%	8.3%

The interviews were unscripted, but the key content questions covered during the interview included the following:

- The resident's life history.
- What did the resident choose to display?
- Why are these items significant to the resident?
- How does the resident feel about the use of this edge?

Each of the interviews were full text transcribed and analyzed for thematic content. The life-histories were converted into short biographical sketches for this monograph.

#### Apartment Survey

A total of 62 surveys were returned from the 122 surveys distributed at both communities. A convenience sample was employed at both communities. At Community One, the self-addressed stamped surveys were distributed into the residents' mailboxes using every other box with the remaining twenty surveys being left for interested parties who lived in the apartments. In order to have a reasonable comparison in Community Two, self-addressed stamped surveys were issued to all apartment residents except for those who were interviewed during the study due to the request of administration. Administrative staff felt completing the interview and the survey would be burdensome to the residents. One apartment unit was empty and another was being used by marketing as a demonstration unit, so both were excluded from the survey. Although the patterns of distribution were not consistent due to administration and research team constraints, it should be noted that both response rates for the survey are quite high and provided valuable data for this exploratory study. Table Seven summarizes the survey data collected at the apartment settings.

**TABLE SEVEN - SURVEY DATA QUANTIFIED**

	<i>Community One Apartments</i>	<i>Community Two Apartments</i>
Number of Units	141	48
Number of Surveys Issued	80	42
Number of Surveys Returned	37	25
Percent Returned	46.25%	59.52%

The survey is included in the appendix portion of this report. The survey questions were oriented to the following topics:

- How significant are these displays for the residents?
- Do these displays contribute to socialization?
- Do these displays contribute to a positive image of the facility?
- What do these displays communicate to others?

Survey data was entered into a computer database and coded. Open ended question responses were grouped into themes and counted. Statistics from the survey data were generated using the statistical analysis program SPSS.

#### Participant Observation

Spending time in the four different settings helped to establish rapport, build trust and provided numerous opportunities for cross-checking data. While visiting both communities, informal interviews were also conducted with residents and staff about the use of the unit's edge. These encounters often clarified issues or provided more information to be followed up on during the indepth interviews.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS

This exploratory study used multiple methods to answer the research questions. The following table shows the relationship between the methods and the primary research questions.

**TABLE EIGHT**  
**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS**

<i>Research Questions</i>	<i>Photographic Data</i>	<i>Resident Interviews</i>	<i>Participant Observation</i>	<i>Survey</i>
How are unit edges being used?	Items used	Resident attitudes Relationship between items and life history	Resident attitudes Staff attitudes	Resident attitudes
What influences the use of these edges?	Architectural impact	Resident attitudes	Administrative attitudes	Resident attitudes and patterns
What messages are the use of these edges conveying?	Use patterns	Resident attitudes and patterns	Resident attitudes	Resident attitudes
Does the use of these edges affect residents' perceptions of the setting?		Resident attitudes	Resident and Staff Observations	Residents attitudes
Does the use of these edges influence socialization?	Similarities and differences	Resident attitudes	Resident and Staff Observations	Resident attitudes and patterns

A N A L Y S E S

A N D

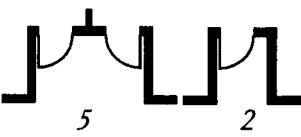


F I N D I N G S

## ANALYSES

### PHOTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS



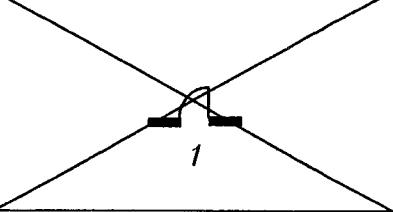
Photographic data were analyzed to make inter and intra community comparisons in settings with different levels of care and architectural features. For the purposes of having a reasonable cell size per architectural category, some of the doorways were combined into a single larger architectural category or removed. In the assisted living care settings for example, double and single alcoves were combined since there were so few single alcoves (e.g., four total). The key architectural characteristics studied at the assisted living settings are an increasing depth of floor space provided in the alcove and the presence or non-presence of a built-in shelf (see Table Nine as a reference).

**TABLE NINE - ASSISTED LIVING ARCHITECTURAL DOORWAY TYPES**

		
Community One Category Combined <i>7 Doorways</i>  <b>Deep Alcove without Shelf</b>	Community Two Category Combined <i>12 Doorways</i>  <b>Deep Alcove with Shelf</b>	Community One Category Used <i>8 Doorways</i>  <b>Hallway</b>

Apartment alcoves were also combined to have reasonable cell sizes for comparisons (see Table Ten for reference). The hallway style alcoves in Community Two's apartment setting were removed, since there were only four units with this style of doorway and only one was photographed. In Community One, the two styles of doorway alcoves were combined into a single category of a deep alcove without a shelf. Thus, the primary architectural differences studied in the apartments were the amount of floor space provided in the alcove and the provision or non provision of a shelf.

**TABLE TEN - APARTMENT ARCHITECTURAL DOORWAY TYPES**

		
Community One Category Combined <i>44 Doorways</i>  <b>Deep Alcove without a Shelf</b>	Community Two Category Used <i>31 Doorways</i>  <b>Shallow Alcove with Shelf</b>	Community Two Category Removed  <b>Hallway</b>

**TABLE ELEVEN - TOTAL NUMBER OF OBJECTS PER DOORWAY BY CARE LEVEL**

	<i>Assisted Living</i> N = 27		<i>Apartments</i> N = 75	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Number of Objects	5.59	(1-18)	8.84	(0-53)

**TABLE TWELVE - TOTAL NUMBER OF OBJECTS PER DOORWAY BY COMMUNITY AND CARE LEVEL**

Community One	<i>Assisted Living</i> N = 12		<i>Apartments</i> N = 44	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
	3.27	(0-8)	10.26	(0-53)
Community Two	N = 15		N = 31	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
	8.25	(2-18)	6.94	(1-35)

**TABLE THIRTEEN - NUMBER OF OBJECTS PER DOORWAY BY CARE LEVEL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

	<i>Assisted Living</i>						<i>Apartments</i>			
	Hallway		Deep Alcove Without a Shelf		Deep Alcove With a Shelf		Deep Alcove Without a Shelf		Shallow Alcove With a Shelf	
	<i>Community 1</i> N = 8		<i>Community 1</i> N = 7		<i>Community 2</i> N = 12		<i>Community 1</i> N = 44		<i>Community 2</i> N = 31	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Placed on walls	2.00	(0-7)	.86	(0-2)	1.75	(1-3)	2.35	(0-19)	.83	(0-6)
Placed on the floor	.25	(0-1)	1.29	(0-2)	2.67	(0-10)	1.58	(0-5)	1.27	(0-5)
Placed on provided shelf	0	(0-0)	0	(0-0)	2.33	(0-6)	0	(0-0)	5.38	(0-30)
Placed on furniture (e.g., tables)	.13	(0-1)	1.29	(0-3)	1.50	(0-4)	5.56	(0-49)	4.41	(0-24)
Placed on door	.50	(0-1)	.86	(0-1)	.50	(0-1)	.42	(0-2)	1.26	(0-6)
Total displayed	2.75	(1-8)	4.29	(1-7)	8.25	(2-18)	10.26	(0-53)	6.94	(1-35)

### Findings for Tables Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen

After reviewing Table Eleven, it might be assumed that apartment residents generally personalize more than assisted living residents. However, Table Thirteen illustrates the mean number of objects found in the doorways relates to the amount of space available in each setting for personalization. Community One's assisted living setting is a mix of hallway style alcoves and deep alcoves without shelves, but the majority of the units are hallway style. This assisted living setting has the least amount of personalization occurring in the entranceways. The mean number of items is fewer than Community One's assisted living setting because hallway styles limited the number of items residents can easily display. Furthermore, Community Two's assisted living setting has a 30 inch deep alcove to personalize as well as a built-in triangular shelf. The highest mean number of objects found in both assisted living settings was found at this setting (8.25).

Table Thirteen also demonstrates that the more conducive the space, the more likely it will be personalized. The mean number of items displayed increases by 1.54 items when a larger alcove is provided in the same assisted living setting. Table Thirteen also demonstrates the differences between having a shelf versus not having a shelf in assisted living. When a shelf is provided, the mean number of items displayed increases by 3.96. The apartment settings also follow this spatial trend. The apartment setting in Community One has the largest available space for residents to personalize in the study and it also has the highest mean number of objects found on display (10.26). Community Two's apartment setting with shallow alcoves and built-in shelves, has 3.32 fewer items on display compared to Community One's apartment setting (6.94).

Table Thirteen also demonstrates that architectural features influence where objects are placed within each doorway style. Hallway alcoves are more likely to have items placed on the walls (2.00) and the door (0.50). However, a few residents who live at the ends of the hall placed tables outside their doorways. Assisted living doorways with a deep alcove without shelf were most likely to have items placed on the floor (1.29) or on top of a piece of furniture (1.29). Wall placement was not as prominent in these alcoves. The assisted living setting with a deep alcove and a shelf had the most items on the floor (2.67) followed closely by items on the shelf (2.33). Architectural features also influenced the two apartment settings. Apartment units with deep alcoves without a shelf had the most items placed on the furniture (5.56). Resident provided furniture often had much more surface area than a small built-in shelf, thus more items could be placed on the furniture. Deeper alcoves also had more wall space that residents could personalize within a defined boundary. Accordingly, more items were placed on the walls (2.35). Shallow alcoves with a shelf had the most items on the shelf itself (5.38) followed by items placed on furniture (4.41).

**TABLE FOURTEEN - PERCENTAGE OF TYPE OF OBJECTS PER DOORWAY  
BY CARE LEVEL (RANGE OF TYPE OF OBJECTS PER SINGLE DOORWAY)**

	<i>Assisted Living</i> N = 27	<i>Apartments</i> N = 75
Framed Artwork	73% (0-7)	59% (0-7)
Table	54% (0-2)	37% (0-2)
Live Plants	46% (0-4)	11% (0-7)
Seasonal Decorations	38% (0-6)	44% (0-18)
Sculpture/Figurines	31% (0-12)	59% (0-28)
Craft Projects	31% (0-3)	29% (0-30)
Signs	23% (0-2)	17% (0-2)
Chair	15% (0-2)	8% (0-1)
Books and Papers	12% (0-2)	9% (0-47)
Artificial Plants	12% (0-1)	17% (0-3)
Practical Items (e.g., umbrella stand)	8% (0-2)	24% (0-4)
Shelving, Casework, Stand	8% (0-1)	24% (0-2)
Certificates/Diplomas/Awards	8% (0-1)	0% (0-0)
Mirrors	4% (0-1)	9% (0-1)
Family/Friends Photos	4% (0-5)	4% (0-10)
Rugs	4% (0-1)	39% (0-2)

#### Table Fourteen Findings

Based upon the photographs from both communities, some objects appeared more frequently in the assisted living settings compared to the apartment settings. Tables were more common in the assisted living settings (54%) compared to apartment settings (37%). Tables are an addition to the doorway areas as an additional place to display items or to create a place to display items. One of the more interesting findings was live plants were found much more frequently in the assisted living settings (46%) compared to the apartment setting (11%). Plants may be frequent gifts for these residents, or it is possible that plants are encouraged in this setting. Visitors or residents may also consider plants a normal item one would place on a shelf. Framed artwork was also more regularly found in the assisted living setting (73%) versus in the apartments (59%). This trend may be motivated by the desire to keep the floor area clear for walkers and scooters in assisted living. Certificates/diplomas/awards were only displayed in the assisted living setting (8%). Visitors or staff wishing to announce the accomplishments of the residents may motivate this trend. One possibility is that it is considered more culturally acceptable to display such items outside of a resident's doorway in an assisted living setting (e.g., place viewed as a care setting) as opposed to an apartment (e.g., viewed as a home-like residence). More information would be required to validate or invalidate this hypothesis.

Apartment alcoves also had certain categories of items more frequently on display compared to the assisted living settings. The presence of shelving, casework, or multitiered stands is more noticeable in the apartment settings (24%) compared to assisted living settings (8%). A larger variety of furniture types appeared in the apartment settings with deeper alcoves. Practical household items were also more common in the apartment setting (24%) compared to assisted living (8%). Items such as coat racks, umbrella stands, grocery carts are more frequently a part of apartment residents' lifestyles as compared to assisted living residents. Figurines, sculpture, and pottery type items were more prominent in both apartment settings (59%) compared to assisted living (31%). These three-dimensional items take up space, which may be more necessary in assisted living for the parking and use of mobility

devices. Residents in the apartments frequently treated the entry alcove as foyer and would place familiar items in the alcove such as a rug to wipe their feet (39%) or a mirror (9%). Rugs may be viewed as more of a tripping hazard for assisted living residents, and only 4% of the doorways contained one.

**TABLE FIFTEEN - PERCENTAGE OF OBJECTS PER DOORWAY BY CARE LEVEL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

<i>Object Category</i>	<i>Assisted Living</i>			<i>Apartments</i>	
	Hallway	Deep Alcove Without a Shelf	Deep Alcove With a Shelf	Deep Alcove Without a Shelf	Shallow Alcove With a Shelf
	N = 8	N = 7	N = 12	N = 44	N = 31
	<i>Community 1</i>	<i>Community 1</i>	<i>Community 2</i>	<i>Community 1</i>	<i>Community 2</i>
Framed Artwork	75%	50%	83%	84%	23%
Table	25%	83%	50%	58%	0%
Live Plants	13%	17%	92%	9%	13%
Seasonal Decorations	50%	83%	8%	63%	19%
Sculpture/Figurines	13%	17%	50%	49%	71%
Craft Projects	13%	17%	50%	16%	48%
Signs	13%	17%	33%	9%	29%
Chair	0%	17%	25%	9%	6%
Books and Papers	0%	0%	25%	12%	6%
Artificial Plants	13%	34%	0%	12%	26%
Practical Items, e.g., Umbrella Stand	0%	33%	0%	16%	35%
Shelving, Casework, Stand	0%	0%	17%	35%	6%
Certificates/Diplomas/Awards	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%
Mirrors	13%	0%	0%	16%	0%
Family/Friends Photos	0%	0%	5%	5%	3%
Rugs	0%	17%	0%	30%	52%

#### Findings from Table Fifteen

Table Fifteen indicates the percentage of doorways photographed which contain each object category listed. In Assisted Living, tables are very commonly found in the deeper alcoves without a shelf in Community One (83%). More seasonal décor was found in the units with a deeper alcove and the shelf; however, this trend may be primarily due to the time of year Community One was visited in early December (83%). Ninety-two percent of the doorways photographed in Community Two's assisted living setting had live plants. Thus, this trend may be related to the community's philosophy, but the shelves may also contribute to their prominence.

In the apartment settings, 84% of deep alcove settings in Community One have framed artwork. These larger alcoves may strongly encourage more residents to use this area as a place to personalize. In the shallow alcove with shelves in Community Two's apartment setting, 71% of the units have sculptures or figurines. Thus, shelves encouraged more three-dimensional art. Seasonal décor also ranked higher in Community One's apartments (63%), but this high percentage is primarily due to the time of the year of the visit (early December) versus Community Two, which was visited in February (19%).



**TABLE SIXTEEN – MEAN NUMBER (RANGE) OF OBJECT CATEGORY TYPES DISPLAYED PER UNIT TYPE AND ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OF DOORWAY**

<i>Unit Type (Both Communities)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (Range)</i>
Assisted Living	12	12.08 (6 – 19)
Independent Apartments	75	7.79 (0 – 13)

<i>Architectural Style (Both Communities)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (Range)</i>
Deep Alcove with a Shelf	12	12.08 (6 – 19)
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	8.38 (0 – 13)
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	6.77 (3 – 11)
Hallway Alcove	8	4.89 (0 – 11)

<i>Breakdown by Community / Unit Types and Architectural Style</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (Range)</i>
<i>Community One – Assisted Living</i>		
Hallway Alcove	8	4.63 (3 – 7)
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	7	7.43 (4 – 9)
<i>Community Two – Assisted Living</i>		
Deep Alcove with a Shelf	12	12.08 (6 – 19)
<i>Community One - Apartments</i>		
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	44	8.53 (0 – 13)
<i>Community Two - Apartments</i>		
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	6.77 (3 – 11)

#### Findings from Table Sixteen

Objects identified in the photographs were sorted into object category types. (See Table Fifteen for categorization). Table Sixteen quantifies the degree of doorway variety by presenting the mean number of object categories per architectural style of doorway in each community. For the purposes of this comparison, a higher mean is reflective of more object category variety in the displays while a lower mean reflects less variety. For example, a display with only live plants would have only one object category represented. Comparing the doorways from both communities by the two care setting types, reveals the difference between the mean number of categories is not considerable. Independent living settings had only .09 more categories represented compared to assisted living. Therefore, care setting type does not appear to greatly impact the amount of variety in the displays. However, architectural doorway style does appear to contribute to variety. Comparing both communities' assisted living settings which had deep alcoves, the presence of a shelf did increase the mean number of object categories represented. Deep alcoves with a shelf had 4.65 more object categories than deep alcoves without a shelf. Providing a larger amount of floor space in the doorway alcoves also resulted in more object categories being represented. The architectural style with the most object category variety was found in doorways with a deep alcove and a shelf (12.08). This architectural style was only found at the assisted living setting in Community Two. At Community One's assisted living setting that has two architectural styles represented, the variety increased when additional floor area was provided. The difference between the mean number of object categories for the hallway style alcoves and the deep alcoves without a shelf was 2.8. This same trend also occurred in the apartment settings. The apartment setting at Community One, which had deeper alcoves without shelves had more variety (8.53) compared to the apartment setting at Community Two with shallow alcoves with a shelf (6.77).

**TABLE SEVENTEEN - SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OBJECTS AND THEIR PLACEMENTS FOR ALL ALCOVES**

<i>Items Displayed or Location</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Significance</i>
<b>Tables</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	.5385	.000 ***
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	.6531	
Hallway	8	.3333	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.0645	
<b>Live Plants</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	1.4615	.000 ***
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	.1020	
Hallway	8	.0000	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.3226	
<b>Chairs</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	.3846	.015 **
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	.0816	
Hallway	8	.0000	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.0645	
<b>Certificates/Diplomas/Awards</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	.1538	.002 **
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	.0000	
Hallway	8	.0000	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.0000	
<b>Artwork</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	1.3846	.003 **
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	1.3469	
Hallway	8	1.7778	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.4194	
<b>Rugs</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	.07692	.003 **
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	.2857	
Hallway	8	.0000	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.5484	
<b># of Items on the Floor</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	2.5385	.000 ***
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	1.5306	
Hallway	8	.3333	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.8387	
<b># of Items on the Provided Shelf</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	2.3846	.000 ***
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	.0000	
Hallway	8	.0000	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	3.4516	
<b># of Items on Walls</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	.07692	.024 *
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	51	.2857	
Hallway	8	.0000	
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.5484	

\* p < .05

\*\* p < .01

\*\*\* p < .0001

Findings from Tables Seventeen, Eighteen, and Nineteen.

Architectural features also significantly impacted the way alcoves were used in both the assisted living settings and the apartment settings. A t-test was performed to determine the significance of differences among the mean number of objects per setting and architectural type. Tables Seventeen through Nineteen review the mean number of objects for each alcove style in the two different care

**TABLE EIGHTEEN - SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OBJECTS AND THEIR PLACEMENTS FOR ASSISTED LIVING ALCOVES**

<i>Items Displayed or Location</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Significance</i>
<b>Live Plants</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	1.5833	.000 ***
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	7	.0000	
Hallway	8	.1250	
<b>Practical Items</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	.0000	.044 *
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	7	.5714	
Hallway	8	.0000	
<b>Arts and Crafts Items</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	.9167	.050 *
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	7	.1429	
Hallway	8	.1250	
<b># of Items on the Shelf</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	2.3333	.000 ***
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	7	.0000	
Hallway	8	.0000	
<b># of Items on the Floor</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	2.6667	.030 *
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	7	1.1429	
Hallway	8	.2500	
<b># of Items on the Furniture</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	1.5000	.050 *
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	7	1.2857	
Hallway	8	.1250	
<b>Total Number of Items in Display</b>			
Deep Alcove with Shelf	12	8.2500	.010 **
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	7	4.2900	
Hallway	8	2.7500	

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

settings for significant differences. For the purposes of this study, a significance level of  $p < .05$  or lower was utilized. Table Seventeen provides an overview of the objects displayed and the associated placement of items for all alcoves studied. Tables Eighteen and Nineteen report significance for each level of care and associated architectural features. The next section summarizes these findings for each care level in more detail.

#### Assisted Living

As indicated in Table Eighteen, there are significant relationships between the mean number of objects and their associated placement in assisted living settings with different doorway configurations. Live plants are typically found in the alcoves with a provided shelf. As discussed before, this trend may be more community based than architectural. However, a shelf would provide a natural place to put a plant. Practical items only appeared in the deeper alcoves without a shelf (.5714,  $p = .044$ ). Their presence may be motivated by more space and the need for additional storage since a shelf is not provided. Similarly, arts and crafts items were also more prominent in the alcove with a shelf, since it provided a normal place to display items (.9167,  $p = .050$ ). Since the shelf appears to be a primary motivator to personalize, it is not surprising that most items are placed on the shelf (2.333,  $p = .000$ ). The deep alcove with a shelf has the most potential for variety and options. The total

**TABLE NINETEEN – SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OBJECTS AND THEIR PLACEMENTS FOR APARTMENT ALCOVES**

<i>Items Displayed or Location</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Significance</i>
<b>Tables</b>			
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	44	.6190	.000 ***
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.06452	
<b>Seasonal Decorations</b>			
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	44	1.3333	.000 ***
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.3226	
<b>Artwork</b>			
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	44	.6190	.002 *
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.06452	
<b># of Items on Wall</b>			
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	44	1.9524	.000 ***
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	.8387	
<b># of Items on Shelf</b>			
Deep Alcove without a Shelf	44	.0000	.001 ***
Shallow Alcove with a Shelf	31	3.4516	

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

number of objects was higher compared to the other two architectural configurations (8.2500,  $p = .010$ ).

#### Apartment Setting

Apartment settings had fewer but more highly significant relationships among the mean number of objects and their associated placements as indicated in Table Nineteen. The larger alcoves without a shelf had more tables (.6190,  $p = .000$ ), and artwork (.6190,  $p = .002$ ) because of the increased floor area and more wall space for hanging items.. Seasonal decorations may represent skewed results because one site visit was closer to a major holiday (early December) than the other site visit (February). The apartment setting with the deeper alcove was more likely to have items posted on the wall since no shelf was provided. The larger amount of wall space in the deeper alcoves provided additional opportunity for wall usage (1.9524,  $p = .000$ ). Items on the shelf are inherently going to be more prominent in an alcove with a provided shelf (3.4516,  $p = .001$ ).

#### KEY PHOTOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Based upon the photographic data, the following findings were derived:

- Whenever space is provided for personalization, residents will use the space. Additionally, personalization will occur on all surfaces available whenever more space is provided.
- A larger spatial area does increase the amount of personalization and the variety of personalization in both the assisted living settings and the apartments settings. Moreover, when no space is

provided there still is an inherent need in some residents to create some type of individualization. For example, some of the doorways in the assisted living setting at Community One that had hallway alcoves were still personalized.

- Deeper alcoves in the apartments are often treated like the foyers found in homes or apartments. Therefore, familiar front hall objects are often placed in these areas such as narrow tables, mirrors, coat trees and umbrella stands. Assisted living displays more frequently reflect decorative trends rather than practical items found in a foyer.
- The provision of a shelf does appear to increase the amount of personalization in assisted living settings. It can be assumed that this shelf allows any resident to easily create a display with very little assistance. Whenever space is available and a shelf is not provided, residents will often provide their own horizontal surface in both apartments and assisted living.
- Keeping the floor area clear appears to be a motivator in reducing the amount of larger three-dimensional items in assisted living. For example there were fewer large pieces of furniture.
- The number and variety of object categories in displays increased when more space was provided in the doorway alcoves. The most object variety was found in doorways with deep alcoves and a shelf. In assisted living settings (comparing doorways which were approximately the same size), the number of object categories and display variety increased when a built-in shelf was provided.

## APARTMENT SURVEY

The apartment survey had a combination of closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were analyzed for response frequency, percent, and the mean when applicable. The number of responses is based upon the total number of people who answered each question. When respondents failed to answer a survey question, it was not possible to interpret the meaning and therefore these missing data are excluded from the analysis. Open-ended question responses were coded into key themes, which emerged from the content. Therefore, all open ended question can be identified by the heading "Content Themes." These open-ended question responses were reviewed several times to be certain that themes reflected the respondents' viewpoints. Then the frequency of how often a theme appeared in responses was counted and percentages were calculated. Since a respondent's answer could cover multiple themes, the number of responses is based upon the total number of thematic responses given to the question. All percentages were rounded to the closest whole number. As a result, percentages may reflect slight variances due to the rounding process. The next section summarizes the descriptive findings from the survey.

### QUESTION ONE

#### 1a) Did you personalize your doorway area?

	<i>Community One</i> N = 36		<i>Community Two</i> N = 25	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	35	97%	22	88%
No	1	3%	3	12%

#### 1b) Please explain why you did or did not personalize your doorway?

<i>Content Themes</i>	<i>Community One</i> N = 43		<i>Community Two</i> N = 33	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Share my interest	9	21%	6	18%
Storage of an item	6	14%	0	0%
To make it look like home	5	12%	3	9%
Make the building attractive	5	12%	5	15%
Say welcome to my visitors	4	9%	6	18%
Wayfinding	3	7%	1	3%
Create a package shelf	3	7%	0	0%
Area was drab/barren/colorless	3	7%	3	9%
To express my individuality	2	5%	3	9%
Peer pressure	1	2%	4	13%
Too new to do anything	1	2%	0	0%
Saw no reason to do much	1	2%	0	0%
No shelf to display on	0	0%	2	6%

#### Question One Discussion

Ninety-seven percent of the respondents personalized their doorways in Community One, and eighty-eight percent personalized their doorways in Community Two. Community Two has a higher "No" percentage (12%) compared to Community One (3%), but it also has four apartment units without a dedicated spatial area to personalize. This finding is also supported by the two open-ended responses to the next question that indicated they did not personalize the area because there was no space available.

“Why did you personalize your doorway?” had a wide range of responses. Community One’s most frequent thematic response was “to share my interests” (21%). Community Two’s two highest frequency responses were “to share my interests” (18%) and “to say welcome to my visitors” (18%). These responses indicate that residents are clearly aware that placing items in the doorway is sending messages to others. Other differences between the two communities are also illuminating. Fourteen percent of Community One respondents indicated they were motivated to personalize the area because of a need for storage compared to 0% in Community Two. This might be expected, since the apartment units at Community One have a deep alcove that allows for furniture to be placed in the space. Community Two respondents mentioned peer pressure (13%) more frequently than Community One (2%) as a motivator for personalizing their doorways. The more practical and utilitarian uses of having a place to put things down and having extra storage did not appear to be a motivator in Community Two. This trend is likely related to these residents not needing to create their own horizontal surfaces because it is already supplied, and the shallow alcove does not offer the opportunity for much storage. Accordingly, residents may view these alcove shelves primarily as a place to personalize rather than as a utilitarian area.

#### Community One – Question One

##### Selected Quotes on Why did You Personalize Your Doorway Area?

- “Easy to identify by others.”
- “Because it is mine.”
- “Because it is an extension of my apartment.”
- “Appreciated the extra wall space.”
- “To help make the entire hallway and building more attractive.”
- “The space looked so bare that I decided to I had to do something with it.”
- “I felt that the area would be drab without some color.”
- “I think it is one way to say welcome and I also think it makes it look like home.”
- “It is part of my home and makes a first impression of me.”
- “I wanted something distinctive.”
- “I was glad I had a spot to display church plates and artifacts from churches my husband had served.”
- “The bookcase was utilitarian to take care of some of my books.”
- “I have the smallest living unit available...and needed extra storage space badly.”
- “A table for a temporary resting place is necessary. I keep the top bare so I can plop stuff while looking for keys, etc.”
- “Small table is handy for daily newspaper, packages, etc. so I do not have to stoop to pick-up.”
- “To feel at home!!”
- “I noticed interesting displays when I arrived. I had numerous small items which I could display.”
- “To add variety for others and myself.”
- “Except for one picture I saw no reason to do more.”
- “Blank doorways are a pain.”

#### Community Two – Question One

##### Selected Quotes on Why did You Personalize Your Doorway Area?

- “I feel it is an extension of my home and I want people to feel welcome.”
- “I like to come home to a cheerful entrance - I like to think of new ideas.”
- “To add some interest to the cold line up of closed doors and names only.”
- “Most residents do but I wanted to share some artifacts given to me by my ...”

- “To share my treasures with others.”
- “Allows you to observe holidays. Creates conversation.”
- “My studio apartment has no doorway shelf....I wish I had such a space.”
- “I enjoy other people’s doorways so I wanted to reciprocate.”
- “I have always had door decorations and the shelf give me an opportunity to share favorite items.”
- “Because I wanted to contribute to the attractiveness of the hall.”
- “I saw others doing it and I followed suit.”
- “It individualizes my apartment making it easier to find.”

## QUESTION TWO

2) Who helped you select the items to display outside your door? (Check all that apply)

	<i>Community One</i> N = 37		<i>Community Two</i> N = 22	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Myself	31	84%	20	91%
Relative	5	13%	2	9%
Decorator	1	3%	0	0%
Friends	0	0%	0	0%
Staff	0	0%	0	0%

### Question Two Discussion

Overwhelmingly, residents are primarily responsible for selecting the items, which are placed outside the apartments in both communities. In Community One, 13% of the respondents mentioned being assisted by a relative and in Community Two, 9% were assisted by a relative. Only one resident mentioned a decorator assisted with her choices. Since residents could easily place items on the shelf provided in Community Two, it might be expected that less assistance would be necessary. Interestingly, friends were never mentioned as assisting residents with these choices. In Community One, staff was listed as an option, on the survey, but it was removed in Community Two at the request of administration. Administration felt their residents were very independent and would be offended by the response option. However, it should be noted that no residents wrote in the open-ended response category that staff provided this type of assistance in Community Two. Staff was also never checked in Community One. These responses indicate that residents are mainly independently responsible for what items are placed on display in the apartment settings.



### QUESTION THREE

#### 3) Why did you select the items you decided to display?

<i>Content Themes</i>	<i>Community One</i> N= 51		<i>Community Two</i> N= 25	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Storage of an item / It fit	12	23%	2	8%
Reflected my taste	9	17%	5	20%
Honor / respect for someone	7	14%	2	8%
I had them / I liked them	7	14%	4	16%
Wanted to share them	7	14%	6	24%
Utility / or Aided utility	6	12%	2	8%
Wanted something natural	2	4%	0	0%
Attractive to others	1	2%	4	16%

#### Question Three Discussion

Community One's most frequent thematic response relates to the "storage of an item" or "the item fit in the space (23%)." In contrast, Community Two's most frequent response is "the desire to share the items with others (24%)." The frequency of these two themes relate to the architectural features in each community. Community One's deeper alcoves offered residents the opportunity to use the alcoves for additional storage while Community Two's shallow alcoves with shelves provided a better opportunity for residents to create personalized displays. Thus, selecting an item for an utilitarian purpose (e.g., creating a shelf) is also more frequent (12%) in Community One. Respect or honoring someone was a more frequent response for selecting an item on display in Community One (14%). Items frequently had significance for the respondents because they were given to them by someone they loved or respected. Heirloom pieces of furniture appeared more commonly in the larger alcoves since the larger objects could not be easily removed and the residents wished to keep the pieces. Comparably, Community Two's smaller alcoves resulted in the use of smaller items, which residents may feel less comfortable putting outside the door if it has monetary or sentimental value. These items could also be easily removed.

#### Community One – Question Three

##### Selected Quotes on Why did You Select the Items You Displayed?

- "These items are a hodgepodge of memories."
- "They seemed interesting and fitting."
- "They reflect my personal taste."
- "Handy or appealing."
- "I wanted to display items given to me by family and friends."
- "Simple it fit the space."
- "I owned it. Because I have a variety of color photos of Switzerland – A photogenic country."
- "Because they represent me."
- "I had no room for some of the items within my apartment – I was glad to have a nook for them."
- "Didn't have room in the apartment for this piece of furniture."
- "I like the feel of fresh greenery."

## Community Two – Question Three

### Selected Quotes on Why did You Select the Items You Displayed?

- “They are all objects I have had for many years and it is fun to share.”
- “I try to put out items others might find interesting.”
- “Conversation pieces, gifts, travel purchases, the season, humor, some to please grandchildren.”
- “Often I display items I picked up on recent trips – unusual items bring the outside world closer.”
- “Items should be pretty, dramatic or welcoming.”
- “They were seasonal.”
- “The items must fit the shelf.”

## QUESTION FOUR

### 4a) Have the items you chose to display been on display at your previous home?

	<i>Community One</i> N = 31		<i>Community Two</i> N = 19	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	25	81%	9	47%
No	6	19%	10	53%

### 4b) What items on display were in your previous home?

<i>Content Themes</i>	<i>Community One</i> N = 23		<i>Community Two</i> N = 9	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Artwork	9	39%	2	22%
Decorative Knickknacks	7	31%	4	45%
Furniture	6	26%	0	0%
Practical (Door Knocker)	1	4%	0	0%
Symbols of past (Flag, Cardinal)	0	0%	2	22%
Holiday Décor	0	0%	1	11%

### 4c) Where did you display the item in your previous home?

<i>Content Themes</i>	<i>Community One</i> N = 15		<i>Community Two</i> N = 8	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Vestibule / Front Entry	9	61%	6	75%
Over Fireplace	2	13%	0	0%
Living Room/Dining Room	2	13%	2	25%
Bedroom	2	13%	0	0%

## Question Four Discussion

This question examines if the objects are part of a resident's past home, or whether they are part of a resident's life in the retirement community. Eighty-one percent of the respondents in Community One indicated that the items used were a part of their past homes. In contrast, only 47% of Community Two's residents indicated that the items were used in their past homes. The larger alcoves in Community One are more likely to contain items, which have been a part of residents' lives which they wish to

keep with them (e.g., heirloom furniture). The smaller display areas in Community Two appear to have objects that are decorative and reflect more current trends in the residents' lives.

In both communities, the types of display items that are most frequently used from the residents' previous homes are primarily decorative objects such as artwork and knickknacks. The larger alcoves found in Community One generated more furniture responses (26%). A few items were not very easily categorized, but need to be included because they reflect continuity of lifestyle. One respondent mentioned a lifetime of flying the American flag at her home and that she was happy to fly a miniature version of the flag in her new home. Another respondent mentioned a lifetime of feeding cardinals and decided to place a red cardinal bird on her display shelf.

Of those residents who indicated the items were used in their previous homes, there appears to be a very consistent trend for past placement of the items. The majority of the objects used in both communities have been a part of the resident's past entry sequence. Most frequently, these items were used in the entrance halls, vestibules, and front porches of past residences. Accordingly, the doorway alcoves offered residents an opportunity to continue past patterns. Another common response was the displayed objects were also used in the living rooms of past residences. Living rooms and dining rooms in American culture are often seen as the place where the most important items are placed (Wright, 1981). Thus, the importance of the objects on display is hinted at from the number of responses that indicate objects were displayed in the living room. Objects placed over the fireplace usually have symbolic presence as well in American culture. Indeed, this area was specifically mentioned by two respondents in Community One as a place where they had previously displayed objects.

## QUESTION FIVE

### 5) How often do you change your doorway display?

	<i>Community One</i> N = 35		<i>Community Two</i> N = 21	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Never	13	37%	3	14%
About once a year	2	6%	3	14%
Seasonally	12	34%	12	57%
Every two to four weeks	1	3%	2	10%
When inspiration strikes	7	20%	1	5%

### Question Five Discussion

Community One had a wider range of responses to this question. The most frequent response from Community One is never changing the display (37%). However seasonally is mentioned by only one fewer resident (34%). Furthermore, 20% of the respondents indicated they change their displays whenever inspiration strikes. Community Two had a clear most common response with 57% of the respondents seasonally changing the displays. The second highest responses indicated displays were never changed (14%) or only changed once a year (14%). Community One has a much higher response rate for never changing the displays (37%) as compared to Community Two (14%). As mentioned previously, this trend may relate to the role of using the doorway for storage or utility in Community One and not primarily as a display area as in Community Two.

Combining the answers into two new categories of “frequently changing the displays” and “rarely changing the displays” provides a clearer picture for comparison. The categories never and about once a year can be combined to create a new category of “rarely changing the displays” and the remainder of the categories can be combined to create a new category of “frequently changing the displays”. Table Five A indicates the results of this categorization.

Question Table Five A – Categorization of Frequency of Changing Displays

	<i>Community One</i> N = 35		<i>Community Two</i> N = 21	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Frequently Changing the Displays	20	57%	15	71%
Rarely Changing the Displays	15	43%	6	29%

Question Table Five A demonstrates that Community One is much more evenly divided regarding the frequency of display changes. There is a clearer separation in Community Two with 71% of the respondents indicating changing their displays seasonally or more frequently. Therefore, it can be inferred that Community Two residents may view the shelf provided primarily as a vehicle for display which should be changed regularly.

## QUESTION SIX

6a) Have you ever learned something new about another resident from his or her doorway display?

	<i>Community One</i> N = 33		<i>Community Two</i> N = 23	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	25	76%	19	83%
No	8	24%	4	17%

6b) If yes, please explain what you learned?

<i>Content Themes</i>	<i>Community One</i> N = 36		<i>Community Two</i> N = 24	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
A person's hobby / interests	13	36%	13	54%
A person's tastes	8	22%	3	13%
A person's travels	6	17%	3	13%
A person has a pet	5	14%	0	0%
Nationality / culture / background	2	5%	2	7%
Women decorate more than men	1	3%	0	0%
Creativity / energy / awareness	1	3%	3	13%

## Question Six Discussion

Seventy-six percent of the respondents have learned something about other residents from their displays in Community One. In Community Two, 83% indicated they have learned something. Considering that many of the objects were chosen to reflect an aspect of self, it is important to realize that a form of interpersonal communication has occurred. Data shows that the doorways provide residents with a form of self-expression and other residents also receive these messages

of self. Furthermore, 36% of Community One's respondents indicated they had learned of another resident's hobbies and interests. The second most common response was learning of a resident's taste in décor (22%). Community Two had a much higher response rate with 54% of the respondents indicating they had learned about a resident's hobby or interests from the displays.

Some other points of interest from the data include the following observations. In both communities, it was mentioned that doorway displays communicated the places that a person has traveled. Clearly, displays with foreign or exotic objects are eye-catching representations of a person's travel to foreign destinations. Another interesting piece of information was communication about pet ownership. Indicators that a pet was in residence were more common in Community One (14%) since administration requested a pet alert be posted.

An intriguing theme emerged from the analysis, which related to how frequently the displays changed. Four responses from both communities indicated that a resident's creativity, energy or awareness would be judged based upon these dynamics and the contents of the display. Frequent changes were seen as reflecting a more positive outlook. This response was slightly more apparent in Community Two that had frequent display changes (13%). While this is an intriguing preliminary finding, more research would need to be conducted to better understand this issue and what the display change conveyed about the mood, energy and competency of individual residents.

#### Community One – Question Six

##### Selected Quotes on What Residents Have Learned from a Display?

- “She loves cats, another loves flowers.”
- “She is an accomplished watercolorist.”
- “Some of their talents.”
- “I learned a neighbor had taught in the Philippines.”
- “She has much better taste than her predecessor.”
- “Talents or interests in creating a home atmosphere.”
- “She likes the same hobbies as I do.”

#### Community Two – Question Six

##### Selected Quotes on What Residents Have Learned from a Display?

- “The resident's interests.”
- “Their taste, creativity, style, culture, uniqueness, awareness, and energy.”
- “Shows their interests in collecting.”
- “Shows nationality of resident or ancestry.”

## QUESTION SEVEN

7) On a scale of one to five, please rank how well you feel you know the other residents who live in the apartment building(s)?

	1 I do not know them	2 I only know them a little	3 I somewhat know them	4 I know them well	5 I know them extremely well
	<i>Community One</i> N = 35		<i>Community Two</i> N = 25		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
1 - I do not know them	1	3%	0	0%	
2 - I only know them a little	3	9%	2	8%	
3 - I somewhat know them	17	49%	12	48%	
4 - I know them well	11	31%	11	44%	
5 - I know them extremely well	3	8%	0	0%	
Range:	1-5		2-4		
Mean:	3.343		3.360		
Mode:	3		3		

### Question Seven Discussion

This question addresses how well residents who live in the apartment building(s) believe they know one another. The most common answer from Community One was "I somewhat know them (49%)". Community One had a wider range of answers, which might be expected since this community has over 100 apartments in three buildings. The most frequent answer from Community Two was "I somewhat know them" (48%). Community Two has a smaller range of answers, but more respondents (44%) felt they "know other residents well" compared to Community One (30%). Three residents from Community One (8%) indicated that they "know other residents extremely well" while no one gave this answer at Community Two. A single apartment building may in part account for why more residents at Community Two indicated that they know residents "somewhat well" or "well". It should be noted, that the answers to this question have some inherent complexities since residents may not wish to express not knowing one another. Thus, these answers may not be wholly accurate. For the purposes of this pilot study, the question helped to establish some benchmark relating to residents' perceptions of how well they know one another. Future research should pursue this issue further via interviewing to gain a more sophisticated understanding in the nuances of how residents are constructing their answers to this question.

## QUESTION EIGHT

8a) Please rate on a scale of one to five, how these doorway displays influence the decor of the hallways in the apartment building? (Circle one number only)

	1 Negative Impact	2 Some Negative Impact	3 No Impact	4 Some Positive Impact	5 Positive Impact
	<i>Community One</i> N = 33		<i>Community Two</i> N = 25		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1 – Very Negative Impact	0	0%	0	0%	
2 – Some Negative Impact	0	0%	1	4%	
3 – No Impact	5	15%	1	4%	
4 – Some Positive Impact	15	46%	2	8%	
5 – Very Positive Impact	13	39%	21	84%	
Range:	3-5		2-5		
Mean:	4.242		4.720		
Mode:	3.0		5.0		

8b) Please explain why you think the doorway displays impact the hallways either positively, negatively or have no impact?

	<i>Community One</i> N = 35		<i>Community Two</i> N = 23		
<i>Content Themes</i>	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
More interesting/beauty/warmth	14	40%	11	48%	
Show individuality	8	23%	4	18%	
Learn about person's personality	5	14%	3	13%	
Show person's taste	3	8%	1	4%	
Promotes friendships	2	6%	2	9%	
Too cluttered looking / ugly items	2	6%	1	4%	
Not enough space for a cart	1	3%	0	0%	
Do not see any impact	0	0%	1	4%	

### Question Eight Discussion

Forty-six percent of Community One's respondents felt the displays had "some positive impact", 39% indicated the displays had a "very positive impact" and 15% of the respondents felt that the displays have "no impact." In comparison, 84% of Community Two's residents believe the displays had a "very positive impact." Community Two had fewer no impact responses (4%) but it also had the only negative impact response (4%). Overall, these results indicate that the majority of residents in both communities perceived the displays had a positive impact on the décor.

Content themes from the open-ended questions reflected a variety of ideas but three primary themes emerged. The first common theme shared between both communities was respondents indicating their preference for hallways with displays in comparison to other apartment hallways they have previously seen which lacked these touches (C1 = 40% & C2 = 48%). Two additional common themes relating directly to the occupants of the units also emerged. The respondents indicated they appreciated

learning about the personality of the unit's occupant (C1 = 14% & C2 = 13%), and they liked the fact that the displays individualized the doorways (C1 = 23% & C2 = 18%). Four respondents pointed out that the displays helped to form friendships in some way. Negative responses from both communities were usually based upon a critique of what objects are placed outside and the number of items displayed outside creating clutter. One respondent commented on the architectural layout's limitation for parking a electric scooter in Community Two, which had shallow alcoves.

#### Community One – Question Eight

##### Selected Quotes on Why You Think the Displays Impact the Hallways?

- “The doorways give me insight into the occupant.”
- “It makes one realize there are individuals living in the apartments.”
- “They give the corridor a lived in look.”
- “Promote friendships.”
- “The variety is important. A stranger can tell we are a community and individuals.”
- “Some are fastidious, other chaotic.”
- “I hope the doorway display would have a positive effect on prospective residents.”
- “They make the apartment halls look less institutional.”
- “They tell me the resident is happy and creative.”
- “Often it is a conversation starter and helps to get to know new residents.”

#### Community Two – Question Eight

##### Selected Quotes on Why You Think the Displays Impact the Hallways?

- “Makes the place looked lived-in not sterile.”
- “They make the hallways more interesting to travel through.”
- “Most of us do not decorate except perhaps at holidays and like the hall uncluttered.”
- “Tastefully done it adds to the décor.”
- “Very definitely personalize and decorate.”
- “One looks at the entranceway shelf everyday.”
- “I regularly receive comments from people walking by about how they enjoy the changing displays and quotations.”



## QUESTION NINE

9) Please rank on a scale of one to five how satisfied you are with the design and interior decoration of the apartment building? (Circle one number only)

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unsatisfied	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied

	<i>Community One</i> N = 32		<i>Community Two</i> N = 25	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1 – Very Unsatisfied	0	0%	0	0%
2 – Somewhat Unsatisfied	0	0%	0	0%
3 – Neutral	9	28%	1	4%
4 – Somewhat Satisfied	10	31%	13	52%
5 – Very Satisfied	13	41%	11	44%
Range:	3-5		3-5	
Mean:	4.125		4.400	
Mode:	5.0		4.0	

### Question Nine Discussion

The most frequent response in Community One was “very satisfied (41%)” while Community Two had the most instances of “somewhat satisfied (52%).” Community One had more responses which fell in the neutral category (28%) compared to Community Two (4%). Overall, it appears that Community Two residents are more satisfied with the design and décor of their apartment building. Interestingly, it should be noted that Community Two’s buildings were older and had slightly more dated décor compared to Community One.

## QUESTION TEN

10) What is Your Gender?

	<i>Community One</i> N = 35		<i>Community Two</i> N = 25	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Female	32	91%	24	96%
Male	3	9%	1	4%

### Question Ten Discussion

Survey respondents in this study reflect a common trend in most retirement communities, which have a higher percentage of women. As a result, many more male responses would be needed to reflect this gender’s point of view regarding perceptions about the unit’s edge in future research.

## QUESTION ELEVEN

11) What is your age (In years)?

	<i>Community One</i> N = 36		<i>Community Two</i> N = 24	
Average Age of Residents in Community	82		75	
Average Respondents Age	84		82	
Mode of Respondents Age	85		80	
Range of Respondents Age	76 - 95		68 - 91	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
70's or Younger	7	19%	6	25%
80's	25	70%	14	58%
90's	4	11%	4	17%

### Question Eleven Discussion

Community One respondents were slightly older than the average age for this community (82.2 Years). The majority of the residents who responded are in their mid rather than early eighties. Community Two respondents who were mainly in their early eighties were also older than the average age of the community (75 Years). Comparatively, the average respondent age was only two years apart for both communities. It should be noted, that the majority of the respondents are older than the average age for all the residents who live in the community and therefore may have been in the community longer.

## QUESTION TWELVE

12) How long have you lived in the community? (In Years)

	<i>Community One</i> N = 36		<i>Community Two</i> N = 25	
Years Community has been in Operation	22		8	
Average Respondents Years in Residence	9.9 Years		5.6 Years	
Mode Years in Residence	11 Years		8 Years	
Range of Years in Residence	.5 - 21		.8 - 8	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than 1 Year	2	6%	3	12%
1 to <2 Years	4	11%	1	4%
2 to <5 Years	6	17%	5	20%
5 to <10 Years	7	19%	16	64%
10 to <15 Years	8	22%	0	0%
15 Years or Greater	9	25%	0	0%

### Question Twelve Discussion

At Community One, the majority of the respondents have lived in the community since the first decade that the community opened. At Community Two, the majority of the respondents have lived in the community since it opened or a few years afterwards. Thus, many of the respondents are fairly invested in these communities based on their long-term residence.

### QUESTION THIRTEEN

#### 13) How long have you lived in the Apartment Building in the community?

	<i>Community One</i> <i>N = 36</i>		<i>Community Two</i> <i>N = 25</i>	
Years Community has been in Operation	22		8	
Average Years Lived in Apartments	6.8 Years		4.8 Years	
Mode Time in Apartments	2 Years		8 Years	
Range of Years in Apartments	.3 to 21 Years		.1 to 8 Years	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Less than 1 Year	6	17%	2	8%
1 to <2 Years	7	19%	4	16%
2 to < 5 Years	8	22%	7	28%
5 to <10 Years	4	11%	12	48%
10 to <15 Years	5	14%	0	0%
15 Years or Greater	6	17%	0	0%
Moved directly into the apartments	25	69%	20	80%
Moved from cottages to apartments	11	31%	5	20%

#### Question Thirteen Discussion

The mean number of years respondents have lived in the Community One's apartments is 6.8 years compared to 4.8 years in Community Two. Community One residents primarily have lived in the apartment building between two to five years and 69% moved directly into the apartment setting. Community Two residents primarily have lived in the apartment building for five to eight years and 80% moved directly into the apartments. Because Community Two has not been open as long as Community One, it has experienced less turnover of residents as they move through the continuum of care. Most of Community Two respondents have been in the apartments since the Community opening.

## APARTMENT SURVEY ANALYTICAL FINDINGS

In addition to the descriptive statistics, non-parametric correlations and a comparison of means were conducted to determine relationships between the Likert scaled questions. The following questions were compared:

### Question Seven

- On a scale of one to five please, rank how well you feel you know the other residents who live in the apartment building. This variable is referred to as "Know Other Residents" in the following tables. The scale for this variable was:

1	2	3	4	5
I do not know them	I only know them a little	I somewhat know them	I know them well	I know them extremely well

### Question Eight

- Please rate on a scale of one to five, how these doorway displays influence the décor of the hallways in the apartment building. This variable is referred to as "Doorway Display Impact" in the following tables. The scale for the variable was:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Negative Impact	Some Negative Impact	No Impact	Some Positive Impact	Very Positive Impact

### Question Nine

- Please rank on a scale of one to five, how satisfied you are with the design and interior decoration of the apartment building. This variable is referred to as "Décor Satisfaction" in the following tables. The scale for this variable was:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unsatisfied	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied

**TABLE TWENTY - STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS FOR BOTH COMMUNITIES**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Know Other Residents</i>	<i>Doorway Display Impact</i>	<i>Décor Satisfaction</i>
<b>Know Other Residents</b>			
Correlation Coefficient		.294	.282
Sig. (2 Tailed)		p < .05	p < .05
N		57	56
<b>Doorway Display Impact</b>			
Correlation Coefficient	.294		.324
Sig. (2 Tailed)	p < .05		p < .01
N	57		55
<b>Décor Satisfaction</b>			
Correlation Coefficient	.282	.324	
Sig. (2 Tailed)	p < .05	p < .01	
N	56	55	

Using a non-parametric (Spearman's) correlation with a conservative two-tailed assessment, there is a significant relationship between the variables when all survey respondents are reviewed. Table Twenty describes these correlations.

A statistically significant relationship exists between how well you know your neighbors and the more positive impact of the displays (.294,  $p < .05$ ). Accordingly, it can be inferred that the displays have contributed to knowing one's neighbors better. Higher ratings for the impact of the doorway displays also correlated to higher satisfaction with the décor of the building (.324,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, it can be inferred that doorway displays play a positive role in the décor of the apartment settings.

In addition to comparing the relationship for these three variables for both communities, each retirement community was also analyzed using non-parametric correlations. In Community One, the most significant relationship was between knowing your neighbor and the impact of the doorway display. This relationship was highly correlated and significantly related (.562,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, the longer residents lived in Community One's apartment setting, the more likely they were to express positive impact of the displays (.348,  $p < .05$ ). Based upon the strength of this relationship, it can be inferred that the larger alcoves provided more opportunities for residents to express themselves and provided cues for residents to get to know one another better. In contrast, no significant relationship was found between the three variables in Community Two.

In addition to the non-parametric correlations, an ANOVA test was run to compare the means for the three variables. Community One residents indicated that they liked the displays more than the residents at Community Two ( $p < .01$ ). Therefore, the larger display areas can be determined to create higher satisfaction ratings.

#### **KEY FINDINGS FROM APARTMENT SURVEY**

The following bullet points represent the key findings from the apartment survey:

- The majority of the residents personalize their spaces. Primary motivators to personalize include sharing interests with others, welcoming visitors, making the building more attractive and storage opportunities. One key reason not to personalize is not having a dedicated space to do so.
- Most of the residents who responded to the survey independently selected the items to display on their own. A few residents had the assistance of relatives with this activity.
- When larger alcoves are provided, residents are more likely to select items based upon the need for storage as well as a reflection of self. Smaller alcoves tend to motivate residents to primarily select items for decorative purposes and self-expression.
- Larger alcoves tend to result in more items being used from a resident's past home. Moreover, these items are usually part of a resident's past entry sequence. In a few cases, residents mentioned being able to recreate past lifestyle customs such as flying the American flag on holidays.
- Residents are more likely to regularly change their displays when shelves are provided while larger alcoves tend to result in more static displays. Some residents made judgements on others'

displays based upon how frequently the displays changed. These judgments of others included whether these residents traveled regularly, were creative, were energetic, and were more aware or happier than others.

- A majority of the residents are able to learn something new about other residents based upon their displays. Residents are able to discern other people's interests and hobbies from the displays.
- There is a statistically significant relationship between perceiving the displays to have a positive impact and knowing other people in the apartment building. Therefore, it can be inferred the displays assisted in this knowledge. Moreover, this relationship is stronger in Community One, which has more space for residents to personalize.
- The majority of the respondents indicated the displays have a positive impact on the living environment of their buildings. There was also a statistically significant relationship between the positive impact of the displays and being satisfied with the building design and décor. Therefore, the displays have played a positive role in building and décor satisfaction.
- The majority of the study's respondents are older than the average ages found for each community and frequently have lived in the community for long periods of time. Due to these demographic differences, it is not possible to know whether their views are truly representative of their communities as a whole. However, the study respondents did provide a great deal of insightful information about how these communities operate and what the resident dynamics are like in each of the study settings. These data combined with informal interviewing and participant observation support the overall validity of the findings.

**L I F E   H I S T O R I E S**

**A N D**

**B I O - S K E T C H E S**

## L I F E   H I S T O R I E S   A N D   B I O S K E T C H E S

Nineteen residents agreed to participate in indepth, interviews for this study. Participants were questioned about the objects they placed on display and then asked about their life histories. Whenever connections were made between objects displayed and important life events, additional interview questions were asked to gain supplementary contextual information. All interviews were transcribed and analyzed for thematic content. These interviews were converted into succinct biosketches for this report, which include the relationship of the display to the resident's life story. All names used are fictitious to preserve the anonymity of the residents. Any errors are mistakes on our part and not the residents.

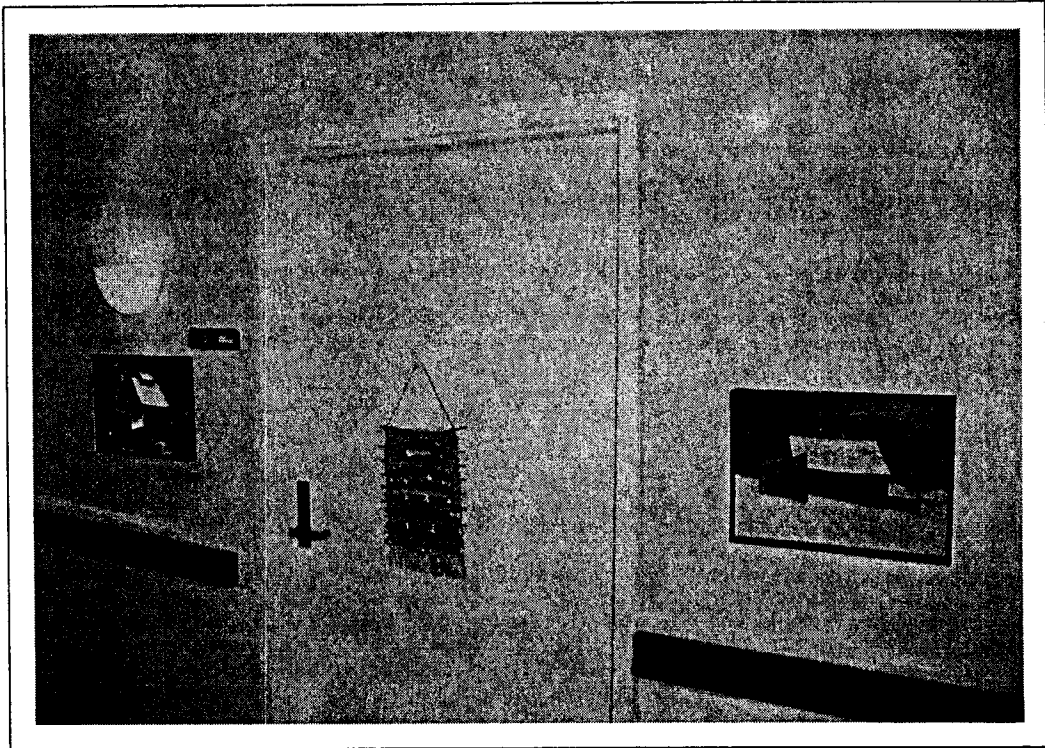




#### 1) Alice – Assisted Living Resident

Alice has had a turtle collection ever since her daughter handed her one and said, “Slow and steady wins the race.” According to Alice, “They just come to her.” Alice grew up in a prominent political family in the Midwest. She studied piano at a large state college in the Midwest where she also met her husband. Gradually, her musical interests expanded to collecting dulcimers, and then she began collecting folk songs from around the country. She eventually held concerts all over the country singing folk songs. Her husband taught art at a midwestern university and eventually was promoted to the Chairman of Fine Arts. They lived in a large house with an extensive garden. She had an entire room set aside for her collection of 40 dulcimers. After her husband passed away and her children left home, she rented her extra rooms to students, who still remain in contact with her today.

Alice loves to talk about her friends, children, and grandchildren. Her room is filled with items from her past and every item has a story. Turtles overflow several surfaces, and there is even a fish bowl. Alice has an Apple computer complete with a modem and a scanner. She uses the computer to edit her daughter’s books and to catalogue folk songs. The doorway display she put together is one of the most extensive in the community. There are turtles on many of the horizontal surfaces complete with a turtle crossing sign. Pictures of family, grandchildren and grandchildren’s artwork fill in the areas between the turtles. Two framed pictures are prominently displayed. One is from a newspaper article, which features a story about her folk singing career. The other is from a treasured student taught by her husband. Currently, she has only one plant to remind her of her garden, but in the past, there have been more. The display clearly reflects her adage. “You will be amazed what people think up to put turtles on.”



## 2) Marion – Assisted Living Resident

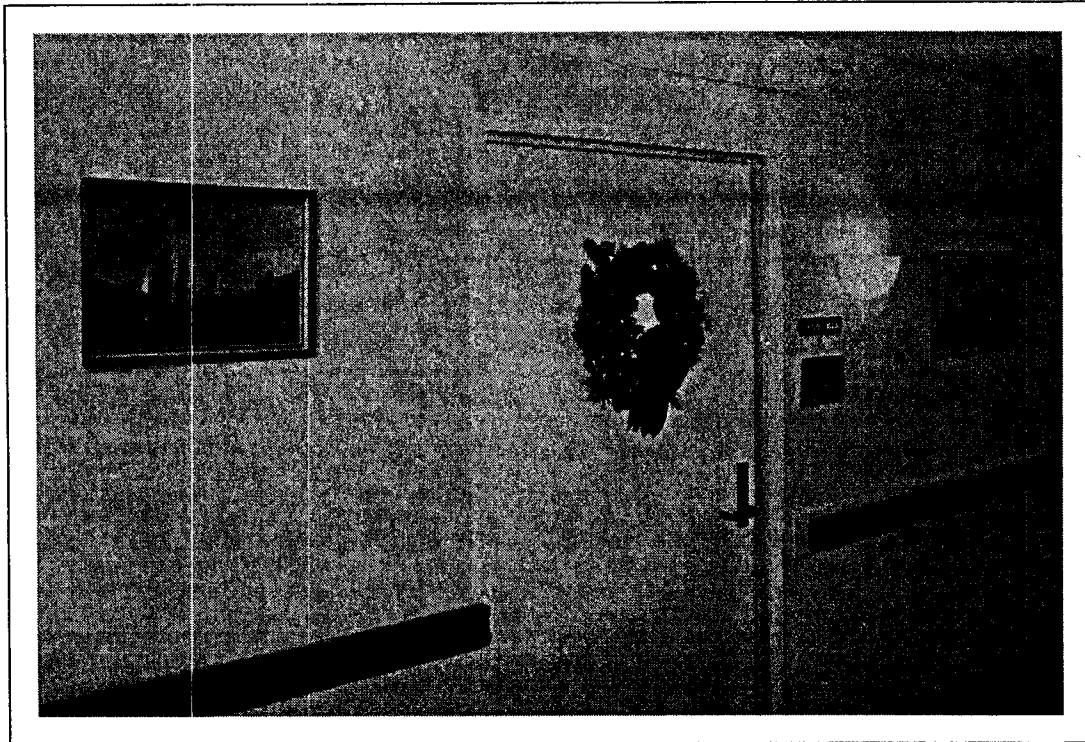
Marion decided to put two wood mosaics outside her doorway to let people know an artist was in residence. She and her second husband found the mosaics at a Florida craft fair where they frequently hunted for folk art. Marion's life as an artist, craftsperson, interior designer, and caretaker evolved through a transcontinental journey. She grew up in Baltimore at her grandfather's house. Her parents had lost a great sum of money in an investment deal and the "old folks" needed someone to stay with them during the day. Her aunt still lived at home, but had a job working as an illustrator for a large department store. Marion went to Quaker school all the way from kindergarten. Upon graduation, her father offered her two choices. She could go away to school for a year or he could send her to a local women's college. She wanted to go away, so she chose to go to a technical school, called Carnegie Tech. At technical school, she took a course in structural sewing to see how garments were put together. It was then she discovered her niche in costume design. She loved the fashion extravaganzas where finished costumes were paraded down the main staircase of the school. Happily, she was able to return to school after all and graduated with a degree in Costume Design and began to teach.

In the Fall, she was invited by some friends to a summer gathering place on the river. When she expressed that she was not going with anyone at the time, her friends assured her that they had someone for her. Her reply was, "Oh, gad, no." However, it turned out that "they were meant for each other." They wanted to get married, but neither one had enough money, since she was teaching for a small salary and he had borrowed money from his father to finish his Ph.D. Encouraged by some of his friends, he moved to Alaska to pan for gold. Marion eventually tired of waiting for better fortunes and wired him that she was coming at the end of the school year. Fortunately, her fiancée was able to secure a position taking care of the horses for the Geological Survey of Alaska. He wired back that she should wait until the Fall.

She remembers the trip to Fairbanks was quite hair-raising when the car lost its brakes halfway there and they had to turn it up a snow bank to stop it. Her parents had found a proper Presbyterian minister in Fairbanks to marry them, but he was out hunting when they arrived and the license office was closed. With a little persuasion, the office was opened and eventually the minister came home. They stayed in Alaska for ten years. Her husband began teaching math at the university, and they built a log cabin on a small piece of land near the campus. They used oil lamps until the school ran a wire down to the cabin for electricity. Marion practiced weaving and doing wood block art designs. She decorated the cabin in Scandinavian style. She remembers living on rabbits for the first year because the rabbits were so big, you could get three meals out of one.

When the war began, they left Alaska because they wanted to help. They also wanted to be nearer to her husband's mother since his father had recently passed away. When the Air Force refused Marion's husband, he worked for the Bureau of Mines conducting geophysical surveys of the United States based out of Ralah, Missouri until the war was over. When the Geological Survey started a geophysical survey, he was put in charge of that branch. They found a farmstead in Middleburg, Virginia and built a house. This was right in the middle of hunt country, so her husband was able to support his love of horses. Keeping with her family's tradition, she invited her parents to live with them in an attached apartment. Her husband said, "If you are going to do that then I must invite my mother and sister." So it ended up that Marion lived between both families and she nursed everyone. Eventually, she lost her first husband to cancer.

Marion remarried and began traveling back and forth between Florida and Virginia since her second husband was an avid sailor. In her travels, she decided to retire in the Carolinas because she loved the atmosphere. Her apartment is filled with her own artwork as well as art from others. If you look at the art pieces as a whole, you can see a common theme. Almost all of it is very mosaic in quality similar to a dress-maker's pattern. There are wood mosaics and wood block prints with each color outlined in white and even a Picasso's mistress painting that is very cubist.

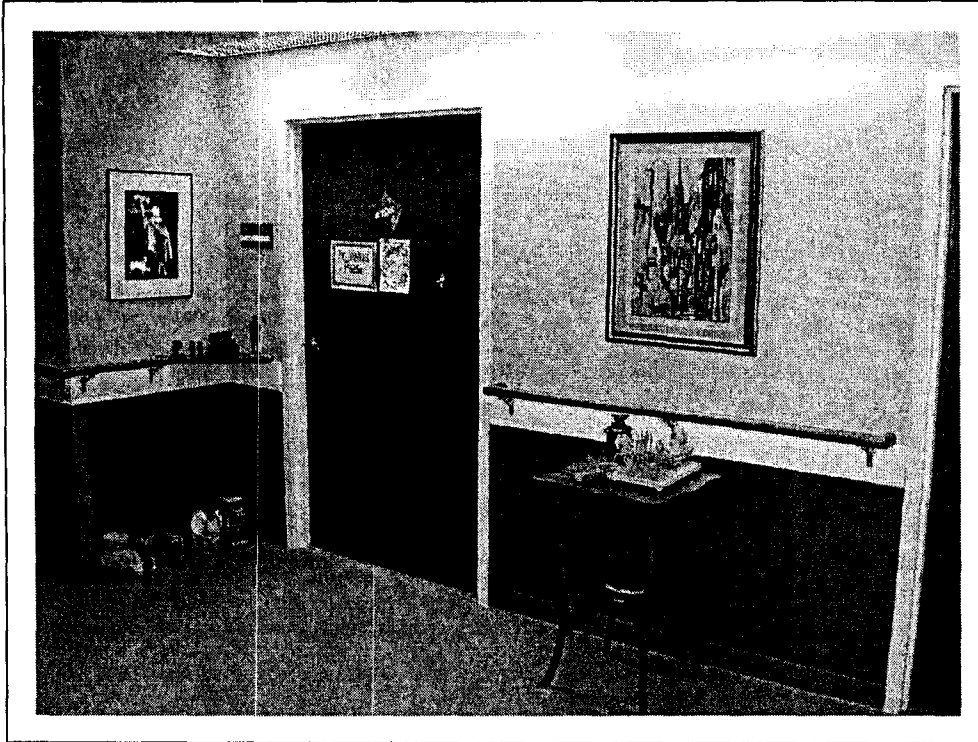


### 3) Beatrice – Assisted Living Resident

Beatrice grew up in Newton, Illinois. She received a music scholarship to study at Illinois, Wesleyan. After school she taught music, but quickly realized she was not getting anywhere and she had, “no one to run around with.” She moved to Chicago and got a job reading for a Loose Leaf Law Service. She worked there for a year before she realized she was losing her sight due to the extensive reading. She then got a job in public service when an opening became available, because “one of the girls got married.” According to Beatrice, women lost their job when they got married in those days.

After receiving training in Joliet, she moved to a small town to start her job and met her husband. Her husband worked overseas for several years. After their two children were older, they spent several years in Switzerland where Beatrice took painting lessons with a man who studied in Paris. She painted everything she felt was interesting. While in Switzerland, she loved to take visitors to France for breakfast and then drive through the tunnel and come out in Italy for lunch. She and her husband belonged to the American Women’s Club and the American Men’s Club. These organizations were formed for the support of Americans living abroad. She belonged to the Opera Committee and she loved touring the opera house in Geneva. Twice a year the group would take a trip, and she had an opportunity to see 54 countries. Beatrice was quite an adventurer. She drank reindeer blood in the Land of the Midnight Sun and she visited a Masai Village in Africa “where they drink cow’s blood.” She says “...the tour group paid one hundred dollars to see the village, but they left quicker than they arrived after seeing the flies.” She has painted several places where she has traveled to and lived.

Beatrice’s suite is filled with her paintings. Each one is like a small snapshot of her travels. She keeps a picture book of her paintings handy to show visitors since many of the originals were given away. Two paintings were hung outside – one she painted of Hong Kong Harbor and the other she purchased while in Hong Kong.



#### 4) Catherine – Assisted Living Resident

Catherine has a collection of 350 elephants. As a child, her mother would take her to the circus and she loved to visit all the animals. The ones she liked the best were the elephants. She has a respect for them because they are so big, and yet so gentle. She said, "With one blow they could crush their handlers who are rude to them, yet they do not." This gentle spirit is why she admires them. In many ways, this gentle spirit reflects how Catherine has approached life. Before coming to America, she and her family witnessed many major turbulent events in European history.

Catherine's parents were Russian. Her father was a military man, who was prominent in Imperial Russia. After the Revolution, they were (going to be) forced to leave the country. During a military leave for his honeymoon, they were fortunate to be picked up by a boat at the Black Sea. Many of the countries that were against Communism had gathered ships in the area to pick people up. These ships were overcrowded. Catherine's mother had an English governess, and could speak excellent English. A British ship was about to leave, but upon hearing English several members of the crew said, "Captain, she is one of ours." The captain stopped the boat and allowed them to board. The ship sailed on to Greece, but they decided not to get off because Greek was not one of the six languages they could speak. They eventually ended up in Yugoslavia because King Alexander had been brought up in Russia and was sympathetic to Imperial Russia. After settling down, they suddenly found out the peace talks in Paris had moved the border and now they were in Austria. They decided to go to Vienna where they knew the French Ambassador. Catherine was born in Vienna. The French Ambassador helped the family by providing extra milk to her mother.

Catherine had a short movie career while in Vienna. Her father was walking in Stadtpark (city park) in central Vienna in the only outfit he had—his uniform. He was asked to join a film about the Russian Revolution. Catherine was used in a scene where a mother is running with a baby. After

that, she was in a film that showcased a birth at court. She also played baby Tarzan. Back then, they did not care about the gender of the baby in movies.

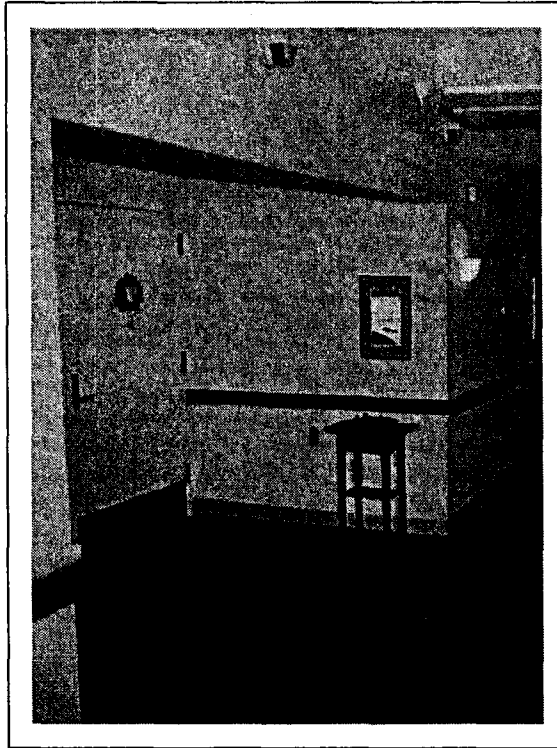
When Catherine was three, her parents divorced. The Revolution had crushed her father. Her mother remarried a mining engineer and they moved to a small village in Yugoslavia. She grew up hearing Russian, Serbo-Croatian and German. Her mother noticed she had a talent for languages and taught her German, English and French. When she finished high school, the Germans occupied Yugoslavia and closed down all of the schools of higher education. She was dating a man ten years her senior who asked her for her hand in marriage. She decided, "Why not, I have nothing else better to do." The Germans forced her husband to move to Rhineland, Germany for a year of training. Catherine joined her husband because she was expecting her first child. Unfortunately, Rhineland was a prime bombing target for the Allies. After a year they wanted to go home, but were told they must stay. They escaped three times and each time the Germans came looking for them threatening her mother and her stepfather so they were forced to return. On their last escape, they got off the train in Vienna and had the luck to meet a man who gave her husband an engineering job. Her second child was born in Vienna. When they heard that the Russians were nearing Vienna they decided to move to Munich, to keep from being asked to return to Communist Russia. Her third child was born in Munich.

Catherine's language skills proved to be very useful. Catherine began working with the United Nations for the Liberation. They sought to reunite families separated during the war. However, this organization closed down, since few people wished to return to Communist Russia. She then worked for the International Refugee organization. They sought to place professionals in other countries. While she was driving an American around, he asked her where she would like to go. Her immediate reply was to the United States. At that time, you could only come to the United States if you had relatives in the country. President Truman changed this policy by allowing several thousands of refugees to be sponsored by local people. Unfortunately, this man had returned home before further conversation could occur because his son had died in a tragic accident. However, he did not forget Catherine's reply and he wrote to her when his church decided to sponsor a family. Another twist of luck reunited Catherine's family. Her mother and stepfather had been sent to a concentration camp and then pushed forward to another camp, which was not known to Catherine. Her mother secretly wrote a postcard to Catherine to inform her of her location and left it behind since she was not allowed to mail it. A man found the unstamped card and forwarded it to Catherine, so she was able to find her relatives and liberate them. Catherine never knew who helped her find her family. When she wrote back to the church, she made sure that both families were included in the sponsorship, so they would never be separated again.

One year later she, her husband, children, her mother and her stepfather arrived in the United States. They settled down in the sponsor's town—a small college town in the Midwest. She became a secretary in the local college and her husband became a janitor since he could not speak English. Eventually, her talent for languages landed her a part time job teaching Russian, since so many students were fascinated with Sputnik at the time. Her husband proved to be very useful by inventing a remote control device for changing slides at the college. Eventually, he learned English and worked in his chosen field of engineering. Catherine devoted much of her time to raising the children, but the school came up with a challenge. They approached her about studying at the college. She refused saying she needed to spend the money on her children. Then, they offered her a loan, which

she also refused. Finally, they “found” a full scholarship for someone with a Slavic background. She, of course, accepted and graduated with honors. After graduating, she taught languages in several schools in the area.

With such a life-story, one can see how the gentle spirit of an elephant reflects Catherine’s life. It is amazing how she kept moving forward. The display outside her door was filled with clues to this amazing history. On the floor were several elephants, each different and unique. On a small table were several Russian items. A child’s samovar, a Russian teapot, was prominently displayed. Samovars are a cultural symbol of Russian hospitality. A wood carving depicting a Russian troika driven by a bear, came from a school trip to Russia. This carving symbolizes an old Russian folk story. On the walls are several pieces of art by a close artist friend, Paul Arnold. A painting by Gabriel Norway, shows the Sacre Coeur church in Paris after it was bombed and reconstructed. Perhaps, the most interesting display item was a curious little collection of figurines she had placed on a shelf. She pointed out that this symbolizes America. The Native American figurines represent how America got started with its first inhabitants. The Mexican figurine with a sombrero represents our Mexican neighbors to the south. The Canadian mounty figurine represents our Canadian neighbors to the north. The Amish figurines represent the people in the middle. For a person who has crossed so many borders and seen so much, this symbol (of people coming together) clearly demonstrated an important place in her heart.



#### 5) Mary – Assisted Living Resident

Mary was extremely proud of her pictures and each one has a story. She firmly stated, “That every one of her pictures was done by an artist and not just purchased from a store.” Outside her door was a small telephone table with a plate from Russia placed on top of it. She had decorated the plate with holly for the holidays. Above the picture was a simple graphic painting of an orange fox in an orange frame. A friend had made the table for her previous home. Inside her suite, “pictures” cover every wall. Her pride and joy is a framed painting she bought for \$5.00 in New Orleans and now is worth \$500.00.

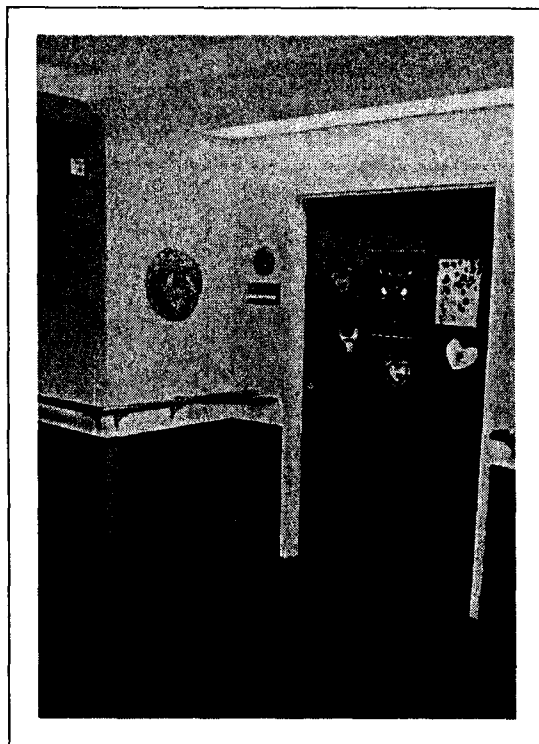
Mary grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. She recalls stories of how her father only had a sixth grade education because he was too proud to go to school in torn clothing. He apprenticed himself to be a plumber and turned it into a good business until the Great Depression. When Mary was six her mother died during childbirth, but her father was determined to keep the family together. He eventually remarried after three years. Mary did well in school and won a full scholarship to Washington University by scoring high on achievement tests. She was called into the principal’s office and asked to turn down the scholarship, since she was a shy girl and would not make much use of it. He suggested that she give the scholarship to John Black who would make better use of it. Her father agreed since he had made it without a college degree and he did not see the point in a girl pursuing all this education. Later, she found out the scholarship went to the second highest scorer, who did not agree to give the scholarship away to John Black. The principal had lied when he said, “She was the only thing keeping John Black from receiving the scholarship.”

Upon leaving school, Mary taught school in a one-room schoolhouse during the deepest part of the Depression. The county received a bargain, since she was so young they did not have to pay her very much. Eventually, she decided teaching was not for her and left the position. She decided to travel to Washington, DC to the Masters’ Plumbing Convention and take her stepmother and father. After



returning from the trip, her step-mother encouraged her to study the Comptometer, the forerunner of the adding machine. After completing the course, she got a job, but quickly did not see a future in it. It was too boring. On a lark, she went with her sister to visit a friend at Missouri University. That is when her sister announced that she was going to get her into college. Together, they found her a job with the National Youth Administration for thirty cents an hour. Her sister agreed to go home and wire her the rest of the money for the first semester. The money arrived on Tuesday and on Wednesday she was in college.

While at Missouri she had her first experience with art. She was walking up the staircase to go to her job and saw this painting of orange flowers – Van Gogh's Sunflowers Series. She had never seen anything like it. Mary said, "From then on I was hooked, but it was much later in life that I started collecting." After Mary graduated, she worked at Iowa State University and met her husband there. Her husband was a pharmacologist and worked for a drug company. For awhile, they moved around a great deal. Later in life, she had an opportunity to travel to Russia and Africa. The table outside her doorway holds the plate she purchased while in Russia. Above the table, Mary's love of the color orange is apparent in the picture of the orange fox.



#### 6) Jane - Assisted Living Resident

Jane grew up on a farm in Idaho. She considered herself a Yankee since her grandparents had an apple farm in Maine. Her parents met in Manhattan, Kansas where they were both teachers. They moved to Fargo, North Dakota after they were married. She recalls stories of how the whole family moved west to Idaho on the train. Her mother rode in the passenger car, while her father had to ride on the flat car with the goods and furniture to keep them from being stolen. In Idaho, her family built a house and farmed 60 acres, which according to Jane was "God-forsaken until we got water irrigation." Her brother still lives on the farm and has expanded it.

Jane left the farm to attend school at the College of Idaho. After two years, she transferred into the Nursing Education Program. She said, "I had some idea that I was going to save the world." This was the beginning of World War II. Eventually, she realized that saving the world was not possible. She met her husband at Idaho College and supported him all the way through his Ph.D. in American Constitutional History. Her husband taught at Berkley for seven years. Since they did not have a lot of money, one of their favorite things to do was to go hiking in the Berkley Hills. Jane loved looking at the new architecture. Jane felt that her time at Berkley was very rich. She had an opportunity to take design and color classes, which are her passions.

Jane and her husband left Berkley pursuing a variety of teaching positions in different states. Along the way, two girls were born. They finally settled in Minnesota for thirty years. In Minnesota, she had an opportunity to build a house in the Frank Lloyd Wright style. She collected Minnesota pottery for years. Frequently, the family traveled abroad. They had a grand trip to Paris and Italy. At their daughter's suggestion, they spent a year abroad on a teaching Fulbright in Nigeria. She and her husband also spent a year in England on a sabbatical. She recalls visiting friends and being fascinated

by English hedgehogs. Upon their departure, her friends bestowed upon them a small hedgehog figurine.

Eventually, Jane relocated to a different state to be near her grandchildren. Her dwelling suite is filled with items from her travels. She insists that her room is different from all the others. Her love of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture is obvious, by the large stained glass window that hangs in her window. This stained glass window came from the Purcell-Cutts house which was designed by William Purcell, an architect who followed Frank Lloyd Wright's style. She said, "This window is a part of me." On her outside door, she displays her grandchildren's artwork. A Minnesota pot and a Nigerian Calabash are displayed to remind her of her travels and past homes of many years. She has also displayed the English hedgehog figurine on the shelf outside her door because, "No one else has one."

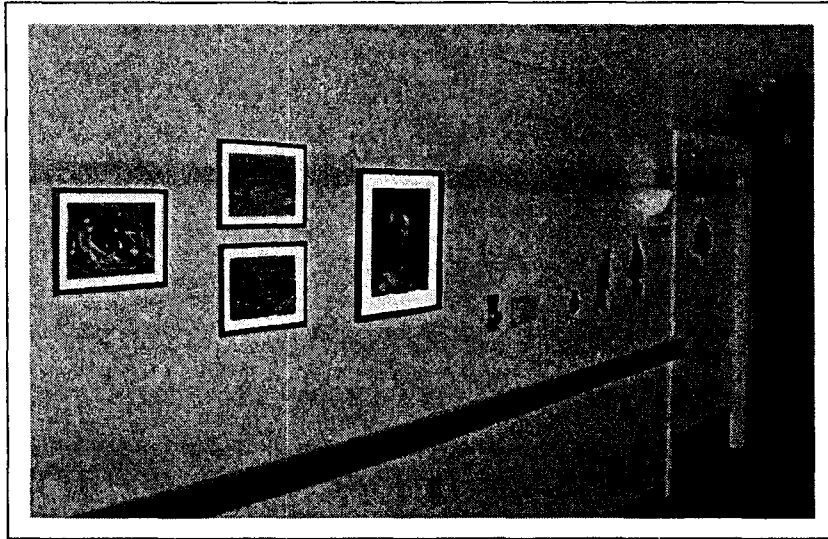


#### 7) Nancy- Assisted Living Resident

Nancy grew up in Iowa, the youngest of seven children. She believes that she has outlived all of her sisters because she was an athletic child, played outdoors, and enjoyed golf as an adult. Her grandfather left money for her and all of her siblings to go to the local college, Morning Side College. But she was determined to have her independence and go to DePaul University in Indiana for her junior year. She got her wish and really "lived it up."

She later graduated from Morning Side and met her husband while teaching in a high school. She supported her husband while he got his Ph.D. in just two years from Johns Hopkins University. She and her husband settled in at the University of North Carolina. During the summer, she would travel with him to different teaching positions at Harvard and Northwestern. They considered these summers to be elegant vacations. One summer, they had an opportunity to visit her husband's ancestral home in Norway.

Nancy's doorway contains a wall hanging from her trip to Norway. She also has a live tree that her niece gave to her. The tree was sitting on a small table and decorated for the holidays. The door decoration was special to her because she had made it out of tin cans years ago.



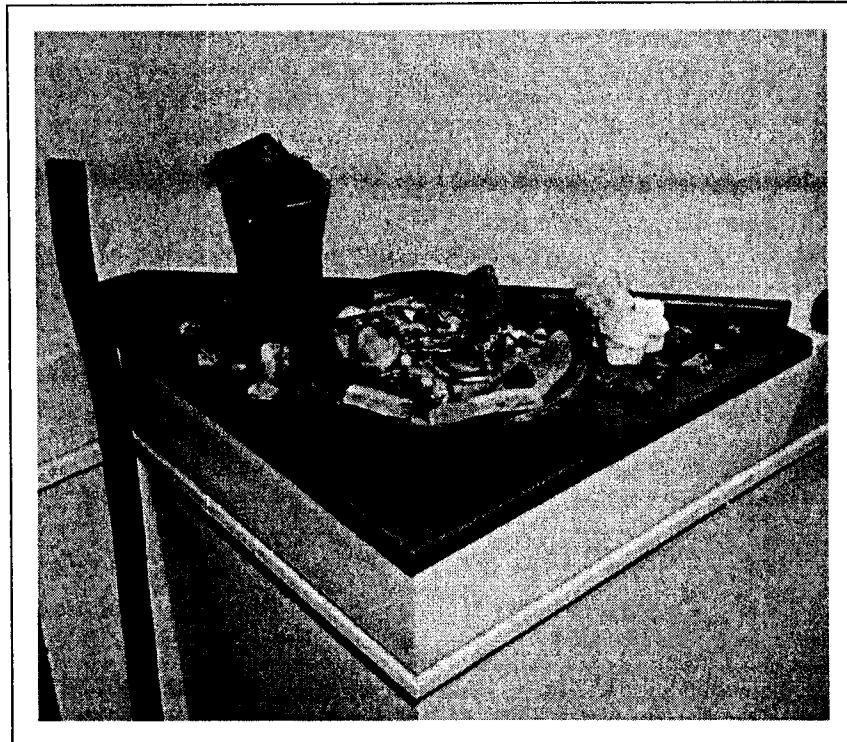
#### 8) Eileen – Assisted Living Resident

Eileen grew up in a little village outside of Syracuse, New York. She remembers fondly that she and her brother were inseparable. In fact, her mother held her back until her brother was old enough to enter school. Eileen says that, “she was born with a book in her hand,” and she naturally assumed she was going to Syracuse University to become an English and History teacher. The Great Depression put a stop to those plans, but her mother said she could go to Nursing School. Eileen was so appalled at the lack of instruction and the poor use of grammar by her teachers that she would write down these mistakes in her notes. She recalls that her notes had to suddenly disappear when her teachers asked her to turn them in for a review.

After leaving school, she got a job in Providence, Rhode Island on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. The job was an assistant night supervisor of a large hospital. Eileen remembers refusing to delay the baby delivery process just so doctors could arrive and collect their fees. This was quite radical in those days. She returned to New York and got a second degree in Public Health Nursing at a large university. She started working at the Health Department around the time of World War II.

From then on, she “never applied for another job; they just came to her.” Her education continued. She received a Masters in Public Health and then completed a Doctorate in Education and Administration from Columbia University. She then decided to try a little adventure and moved to upstate Michigan to be a consultant for the county nurse system. All she knew was “upstate Michigan was not the city of Detroit” and few roads were paved back then. She returned to Syracuse to head up the Department of Public Health Nursing at the University. There she helped to establish the first College on Aging. She then had a variety of consulting positions, which allowed her to travel. She worked with the American University of Beirut, the Central Europeans Nations Treaty Organization in Turkey, the World Health Organization in El Salvador and The Agency of International Development in the Philippines. She also had a Fulbright, which allowed her to travel to New Zealand when she was 70.

When she moved into her apartment, she decided to display some of the photographs from her trips to El Salvador and the Philippines. While in Latin America, she learned to do the handkerchief dance and purchased a series of plaques that depict the dance. These are displayed outside her door and she still recalls what the natives told her about the dance, “Handkerchief dance very sexy.”



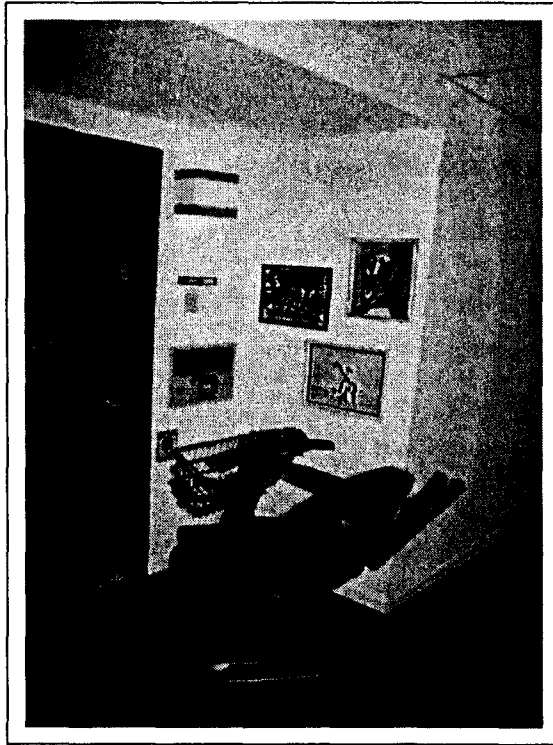
#### 9) Martha - Apartment Resident

Martha grew up in the town of Marion, Ohio. She did not have any siblings and remembers well her parents being active in politics. In fact, her mother and father were in the room when President Harding was elected president. A picture taken at the White House with President Harding and Marion town representatives hangs in her living room. She can easily pick out her father and mother in the crowd. As a child, she traveled around the countryside to her uncle's farm and to Lake Erie for picnics. She remembers having an old Ford car with a rumble seat where she and her collie dog Laddie would ride. Laddie was her companion for sixteen years.

Her mother was an Oberlin College graduate, so Martha was destined to attend this school. At Oberlin, Martha studied kindergarten primary education. The day she graduated, the Superintendent of Schools helped her to find a position. Her first position was in Garrettsville, Ohio and that is where she met her husband in church. Her husband owned a grocery store and eventually, built the first drive-in super market in town. They settled down in Hiram, Ohio and raised five children. Her apartment is filled with pictures and mementos of her family. One of her sons died as an F100 fighter pilot in the Vietnam War. Her bedroom has a few of his model planes he built as a child as a remembrance of him. One of her daughters from an early age wanted to be an artist and several of her pieces hang in Martha's apartment. She recalls how her sons teased her that she would not make any money as an artist. Her reply was "I have got to paint."

Martha loves nature and has always been fascinated by rocks, shells and animals. She considers herself an "outdoor person." Martha and her husband loved to take trips. Once a year, the family would assemble at a beach in South Carolina. One of her favorite things to do was to take trips on the Windjammers in the Caribbean. She preferred to sleep on the deck rather than in the cabin.

Martha's display outside her door reflects a variety of times in her life, as well as her interests. Since she was one of the earliest residents, she has had an opportunity to place some of her items across the hall in a small sitting room, which opens to the corridor. On her shelf, she has a bowl of rocks. The rocks were collected over a lifetime of walking and there were many sizes and colors. On top of the rocks, she had placed a whole dried frog and a snakeskin she had found on her walking trips. In the corner of her alcove, leaned a walking stick. Down the hall were several pictures, which she had contributed to the community. A painting done for an art class while she was at Oberlin was in a prominent location. She also had a picture of a windjammer as a key memory of the trips she use to enjoy. A picture of Monticello recalled a trip to Jefferson's home with her children and how they played in one of the reflecting ponds.



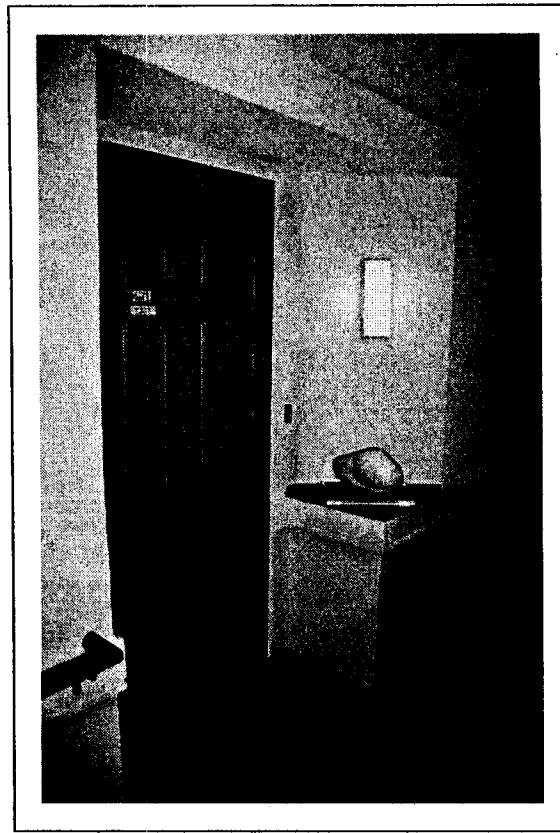
#### 10) Jean – Apartment Resident

Jean grew up in a townhouse on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. She remembers going to Central Park everyday. Summers were frequently spent in Connecticut. Except for time spent at a boarding school, she did not leave home until her first marriage. She worked at the American Film Center, which was a Rockefeller funded organization devoted to furthering the use of non-theatrical films. Her interest in film and photography started when she was twelve and purchased her first camera, a 98-cent Box Brownie.

She lived outside of New York for most of her life and raised two children. During the 1970's, she had an opportunity to go to Kenya twice. She was able to take pictures of animals, while she was there. She recalls fondly picking up an African Witch doctor carving at the docks in Brooklyn. When it was uncrated, the dock workers said, "Nice piece of whittling." Before retiring in the Carolinas, she lived in California where she served as a volunteer at the Sea Grass Hospital.

Jean's doorway was filled with pictures of lions, tigers, and zebras from her trips to Kenya. Her daughter placed the pictures there because, "she has an eye for that sort of thing." Jean also provided a picture of her own domestic cat, Misty. She said, "I think it is nice for people to know who she is."





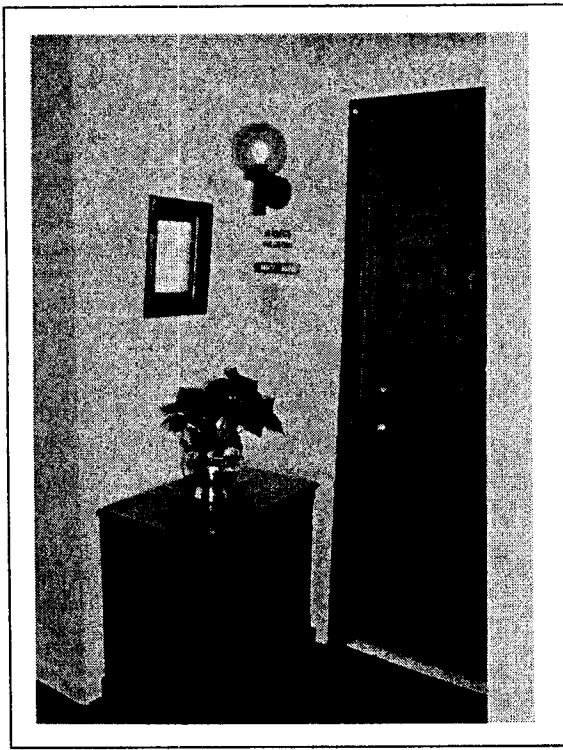
#### 11) The Grangers – Apartment Residents

The Grangers met in Peninsula, Ohio. This was a second marriage for both of them. They appeared destined to meet, since they were both around the Hay Stack School of Crafts in Maine in the late 1960's. However, they never crossed paths until later. Mr. Granger grew up in Cleveland and studied law at Case Western Reserve University. He has always had an entrepreneurial spirit and opened his own firm. When the war started, he decided to help the war effort by working in a factory that made landing gear and pneumatic tools. This led to a career in owning and turning around manufacturing companies all over the country. He considers himself a "problem solver." Mrs. Granger went to school at Hunter College, but she values art courses, art history and going to museums as the best education. During her career she ran galleries, became interested in crafts, antiques and organized trips to Europe. Her current interests are textiles and American crafts.

Once they married, both enjoyed traveling as well as remodeling their homes to fit their needs. They have had as many as five projects going at once. At three places where they have lived, a wall has been removed to gain more space and light. They still own a house in Maine and travel there every summer for four months.

The Grangers' art interests and problem solving mindsets are evident from the moment you walk into their apartment. Outside their doorway is a large modern marble sculpture by Bernice, a local artist. They bought the piece when they first got married. They both felt the piece made a statement. Mr. Granger, the problem solver, clearly went to work on figuring out how to best use the limited space in their suite. With the help of an architect, a wall was removed between the living room and the

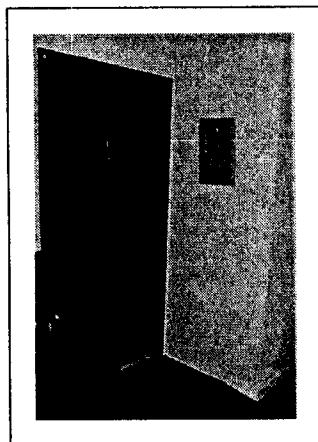
second bedroom to expand their living space. Built in couches with storage were placed along one wall. On the other wall is a floor to ceiling shelving unit with prominent lighting features, books and a large teapot collection. In front of the teapot wall is a clever maple screen, which hides a small twin bed, which can be used as a guest bed. This maple screen provides a backdrop for two Saarinen chairs. The reconfiguration also provided a small dining nook by the window, which was an important feature for the couple to create. The bedroom was also reconfigured with built-ins for more books, artwork, and a computer area. Mrs. Granger's interest in textile art is clearly represented by the custom fabrics. Unique Kilams cover the floor throughout the space. When asked if they would ever change the piece outside, they felt they might change it to a sculpture of Adam and Eve they had just purchased on their recent trip to Yucca.

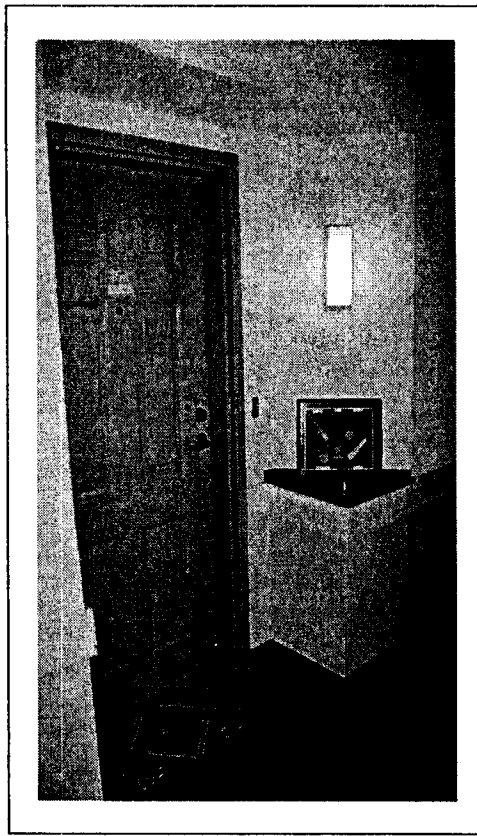


#### 12) Blanche – Apartment Resident

Blanche grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina. She remembers having a pony and lots of dogs and cats that stayed outside. She went to college in Washington DC and married her senior year. This was during the time of the second World War, so they frequently moved around. She cannot recall living in one place more than three or four years. According to her, people moved to get a better job or promotion. She stayed in Jacksonville, Florida the longest.

To her, cats are very important and she feels they are the perfect apartment companions. Her display reflects their importance. She has a sign up in French that says “Chat Lunatique (Crazy Cat).” Below the sign, so if you cannot read French she placed a sign that says, “The Cat Box.” Her son does not share her sentiment about cats. He gave her a plaque to display outside her door since he felt she should have something without a cat on it. The plaque is a relief of a hen that specifically says “God bless this house as much as possible.” She finds this amusing since God can do whatever He wants.





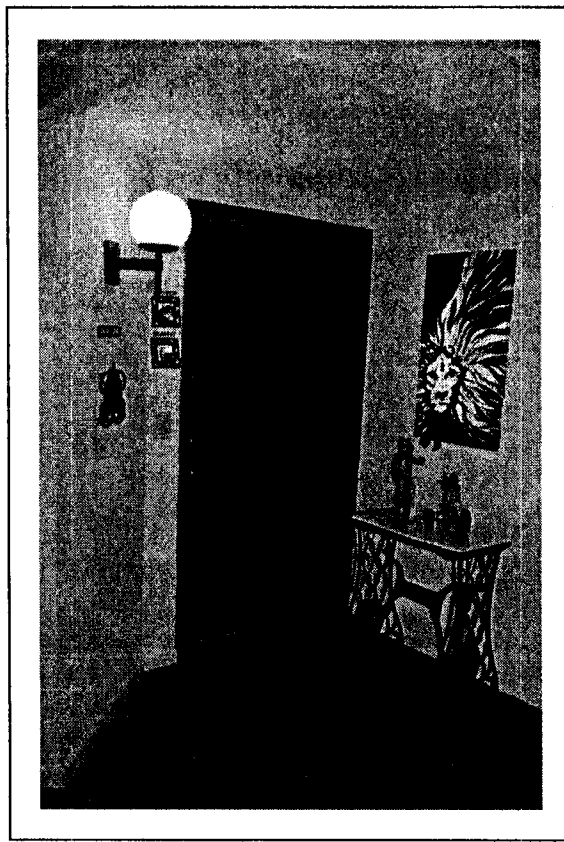
### 13) Helen – Apartment Resident

Helen was born in Virginia but she did not spend much time there. Her father decided to go to medical school at Johns Hopkins, not to study medicine but physical education. Afterwards, he joined the YMCA organization and went to China. He then took a job with the Chinese Government University, which he felt was more in line with his interests. Her family lived in China for thirteen years until Helen became of age to go to college. She chose a small Midwestern liberal arts college and studied corrective physical education. Then she “began to notice that people with crooked spines had crooked personalities too.” After obtaining a Master’s in Corrective Physical Education from New York University she pursued a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Iowa.

After leaving school, she worked during the Depression for the Ohio State Board of Social Welfare running a child guidance clinic and the Michigan Children’s Institute. Eventually, she moved to Iowa to marry. Her husband served as the Director of Child Guidance and she served on the State Board of Welfare. When World War II began she joined the Navy effort, and her husband joined the Army. In the Navy, Helen worked in the curriculum section of Navy personnel until her IBM card went through a sorting machine and the Navy discovered she spoke Chinese. The Navy felt that if she could speak Chinese then she could certainly learn Japanese. She politely pointed out to the commander that she was thirty-four and the rate of attrition for the language course was quite high for people over thirty. He replied, “You do not look like a tired thirty-four.” She relocated to Colorado to study Japanese and later moved to Washington where she translated captured documents. When she retired, she received a letter from the Navy Commander stating, “Your shipmates will miss you more than you realize.” This was a complete surprise to Helen, since she had not been near a ship during the entire war.

After the War, she and her husband held a variety of teaching and private practice positions around the country until they eventually returned to Iowa. She taught at Iowa Wesleyan for 11 years. For six of those years she did not draw a salary, because she was over the age of sixty-five. Her courses included Psychology as well as East Asian History. After her husband died, she then returned to a small Midwestern college town to be near a good friend.

Helen's doorway contained a simple framed shadowbox containing miniature Chinese instruments. She has had an interest in music all her life and many of the small instruments she has actually played in their larger forms. She purchased the instruments on a school trip with students in East Asia.

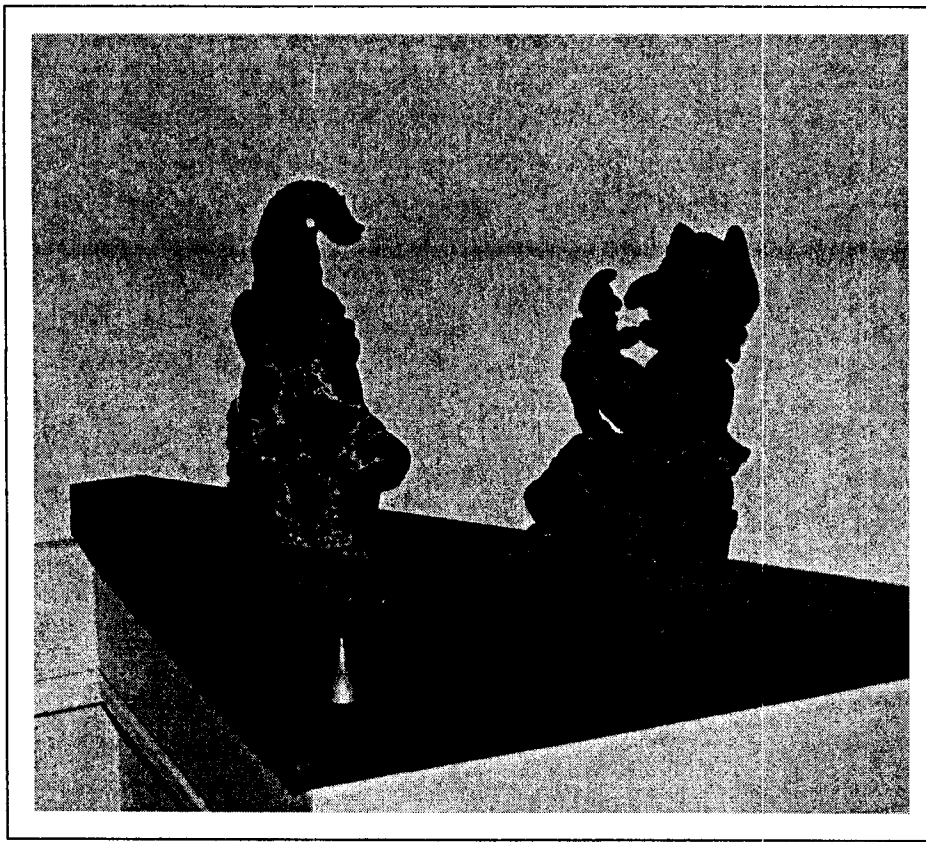


#### 14) Dorothy – Apartment Resident

Dorothy grew up in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She can remember growing up with lots of cats and dogs. Dorothy remembers her mother kept her plants on two Singer sewing machine bases, which she purchased from a repairman who lived in town. She went to school at the University of North Carolina and Stephens College at Columbia University. In those days, freshmen women were not accepted into the university. Although Dorothy studied journalism, she ended up in medical records and worked in several hospitals.

One of the first things she asked before moving into the retirement community was “Can I have a cat?” She has always liked the lion family. She is very clear though that the cats are not her family. They are her pets.

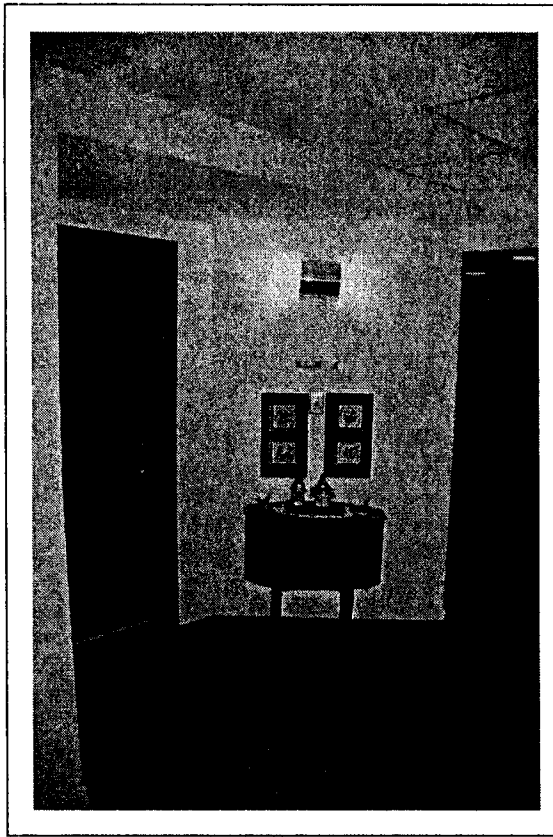
Her display outside her door reflects some objects from the past as well as her love of her cats. Her mother’s wrought iron sewing machine bases are out in the hall along with pictures of the cats. For a whimsical holiday decoration, she has two straw cats riding miniature bicycles. An old dress she turned into a wall hanging displays a large lion.



15) Barbara – Apartment Resident

Barbara and her sister grew up in Cleveland. She went to Vassar College and studied Library Sciences. She then spent her career working in the Cleveland Public Library system. Her principal enjoyments have always been music and the outdoors. Her sister was an accomplished mountain climber.

Her doorway was unusual, because it had two brass doorstops and figurines depicting Punch and Judy. Her mother loved to collect brass and one of her chief hobbies was marionettes. Punch and Judy were two of the most famous marionettes of the time. A marionette craze was sweeping the area because of a famous puppeteer who was part of the Cleveland playhouse. Barbara remembers that she and her sister took part in the plays, but that her mother received the most enjoyment. The doorstops have always been with her and she considers them, “a bit of family.”



#### 16) Rebecca – Apartment Resident

Rebecca grew up in Oak Park, Illinois. Her family lived in the same house where her mother grew up. She recalls walking through Frank Lloyd Wright's yard on the way home from school. According to her, "He was not there but his family was." Her family was very musical. She recalls her father playing the cello and her grandfather was a music critic. Rebecca went to Swathmore College in Philadelphia and studied psychology and philosophy. The branch of psychology she studied was gestalt psychology which relates to phenomenological psychology which is based in the philosophy of learning and perception. Kurt Lewin's Field theory was a key aspect of her studies. Upon leaving Swathmore, she had a year of graduate work at the University of Chicago where she studied psychology and neurology.

After leaving school, she went to work for the Scott Foresman Publishing company editing text books and manuscripts for college. She worked for the company for thirty-three years. Rebecca was fascinated by the battle between behavioral and cognitive psychology. She witnessed a total change in academic thinking, in that, behavior is a result of what you think and feel and not just what is done to you.

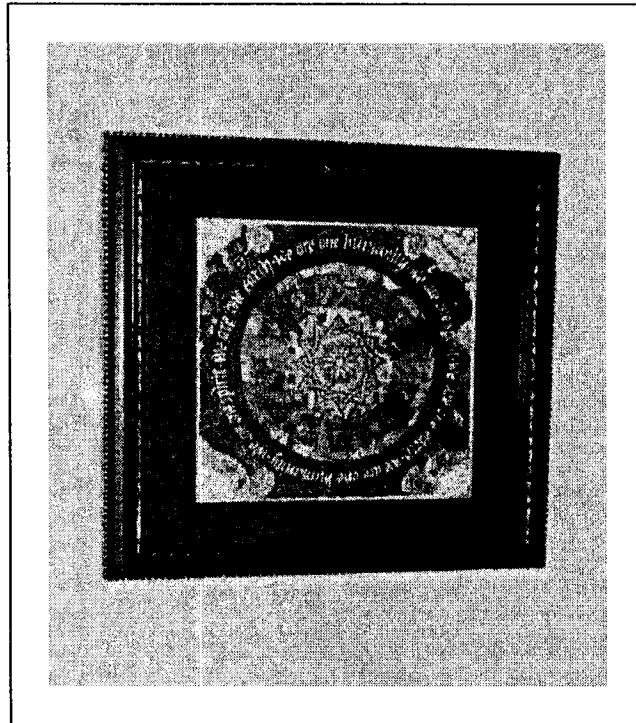
Rebecca married twice. By her first marriage, she had two children. She met her second husband on a blind date set up by a mutual friend. Her second husband was an ardent World Federalist and interested in prayer. Through prayer, her husband decided "that what the world needed was to get things done together rather than separate." Thus, he planned his engineering career so he could spend a couple of days a week working on world government. World Federalists strongly believe in the power of working out problems at a global level rather than jockeying as national adversaries.

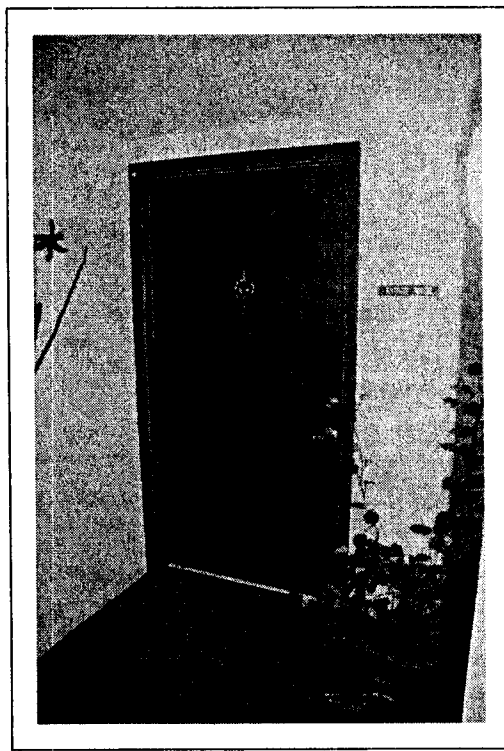


Both of their strong beliefs in these principles motivated them to take early retirement and spend several years volunteering at various World Federalist organizations.

Her involvement with World Federalist brought many friends, which included a Japanese couple. During this time she took a course in English as a Second Language (ESL) and began instructing several students in ESL. Eventually, they relocated to the south to retire and built a small cottage on a lake. After her husband died from chronic leukemia, she decided to move into a retirement community.

Rebecca's display represents some of her world involvement and her roots. She decided to put her grandmother's sewing chest outside her door. On top of the chest are Japanese figurines that she received from her friends. Above the figurines are framed embroideries from a Chinese ESL student. A framed print hangs on the opposite wall defining her strong world philosophy—"We are one earth, we are one humanity, we are one spirit."





#### 17) Francis – Apartment Resident

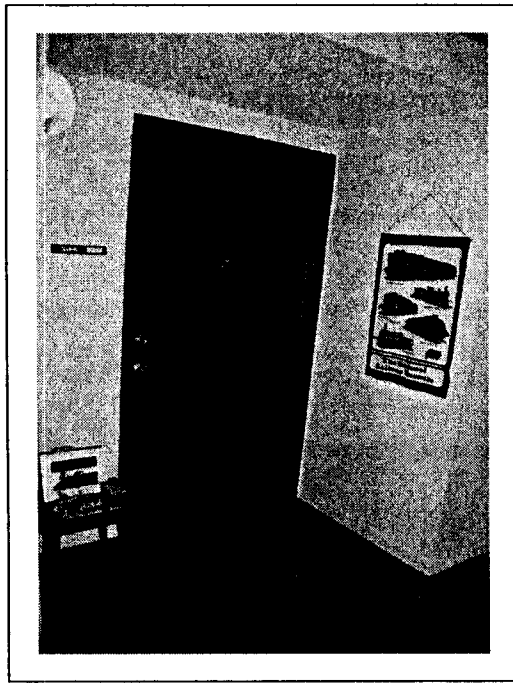
Francis grew up on a dairy farm in New Hampshire. Her mother did not believe girls should be working in the barn, so she helped with other chores, such as separating the cream or picking strawberries. One of her favorite memories was learning to swim in a brook, which was a short walk away. The brook was only twelve inches deep, but since she was small, it worked for her. She left home to go to Syracuse University to study math education, but quickly realized that she needed to have more options, since the men teachers could also coach a sport as well as teach. Therefore, she switched her major from math to home economics. During school, she remembers working in a private home and not having enough money to ride the trolley. She walked a mile and a half to school and frequently had to come home at noon to do the dishes.

She met her husband on her first job out of school. He had a degree from Cornell in agriculture. He was a teacher, but later was promoted to principal and then to superintendent of schools. They lived in a variety of places. Sometimes she taught at the school and sometimes she stayed home and took care of her two daughters. This was a time before teachers were organized and frequently they would move just to get a \$200.00 raise. It seems that everywhere they lived they were close to a river, a lake, or an ocean.

Because of the school year, they enjoyed six-week vacations. They would frequently go to her parents in New Hampshire for the summer. Her husband satisfied his need to farm by helping her parents and providing advice on how to improve the farm operation. By the time her parents retired, the farm was a great success. Her husband loved to garden and would have large areas planted at many of their homes. Although, Francis was not interested in farming, she frequently remembers helping out. Later, her husband lost the use of his legs. Some of her most treasured memories were working with him to keep up the garden. They went to great lengths to make the paths accessible for

him to get to all the planting beds with a motorized scooter. In retirement, they owned a home in Florida and New York and traveled in between because her husband could not be chilled.

After her husband passed away, she decided it was too much for one person to keep up. So, she moved to a retirement community close to her family. She waited a year and a half to find something to put outside her door. Her choice was a small natural looking fountain which fills the hallway with the sound of falling water. Around the fountain she placed rocks, plants and ferns. When asked why she likes it she says, "It's alive." She loves water and the plants remind her of the gardens in her life. The rocks, she picked up during her recent hiking adventures. On the opposite wall is a Brass Lilly in relief that holds a special memory for her. This is the first art piece she purchased with money she had to waste after a lifetime of frugality.

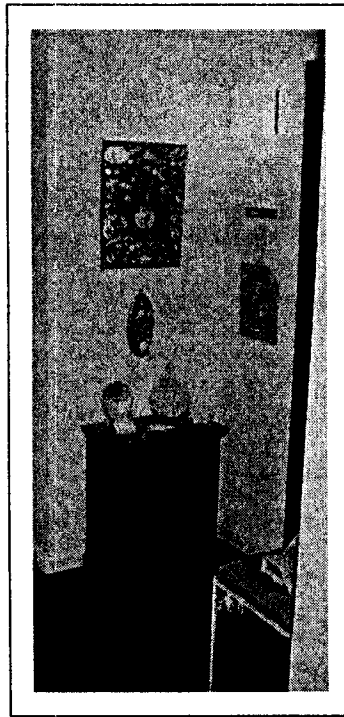


#### 18) Richard – Apartment Resident

Richard grew up in Florence, South Carolina. His father was a dispatcher for the United Coastline railroad. According to Richard, no train ever passed through the town without changing locomotives. Because, at that time, trains stopped for water every 100 miles and the crew always stayed with the same locomotive. Richard remembers not having a car when he grew up since they could always ride the train if they needed to go somewhere. He knew all the crew members since they lived only a half a block from the track. He even has obtained a copy of the first book he ever received about trains as a child.

A gifted student, Richard has degrees from Furman University, The University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University. He met his wife in Nashville while studying at Vanderbilt University. His first degree was in medieval history. He taught in high school and college for a few years, but decided his true calling was to be a librarian. He eventually worked as a university librarian in several schools as well as running a large federal library. Whenever he traveled, he preferred to travel by train.

About the time he retired, he started to collect model locomotives. Eventually, his collection nearly outgrew the house. Each of the miniature steam locomotive is handmade of brass and actually operates. He has sold a great deal of the collection, but still keeps his favorites. Almost every wall in his apartment is filled with track shelves filled with miniature locomotives. He advertises it as a museum. Richard has a librarian's knowledge base about locomotives, which he shares with anyone who visits his museum. He was also instrumental in pointing out that the locomotives being depicted in a model at the site of the first Transcontinental Railroad Museum in Promontory, Utah (the historical place where a golden spike was driven to celebrate the joining of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869) were the wrong color. He proudly remembers returning to the museum years later and finding out the proper colors were in place. Outside his door, he has placed a small toy locomotive and a sign from the National Railway Museum in Britain to let people know, "this is where the museum is." During the interview, a great deal was learned about the fascinating history of steam locomotives.



#### 19) Sarah – Apartment Resident

Sarah grew up on the south shore of Massachusetts by Cape Cod. She remembers happy days spent at the seashore digging for clams. Sarah's father worked in a box shop making wooden boxes. Since he was a handy carpenter, he also made furniture. Being the oldest girl, she received piano lessons. She was then supposed to teach her younger sisters how to play. Although she did not have much luck with her sisters, she did earn reasonable money teaching other children in the neighborhood. Her brother was fortunate to win a scholarship to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The rest of the family had to work to help keep him in school. Because there was no money to send her to college, Sarah decided to go to cosmetology school. The day before receiving her license she decided that this was not for her and left. She wanted nothing to do with hair and never wanted her license.

Sarah always enjoyed making her own way and recalls how she left one job because she could not take arguing with her boss. She immediately accepted a position washing dishes in a restaurant and in three months, she was in charge of the restaurant. She quickly pointed out that, "It was not because I was clever; I was willing to work and it was the second World War." She worked in the restaurant for seventeen years. During the war years, she met her husband who was a service man. His family owned a pharmacy and expected him to be a pharmacist. Similar to Sarah, he quit before he got his license. He still worked in his parent's store because his family owned it and Sarah frequently helped in the store as well. She and her husband raised one son.

After her husband passed away, she decided that she was through with cold weather. She sold everything and moved to Fort Lauderdale. She lived on the beach for sixteen years and loved every minute of it. She loved the sound of the tide coming in and walking the shoreline looking for things. She volunteered at an organ and music store to teach people how to play. She remembers how she

learned there that you do not have to always play a piece of music like it is written. She liked that a great deal. Since her son travels frequently, he asked if it would be possible for her to move to a southern state near her grand daughter. So, she moved away from the beach. Outside her doorway are many reminders of her time in Florida. An avid shell collector, she has a variety of shells displayed. Some have been made into ships, which she sold to people looking for souvenirs when she lived in Florida. She also placed a chest outside her door that her father made for her. The combination makes her doorway very distinctive.

#### **BIO-SKETCH FINDINGS**

The primary finding from the resident interviews was that most of the items placed outside the door had significant meaning and were tied to a resident's interests and past lifestyle. These interviews also provided key sources of information on how the doorways are used by individuals, as well as their attitudes about their displays. This information helped to answer some of the key questions presented next in the research questions and discussion section of this report.

**R E S E A R C H   Q U E S T I O N S**

**A N D**

**D I S C U S S I O N**

## RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

### HOW ARE THESE EDGES BEING USED?

All dwelling units have an exterior spatial zone, which is under the occupants' control. Spatially, this area may range from only a doorway threshold to a large alcove. In this study, the occupants of the unit are clearly controlling these zones for their own purposes, but these edges also have roles in the retirement communities' peer group structure. These uses can be broken down into four primary categories:

- Utilitarian
- Decorative
- Communicative
- Social

#### PRELIMINARY TYPOLOGY

Based upon the findings from the research methods employed, the following preliminary typology of edge uses has been created.

TABLE TWENTY ONE - A TYPOLOGY OF USES

<i>Utilitarian</i>	<i>Decorative</i>	<i>Communicative</i>	<i>Social</i>
Convenience	Hallway Improvement	Written Communication	Group Membership
Storage	Dynamic Project	Visual Communication	Camaraderie
	Continuity	Self Expression	Similar Interests
	Individualization		

The next section of the report will describe the four typology categories and their associated themes.

#### UTILITARIAN USES

Utilitarian uses are basic, practical uses for the doorway areas. The two themes that emerged from the findings are Convenience and Storage. These themes were apparent in all four research settings.

##### Convenience

*Definition: Using the doorway area as a place to put things temporarily to avoid stooping or to keep the hands free while operating the door.*

One of the basic, practical manipulations of the unit's edge in retirement communities is to create a package shelf for the convenience of older people. Residents clearly stated they like having a shelf or a piece of furniture next to their door as a place to put things down as they unlock the door. In fact, this use was the primary catalyst for installing a shelf in several early apartment buildings for



older people (Zeisel, Epp and Demos, 1977). Residents also like to have an elevated place for the newspaper or a package to be delivered, so they do not have to stoop over and pick them up from the floor. Thirteen percent of the apartment survey respondents specifically mentioned providing a table or keeping the shelf clear, so they could have a place for deliveries. This need also influenced the type of items placed outside their door. Display items were selected, so there was still room left on the shelf or the table. Specific quotes from the surveys and interviews that support this theme include the following:

- “I like the shelf to be clear for my paper.”
- “One advantage of Punch and Judy is they do not take up too much space and you can still put your groceries down when you open the door... It is a handy shelf.”
- “And that is just utilitarian, people want places to leave something—packages.”
- “A table for a temporary resting place is necessary. I keep the top bare so I can plop stuff while looking for keys, etc.”

This theme also appeared in the assisted living interviews and observations. One resident mentioned keeping the shelf clear for her newspaper. Moreover, one resident, who did not have a shelf or a recessed alcove, was happy he lived at the end of the hall, so he could place a table there for the delivery of his newspaper without blocking hall traffic.

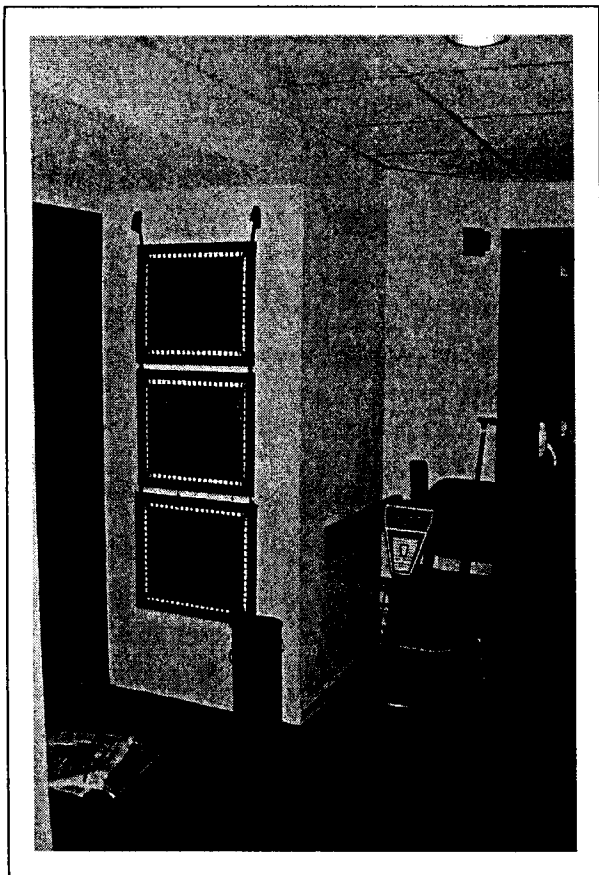
## Storage

*Definition: Using the doorway area as a place to keep items to be used later and do not fit inside the unit.*

Another, basic practical use of the doorway alcoves was for storage. The larger alcoves provided a place to keep things that did not fit in the dwelling unit or were preferred to be kept outside. Sometimes, this need was due to aging in place. For example, one resident described relocating a bookcase into her doorway alcove when medical staff requested a clearer path to her bedroom door. Another medical necessity, mentioned by residents, which motivated using the doorway alcove is finding a parking place for walkers, rollators, and electric scooters. One resident informally interviewed expressed regret over disassembling her doorway display because she started using an electric scooter and needed a place to park it. Transportation devices are frequently found outside the doors of the apartment and assisted living units since they are not always necessary inside the unit and frequently take up much needed space. Assistive mobility devices appeared in 11% of the 102 doorways photographed (See Figure Seventeen).

Photographs of the apartment doorways revealed that some residents view their doorway alcoves as a foyer and stored convenience items that are typically found in a front hall such as coats, overshoes, umbrellas, umbrella stands, and coat racks (See Figure Eighteen). Twenty-four percent of the apartment doorways photographed displayed some type of practical item of this nature.

Compared to past homes the residents have lived in, most retirement apartment units are much smaller in size. In 1998, AAHSA's Continuing Care Retirement Community Industry Profile reported the average independent dwelling unit in CCRCs to range from 432 square feet to 1040 square feet. Assisted living dwelling units typically fall in the smaller range of the scale. One of the most difficult things to do when moving into a retirement community is scaling back one's possessions to just the



**FIGURE SIXTEEN** SCOOTER PARKING EXAMPLE  
PHOTO BY MARK PROFFITT



**FIGURE SEVENTEEN** FOYER EXAMPLE  
PHOTO BY MARK PROFFITT

essentials (Bourenstrom & Pastalant, 1975). Having made the first cut before packing the moving van, it is understandable that it can be even more devastating to find that some items do not fit once you arrive. Thus, many residents saw the larger entry alcoves as a place to keep items that were important to them, but did not fit in their units. This is particularly true of the apartment residents who had a deep alcove. Use of the alcove for storage was mentioned by 14% of the respondents in the apartment setting with deep alcoves and none in the apartment setting with shallow alcoves. Some clear indicators of the need for storage are the following interview and survey quotes:

- “Well the main thing is my grandmother’s sewing cabinet which I did not have room for it here, but I wanted to have available.”
- “I brought more furniture than I had room for in the apartment and my grandmother’s card table fit nicely in the alcove.”
- “I have the smallest living unit available...and needed extra storage space badly.”
- “My granddaughter was helping me pack, she said, ‘you have so many put-about.’ You know those little things that are very nostalgic, little treasures, artwork, it is a nuisance when you have no place to put them. And yet I think that is part of decoration.”

The need for storage of important objects was also true in the assisted living settings. A frequent theme that emerged from the interviews was the dismay a resident would express about moving into

assisted living and having to scale back his/her possessions even more. This was particularly true when it came to important collections. Five of the eight assisted living residents interviewed specifically mentioned the difficulties of scaling back their possessions and the importance of the items they had left. The following quotes from the interviews support this theme:

- “It was my idea to put them there because I did not have room.”
- “I got lots (of turtles) in storage this is nothing...I would put more out if I could.”
- “So people are much more limited and (you have), less chance to inhabit your own space.”
- “I had given away so much.”
- “And that made me so mad that they let me move over here and get rid of most of my things.”

## DECORATIVE

Decorative uses of the unit's edge relate to the embellishment and adornment of the area by the occupant. The primary themes that emerged from the data include Hallway Improvement, Dynamic Displays, Continuity with the Past, and Individualization.

### Hallway Improvement

*Definition: Using the doorway to improve the hallways and to create variety and interest for other hall users.*

Residents consider themselves to be responsible for making the retirement community more attractive. The displays were clearly seen as a key aspect of creating attractiveness. One resident stated in the survey, “Some want to add to the beauty and interest—a few do not (hence nothing at their doors).” Sixteen percent of the apartment survey respondents mentioned this trend as a primary motivator for personalizing their doorways. In addition to the qualitative data, a statistically significant relationship was found between being satisfied with the apartment décor and feeling the doorway displays had a significant impact. The following survey quotes support this theme further:

- “To help make the entire hallway and building more attractive.”
- “Because I wanted to contribute to the attractiveness of the hall.”
- “They make the hallway more interesting to travel through.”
- “To add some interest to the cold line up of closed doors and names only.”
- “I hope the doorways would have a positive effect on prospective residents.”

Only one respondent to the apartment survey felt the displays affected the hall negatively. Six percent of the open-ended responses to the question, “explain why do the displays impact the hallway either negatively or positively,” produced negative responses. Examples of these responses include the following:

- “...It could be junky if we all hung stuff out. An occasional piece is eye-catching but a hall full would not be neat or fetching. Keep décor for the interior.”
- “One or two have too much stuff in a small space.”

Objects on display were also selected because they were interesting or appealing. Forty-seven percent of the survey responses from both apartments related to this theme. Moreover, this trend was more prominent in the apartment setting with shallow alcoves and shelves. Sixteen percent specifically mentioned attractiveness as the reason for selecting items to display in the community, which had shallow alcoves with shelves compared to 2% in the community with larger alcoves. Residents selecting items for appearance may view this area primarily for display and are much more concerned with objects having attractive qualities. Representative answers from the apartment residents in response to the survey question, “Why did you select these items to display?” include the following:

- “I try to put out items others might find interesting.”
- “Conversation pieces, gifts, travel purchases, the season, humor, some to please grandchildren.”
- “Often I display items I picked up on recent trips – unusual items bring the outside world closer.”
- “Items should be pretty, dramatic or welcoming.”
- “They were seasonal.”

### Dynamic Project

*Definition: Using the doorway display as a continual project by changing it more than once a year.*

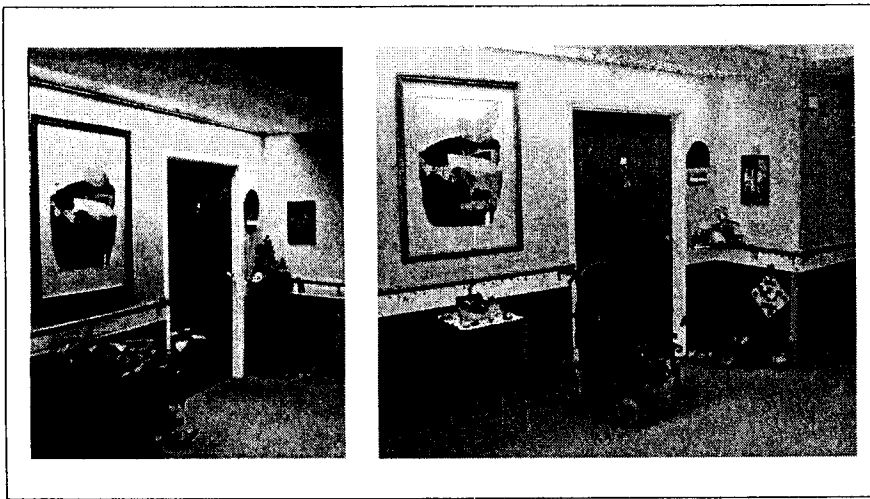
Some residents considered creating a display to be a constant project and frequently change what is at their doorways. Of all the apartment residents surveyed, 43% reported changing their doorways with the seasons. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents never changed their displays. A consistent theme from the surveys and interviews was that residents craved variety in their lives and used their doorways to respond to that desire. The following quotes support this theme:

- “Well, just for change”
- “I really do not know - it is likely to be the season and if they are an artist they change easily. The plants, change the wall hanging—some people do it a lot.”
- “I change it frequently—I do not know, I have always enjoyed rocks.”
- “To add variety for others and myself.”

This pattern of regularly changing the doorway displays is much more apparent in the apartment settings, but it is also evident in the assisted living settings. Informal staff interviews confirmed that some doorway displays do change seasonally in assisted living. One assisted living resident specifically mentioned she purposely changes her display seasonally.

I change what is on the door every season. In the fall, I put corn and in the spring,  
I put this out (holds up artificial leaves). We do not have any competition. I think  
it is just fun.

One of the assisted living settings was originally photographed in earlier pilot work for this study and then was re-photographed four years later. After verifying the same residents were still in residence it was clear that the assisted living displays had also changed (See Figure Eighteen). However, it was anecdotally reported that these changes occurred with less regularity. More information would need to be gathered to determine the exact difference and frequency.



**FIGURE EIGHTEEN** EXAMPLES OF ASSISTED LIVING DISPLAYS CHANGING OVER TIME.  
PHOTOS BY MARK PROFFITT

The dynamism of the displays also makes a statement to other residents. Changing a display often was seen as a sign of creativity, traveling and even a sign of the occupant's energy. The following quotes about what apartment residents learned from others' displays illustrate this connection:

- "Their taste, creativity, style, culture, uniqueness, awareness, and energy."
- "Shows their interests in collecting."
- "They tell me the resident is happy and creative."
- "Now some people are creative and you are always looking to see what they are going to put out next."
- "You kind of spot the people that travel a lot. They have unusual things out there. And also they are apt to change."

### Continuity

*Definition: Using the doorway as a means of maintaining a historical link to past décor or as a place to display items that were prominently displayed in past homes.*

Residents also mentioned that having a display area allowed them to maintain continuity with their past décor. Frequently, this comment would relate to special objects which have always been on display in their past homes and are now on display in their retirement community homes. Quotes from apartment residents that support this trend include the following:

- "I was glad I had a spot to display church plates and artifacts from churches my husband had served....I always used to hang them in the dining room."
- "I have always had door decorations and the shelf gives me an opportunity to share favorite items."
- "I wanted to share some artifacts given to me by..."
- "I collect Japanese art and have always displayed it."
- "The American flag was nearly always flown daily from my porch. Now, I display it (a small one) on the ledge on all national holidays."

*Definition: Use of the doorways to create distinguishing characteristics that set one's doorway apart from others.*

Residents also saw the doorways as a way of expressing individuality. A positive outcome of individualization was increased wayfinding. In Community One's apartment setting there is a variety of alcove configurations, light sconce designs, and carpet colors. Each apartment floor has a different combination of light sconces and carpet colors. However, the primary, distinguishing features are the items residents place in the alcoves and the changes made to the alcoves. The apartment setting in Community Two has no variety in architectural features except for four doorways that do not have shelves. All doors, walls and carpets are the same color and style. Similar to Community One, the primary differences are the items residents place in the doorway alcove. Twenty-one percent of the apartment respondents mentioned individuality as a benefit to the doorway displays. Five percent of the apartment respondents indicated that personalizing the doorway was motivated by a need to increase wayfinding.

- "It makes one realize there are individuals living in the apartments."
- "It individualizes my apartment making it easier to find."
- "Blank doorways are a pain."
- "I am told it helps some people be sure they are at their own apartment."

Interestingly, residents of both assisted living settings never explicitly mentioned wayfinding as a motivator to placing items outside their doors during the interviews. More research would have to be conducted to find out if they view these displays as an aid for wayfinding. However, several residents did indicate placing items outside the door made it more distinctive, which is a tacit reference to wayfinding. In fact, one resident was quite proud of her doorway display and said, "It is like no one else's. I will tell you that." One apartment resident mentioned the benefits of individualization in assisted living.

I travel to the Health Center (assisted living setting) and I find it very interesting to see what is outside. This room has china elephants and on this side is a collection of turtles. My feeling is what I have seen and there are exceptions, ... everybody is a collector and these are things that...and these people have been around. And they want to display the things they have collected.

## COMMUNICATIVE USES

Residents use the doorways as a vehicle for communication. Either the occupant or other residents of the community may initiate these exchanges. In most instances, this is a one way exchange of information for the benefit of the occupant (e.g., colored dots expressing a newspaper preference). However, the community also benefits from the information conveyed in the displays (e.g., knowing a pet is in residence for people who may be allergic).

### Written Communication

*Definition: Use of the doorway area to promote written exchanges of information.*

The doorway displays provide a means for members of the community to initiate exchanges of written communication with the occupants of the dwelling and visa versa. Apartment doorway alcoves are also convenient places for community residents to leave notes for the occupant. A few residents preferred to facilitate written exchanges by providing a small box to place messages, a pencil and a pad of paper for others to use. This type of message center was identified in 5% of the apartment doorways photographed in Community One. One resident interviewed identified this trend by saying, "Upstairs there is a lady with a scratch pad and pencil, so you can write notes."

Another clear form of communication is the creation of signs. The most frequently observed type of sign found in the apartment settings' photographs was an indicator that a pet is in residence. Nine percent of the apartment doorways had some type of pet alert. This trend was primarily motivated by Community One's administrative rules, which requests residents post some type of sign when they have an animal. The intent is to warn others who might be allergic to animals and to notify the cleaning staff of the animal's presence. However, residents are extremely creative with how they decided to alert others. One resident took pictures of her cats and hung them up in frames outside her door with their names printed below. Another resident hung up a sign with the words "chat lunatique" which is French for crazy cat. She put "Cat Box" below for those who cannot read French. Signs also appeared in the assisted living setting. These varied from requests to "not be disturbed by visitors" to wishing others a "happy new year". Community Two's assisted living setting had several "stop signs" up to deter wandering residents from entering the wrong unit. These signs may be more necessary when the building is directly connected to the skilled nursing portion of the community.

### Visual Communication

*Definition: Manipulating the doorway area to visually convey information.*

Visual communication is primarily an occupant-initiated exchange of information performed by manipulating the alcove's contents or features. One example is the use of the doorway light. Both of the apartment settings have a wall mounted light at each unit's door, but only one of the apartment setting's lights are under the resident's control. These lights appear to be turned off the majority of the time. One resident stated that when she is expecting visitors, it is her

custom to turn the light on. Accordingly, this light provides a signal to visitors that she is at home and expecting their arrival.

Another form of visual communication found in the apartment units promotes interdependence. At Community Two's apartment setting, everyone has a buddy, who is supposed to informally check-up on the health of another resident. To avoid having to receive a call everyday, one resident has arranged to create a signal by manipulating a small object in her alcove. The following paragraph explains the system:

I will tell you what that little bell is. We have at (community name) a buddy system... That bell when I get up in the morning to start my day I move which says, "I am okay do not worry about me." That is what that bell is for. When I go to bed at night, I put the bell in the back. When I get up in the morning, and I am okay I move it back to the front. But, all of us who live independently at (community name) have someone who is dedicated as our buddy—another resident who checks everyday to see if you are okay. If you have a system like this, they do not have to bother to come in and ask if you are okay. That's what that bell is for.

Another form of visual communication found in one community is the use of colored dots placed on the door frame to help newspaper delivery people know which papers to leave. Each newspaper is assigned a different color. This dot was never mentioned in any of the interviews or surveys, but it would also provide other residents a visual clue about the occupant's reading preferences. Additional information is needed to know if residents pay attention to these dots.

## Self-Expression

*Definition: Using the door as a place to make a statement about themselves or their past lives.*

Self-expression is another form of communication, which is more latent since it requires more information to process and verify. Objects in the alcoves are often selected because they are an "expression of me." Eighteen percent of the apartment survey respondents indicated objects were selected because they reflected themselves when asked what was the motivator for choosing objects to display. Moreover, 37% of the thematic responses to the survey question, "Why did you personalize your doorway?" indicated the motivator to personalize related to some type of individual reflection. Clearly, residents have a perception that the objects on display have importance for the occupant and are not just decorative. One resident stated, "They would not put something out they did not like...something that really had some significance in their lives." Several residents supported this sentiment as evidenced in the following quotes from surveys and interviews.

- "you long for it to be a part of yourself. I am not going to change mine. I like it too well."
- "Oh don't you think it is their personality out there...Oh I think so."
- "It is part of my home and makes a first impression of me."
- "Oh I think it fit and made a statement."
- "The way they are letting people know what they are like inside and my guess is that everyone is advertising the sort of person they are"



The following quotes illustrate the minority opinions of a few residents who did not see the importance of the objects as self-expressions:

- “I think people do not make use of it as much as they should. It does not make a statement of their lives or their interest as a whole.”
- “Um, just something that catches my eye – a lot of it looks like nothing to me; some of them are nice.”
- “My son and daughter-in-law who are not crazy about cats. Gave me this little plaque, so I could put it in my office. Attention, warning crazy cat. I put it up because I already had it but people... have asked me about the French, ‘why is it in French?’ Similar to you of course. It was a false lead. There may be a lot of false leads.”

The connections between what people put on display and their lives were primarily discovered during the interview process. When questioning one resident about her display she immediately said, “Do you want me to tell you my stories.” These life stories were frequently interwoven with mentions of the displayed objects and the significance in their lives (See bio-sketch section of the report for more information). For example, one resident who described a lifetime of being a naturalist and a novice geologist has a bowl of rocks and a walking stick at her apartment entrance. Sometimes the connection was extremely clear at first glance, in other cases it required some explanation by the resident. One resident, who immigrated to America after World War II, assembled a collection of figurines that symbolized America and its neighbors. On her shelf are Indian figures symbolizing the first Americans; Mexican figures symbolizing our southern neighbors; Canadian mounties symbolizing our northern neighbors and Amish figures representing, “the people in the middle.”

In some cases, the opportunity for self-expression and identity appeared to provide a form of self-actualization. This trend was found in the assisted living settings when residents had relocated from another part of the retirement community. One quote about the experience of moving through the retirement community came from an apartment resident:

I think people, partly, when people come into a retirement community like (community name) where the emphasis is do something and enjoy yourself, ... they are more apt to get rid of things and not live in the past unlike many places when you get to retirement. And, I think when you get to assisted living, then you cannot do anything else (not able to do things) , so then your possessions are very complicated (From the conversation, resident implied items were much more meaningful and difficult to part with).

Some assisted living residents, echoed this sentiment by talking about the importance of displaying their self-identities with their possessions. Moreover, others would talk about their displays and their happiness in the same frame of reference.

- “Well I wanted to show that was where I lived or rather that is where an artist lived.”
- “It just seemed right. It just sort of fell together. I am happy.”
- “But people like me who do anything especially like me do put something out.”
- “I would put more stuff out there if I could. I do more if I could. I like to put things out.”

Loss of possessions after moving into a retirement community and especially into assisted living was a theme that was mentioned in five out of eight interviews with assisted living residents. Items placed on display and items inside the suites were very important to these residents. Furthermore, the compression of living space into one room also places more importance upon the transition zone from public to private that the edge provides. Thus, placing objects outside in the doorway alcove also marked one's territory. The following quote is an assisted living resident's response to the question, "how important is that space?"

It is my space. I like the door—I do not like when staff come unannounced. They come when I am in the middle of doing things. I feel like I am a little invaded. After all I only have one room.

## SOCIAL USES

Doorways also served important social purposes, which helped to form bonds among the residents in both communities. The primary social themes are Group Membership, Camaraderie, and Discovery of Similar Interests. Although several themes in Communicative Uses are also present in Social Uses the primary difference is these social uses relate to the formation of group and their dynamics and customs. Social uses have an inherent scale issue. Some social uses are reflective of group membership into the entire retirement community, at the largest scale. Some social uses are more reflective of smaller scaled groups such as "cliques".

### Group Membership

*Definition: Use of the doorway display to express membership in the community.*

One of the interesting themes that emerged from the research is how these doorways also reflect community. One apartment resident expressed this by stating, "The variety is important. A stranger can tell we are a community and individuals." This comment clearly reflected that the displays not only individualize the setting, but also demonstrate that residents belong to the wider community. As a cohort, the residents that live in both communities share some similar characteristics. The majority of the residents are in their early eighties (with a range of 23 years separating the youngest and oldest respondents in the apartment survey). Almost all of these residents' lives have been impacted by major world events such as the Great Depression and the second World War. For example, using the average respondents' age eighty-three as a benchmark, a person would have been born in 1918. They would have been eleven years old when the stock market crashed and twenty-three when the United States entered into the second World War. Thus, most these residents were of similar ages when they lived through these landmark 20th century events.

Almost, all of the residents in these two retirement communities have had the experience of going to college and have pursued advanced degrees. This is a strong indicator of either coming from a financially secure background or being able to obtain a scholarship (considering they would have entered college during the Depression years). Many have been teachers or professors at colleges or the spouses of teachers. Several of the residents interviewed mentioned changing career paths to help with the war effort during World War II. This group is well traveled and many residents have lived in multiple places around the United States. Moreover, several residents have lived abroad or

traveled extensively abroad. Thus in these two retirement communities, residents often shared the same careers, hobbies and interests.

Doorway displays provide an opportunity to latently demonstrate that residents are members of the same socio-economic group. Examples include displaying art purchased abroad or very unusual artifacts and antiques. For example, several residents displayed antique washstands or tables. "Disposable furniture" was rarely seen in these apartment alcoves (e.g. only one photograph showed a piece of press board furniture). In keeping with the aesthetic sensibilities of this upper level socio-economic group, residents would often display very modern items such as sculptures or other "high art" objects.

Several residents stated in their interviews that there was no competition between residents about the displays. However, it was clear that many residents put an effort into having something different that would stand-out. The importance of this effort demonstrates an emphasis on reflecting membership into the primary socio-economic group who live in these retirement communities. Examples of expressing a desire to be seen as different, creative or clever were often conveyed in the surveys and interviews:

- "...you would feel stupid not to put something out. You like to have something good."
- "But people like me who do anything, especially like me, do put something out."
- "Well we try to put something out a little different."
- "Well it fit and I think it makes a statement."
- "I wanted something distinctive."

Group membership themes were evident in the apartment settings from the photographs, interviews and the surveys. Assisted living residents also appeared to support this trend. Similar to the apartment resident, it was evident from the items placed on display that assisted living residents had also traveled, or had an interest in the arts. For example, residents who enjoyed quilting would hang quilt pieces outside of their doors and were recognized by others residents as being quilters.

Residents clearly made judgments about the types of items placed in the displays and these judgments extended to the occupants of the units. The following quotes demonstrate this relationship.

- "And it makes the people interested in who is in there rather than...and notices a person."
- "Well yeah - people will say why did you put that out. That I am afraid does influence how they feel about people."
- "Some people want it to look very simple or stylish. And other people want it homey and remind them of home, nostalgic...All of them do reflect the people."

*Definition: Use of the doorway to reinforce friendships and membership in the community.*

Membership in the community group is frequently reinforced with actions that involved the unit's edge. Residents often expressed their enjoyment on receiving positive comments from other residents about their displays. When questioning residents about their displays during the interviews, they would always mention the items which have received positive compliments.

- "Occasionally, people will come to me and ask me where I come from and where I got the shells."
- "Oh, everybody loves them. If friends visit, they will bring them by to show them."
- "We have had a lot of compliments."
- "Well sometimes, people particularly remark about my owls."

Apartment survey answers also reflected this trend. For example, one resident regularly posted quotations outside her door and she frequently received positive feedback from others about these quotes. Furthermore, in Community Two's apartment setting, respondents said, a primary catalyst for creating a display is to reciprocate for enjoying what other people have placed outside their doors. Thus, manipulating the unit's edge played a role in reinforcing friendships. Eight percent of the respondents to the apartment survey specifically indicated that the displays promote friendships.

One resident described in her interview how customs relating to celebrating important days reinforces group membership. An example of this tradition that involved the unit's edge was the celebration of birthdays in the apartment setting in Community Two. On a resident's birthday, it was customary for other residents to place flowers and cards on the display shelf. For example, one resident said her entire shelf was covered with birthday gifts and greetings just a few days ago.

Camaraderie was less apparent among assisted living residents. It was clear from the interviews that long term assisted living residents knew one another, and some were familiar with the items that others had placed outside their door. However, four of the eight residents interviewed indicated they are friendly with the other assisted living residents, but maintained stronger friendships elsewhere. Thus, it is possible that several residents viewed assisted living as something temporary and do not invest themselves with the other residents. Moreover, residents may not feel comfortable with one another when they have been requested by administration to move into assisted living. One resident called the other assisted living residents, "the people I eat breakfast with." However, further research would need to be conducted to gain more detailed information about this issue.

## Discovery of Similar Interests

*Definition: Use of the doorway area to discover similar interests.*

Both of the retirement communities studied have well over two hundred residents, so it is not possible for all of the residents to have strong communal bonds with one another. Accordingly, in each of these settings, there are smaller groups of residents who regularly associate with one another due to common interests or backgrounds. The doorway displays provided residents with an opportunity to advertise their interests to others and supports the formation of these smaller groups. Forty-three percent of the apartment survey respondents indicated they had learned of another resident's interest from looking at his/her display. The following quotes from the interviews and surveys illustrate this trend further.

- "I learned that she has the same interests as me."
- "And the woman next door on this floor also has a piece she has quilted. She's a quilter, a serious quilter. Little pieces. And she has done amazing things. That is definitely her."
- "(The doorway's) promote friendships"

The analytical findings from the apartment survey also indicate that there is a significant relationship between the positive impact of the displays and knowing others in the apartment buildings (.294,  $p < .01$ ). Furthermore, the larger doorway alcoves, which offer a greater opportunity for personalization, had an even stronger relationship (.562,  $p < .001$ ). These findings strongly indicate that the doorways helped to reinforce and promote other residents getting to know one another.

## RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

### WHAT INFLUENCES THE USE OF THESE EDGES?

While the previous section reviewed various uses for the unit's edge in retirement communities, this section will examine a number of influences that impact how these edges are used. Five primary influences will be discussed. These include the following categories: Architectural, Administrative, Peer Review, Care Level and Normalization.

#### ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCES

Architectural influences on the use of the unit's edge are the limitations and opportunities that different spatial configurations and architectural features provide. Architectural influences played a significant role in how these doorways areas are used. The primary themes for architectural influences are Amount of Space, Architectural Features, Boundaries, and Electricity.

##### Amount of Space

*Definition: The specific impact of the amount of space outside the unit's door, which is separate from the public corridor that is under the control of the unit's occupant.*

Regardless of the care level or the community, if space was provided for personalization, it was used in all four settings (See Table Thirteen as an example). The larger the space provided; the more items that are placed in the area and greater amount of object variety. This is clear from the significance levels reported for the mean number of items on display in the assisted living setting at Community One that had two architectural styles of doorways – both recessed alcove style doorways and hallway style doorways (See Figure Eight). The alcove style had 4.29 mean number of items while the hallway style had 2.75 ( $p = .010$ ). Therefore, the amount of space did make a difference in the number of objects displayed in the same setting. The assisted living setting at Community Two with larger alcove spaces and built in shelves, has a mean number of objects on display at 8.25, which is even higher. Comparing both apartment settings, the mean number of objects increased when more spaces is provided. Community One's deep alcoves had 10.26 mean number of items on display while Community Two's shallow alcoves had 6.94. However, this mean number difference was not found to be significant.

Wherever larger alcoves were used, apartment residents perceived the spaces as providing storage. This is evident from the 14% of the survey respondents who mentioned storage as a primary reason for personalizing the larger alcoves in Community One's apartment setting. Comparatively, none of the respondents in Community Two's apartment setting, which have shallow alcoves, mentioned storage as a reason for object choice or placement. The additional wall surfaces and floor areas provided in the larger alcoves also encouraged larger items such as tables and more frequently items were hung on the wall. Shallow alcoves with a built-in shelf appear to be viewed as a place to display items or a place to temporarily place items. This finding is supported by the greater number of decorative display oriented themes provided from Community Two's apartment survey compared to the more storage and utility oriented themes provided from Community One. Finally, the larger display areas in Community One also have a stronger significant relationship with knowing one's neighbor better. Thus, it can be inferred that larger alcoves may also provide more space for meaningful personalization.

## Architectural Features

*Definition: Impact of architectural features provided in the doorway area.*

The impact of providing a shelf versus not providing shelf in the same amount of space in apartment settings requires additional study. The results of this impact was not possible to determine in the current study since these research settings had different sized alcoves. What can be determined is that the larger spaces without a shelf did impact the number of items displayed and the types of objects on display. Deeper alcoves without a shelf had 10.26 mean number of objects on display while the shallow alcoves with a shelf had 6.94 mean number of objects. The apartment setting with larger alcoves also had more variety in the types of objects on display. This trend is evident from counting the number of object categories present in each architectural type. The shallow alcoves with a shelf had a mean of 4.63 object categories, while the deeper alcoves had a mean of 8.53 (See Table Sixteen). The larger alcoves without a shelf created a natural need for residents to provide their own horizontal surface for utility or personalization resulting in increased variety and number of objects displayed.

The impact of providing a shelf versus not providing shelf within deep alcoves was possible to determine with the two assisted living settings since both architectural types existed. Comparing both assisted living settings that have doorways with deep alcoves, the presence of a shelf did increase the number of objects that were on display significantly. The difference between the mean number of objects in deep alcoves without a shelf versus deep alcoves with a shelf was 4.39 ( $p < .05$ ). Additionally, the mean number of object categories also increased by 4.64 categories in the similar sized alcoves when a shelf was provided. Therefore, it can be inferred that providing a shelf in assisted living settings does increase the amount of personalization and the types of objects possible to display.

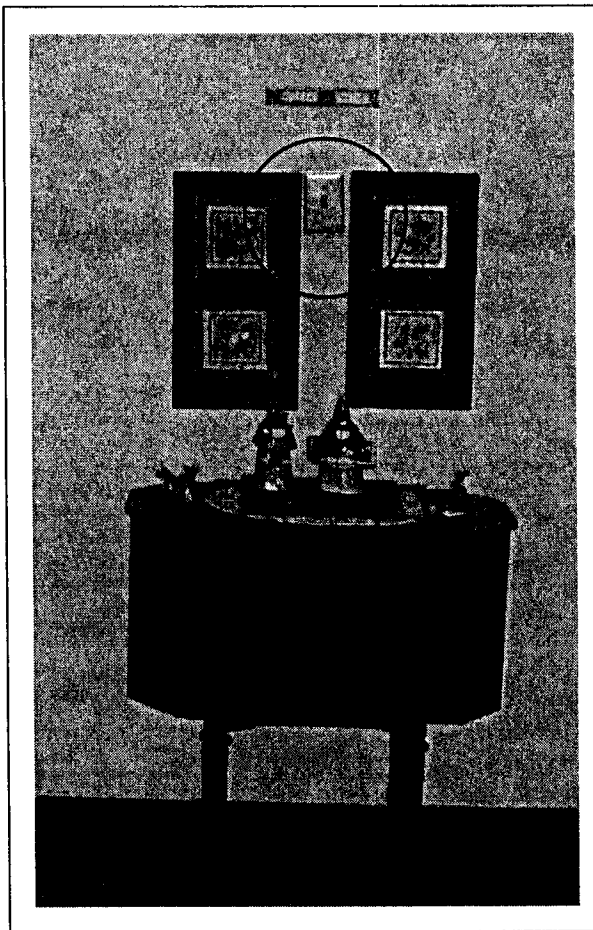
## Boundaries

*Definition: Impact of how definitively each display area is defined architecturally.*

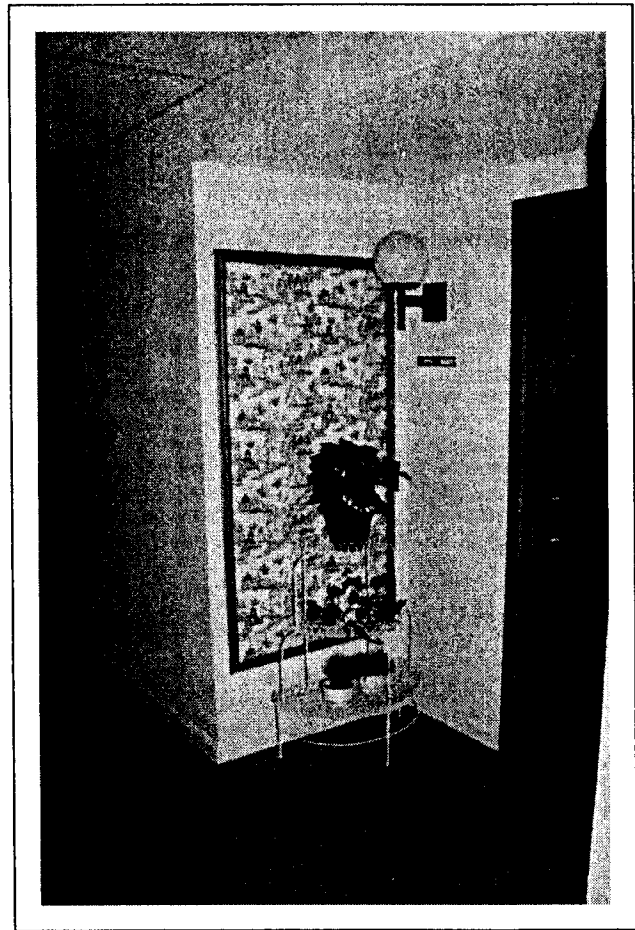
Another clear advantage of alcove entryways is the distinctive boundary within which a resident can personalize without straying into the community space of the hallway. Doorway alcoves which shared space with other doorways or hallway doorways without a clear architectural separation frequently created an ambiguous line. The result is that some residents are not sure where they can personalize. One apartment resident, pointed out this architectural limitation in her interview:

That's right — they couldn't (personalize the area) and then if it's right next door to someone else, and sometimes it does not go with what ever the person has next door. So people are much more limited and have less chance to inhabit their own space.

Two of the three assisted living residents who had hallway style alcoves mentioned they had to get permission to branch down the hall from their doorways with personal objects. Comparably, the two assisted living residents interviewed in the same community, who had alcove doorways,



**FIGURE NINETEEN** EXAMPLE OF WORKING A DISPLAY AROUND THE ELECTRIC SWITCH  
PHOTO BY MARK PROFFITT



**FIGURE TWENTY** EXAMPLE OF A PERMANENT CHANGE TO AN ALCOVE. MURAL WAS GLUED TO THE WALL AND SURROUNDED BY WOOD MOULDING.  
PHOTO BY MARK PROFFITT

did not mention having to receive permission to personalize. Thus, the lack of a boundary appears to be an issue worthy of further investigation.

## Electricity

*Definition: Limitations and opportunities of having electrical outlets and lights in the display area.*

Electrical outlets, lights and switches also impacted the doorway usage. Electrical outlets had the very practical use of providing the residents with a place to recharge batteries for electric scooters. In addition, outlets outside the residents' doors allowed the placement of small lamps and in one case a re-circulating water pump for a waterfall. The apartment setting with shallow alcoves (Community Two) did not have any convenience outlets in the alcove area; therefore, no electric items were found on the shelves. Wall mounted light sconces controlled by wall switches located in the alcove were used as a means of welcoming visitors in Community One. They also served the purpose of providing residents with the opportunity to illuminate the keyhole as needed when returning to their apartments versus always leaving the light on. Community Two had light sconces that are under the control of motion detectors. One drawback of the wall-mounted switches was their location in Community One, which occasionally impacted how residents personalized their doorways. Sometimes residents would just cover over the



switch while other times they worked their display around it. Thus, electrical outlets and switched lights provided an opportunity for increased variety in the doorways while the placement of these items also impacted the display (See Figure Nineteen).

## ADMINISTRATION INFLUENCES

Both communities were selected for the study based upon their highly positive attitudes about personalization. Accordingly, it is not possible from this data set to determine how personalization might differ in settings with more stringent administrative rules about the permissible uses of the doorway alcoves. In this study, administrative staff were questioned informally about the use of doorway alcoves and in most cases personalization was encouraged within reasonable boundaries. It should be noted that both of these retirement communities have a double tier of administration which will be described in further detail below. One tier is the organization's administrative policies and the second tier is the residents' self-governing policies. Both of these organizations set boundaries for personalization which will be described in the following paragraphs.

### Administrative Rules

*Definition: Impact of the administrative rules and policies enforced by staff members.*

In both communities, assisted living settings appear to have more restrictions on doorway uses compared to the apartments. Some staff members expressed concern about things looking cluttered or crowded, but all interviewed saw the positive benefits of having doorway displays. One staff member expressed concern that the Fire Marshall may request the removal of live plants and wreaths being displayed for the holidays. The assisted living residents' comments also shared a diversity of staff attitudes towards hallway personalization. One assisted living resident mentioned in her interview that she requested permission to decorate further down the hall from her doorway and received approval. Another assisted living resident stated that she brought several things to display but only received permission for two objects. When I interviewed another assisted living resident, I was surprised to find she had artwork down the hall and across from her unit's doorway alcove. Her reply was, "They say it is okay, so I do it."

Apartment buildings appear to have much less administrative involvement over limiting the personalization of doorway alcoves. However, both of the apartment settings studied had very clear architectural boundaries for the doorway alcoves. Residents appeared to have freedom within those boundaries. This was particularly true in the apartment setting with deeper alcoves where residents would sometimes change the color of walls or add a permanent shelf (See Figure Twenty). In the shallow alcove apartment setting, most items were applied to the alcove and could be easily removed without changing the integrity of the area. Administrative rules did motivate what some residents decided to put on display. One community asked residents to make up their own name tags for their doors and they discouraged the use of titles such as Doctor or Ph.D. for egalitarian purposes. This same community also requested that resident put up some type of sign to warn people that a pet was in residence. More research is needed to assess how residents perceive such administrative instructions regarding how to label themselves (and their possessions) in the display areas.

## Resident Self Governing Policies

*Definition: Impact of resident run committees on doorway displays.*

Both communities have strong resident committees that establish policies for the community. As both communities evolved, residents committees have fully taken over the review of hallway décor. These resident organizations supervise the placement of art and furniture in the public areas of the community. Some residents described confrontations with these committees over items they wished to donate for public displays, but wished to have near their dwelling units. In both apartment settings, residents could do anything they wished within reason to their own alcoves, but if they branched down the hallway then they needed permission from a resident committee. However, there appears to be some gray area to these policies. In the apartment setting with shallow alcoves (Community Two), residents could donate artwork to the committee and the committee would make an effort to hang the pieces near their doors if it was requested. Before these committees and rules were established, it appears that some of the founding residents branched out to some of the small sitting areas and down the hall. It also appears that a few residents have branched down the hall and added items such as travel pictures. A few respondents indicated that this behavior was now discouraged. The apartment setting with the larger alcoves (Community One) was decorated by a committee, which purchased artwork specifically for the hallway. This artwork was more anonymous compared to the other setting which used donated items from residents.. However, in this community, residents did not appear to branch out of their clearly defined alcoves. One couple explicitly acknowledged the decor rule system as a part of community life.

(wife) I happen to be on two committees. I am on the art committee and the house committee. The art committee feels strongly that people should not be putting pictures across the hall because what suits one person for personal reasons may not be something that is pleasing as a decorative object. Not the personal spaces just along the wall. When it comes to the general hall space we think the quality should be very good. So, the house committee was created in part. Oftentimes when you come from a house you have items you may want to make as a gift or a loan. Now, we have decided it all should be a gift since it gets very complicated with estates otherwise. So, there has to be lid put on with what is accepted.

(husband) And I think it is important in a place like this, which is a community and we all impinge on one another. I think it is important to follow this convention. Otherwise, many people want to spread themselves, their ego and their importance or whatever.

(wife) You gain a lot when you come here but you also give up a lot.

(husband) It's that kind of a place.

*Definition: Informal peer pressure, which influences how doorways are used.*

Residents also described how informal peer pressure influenced what was placed in the doorways. Sometimes this was a form of positive reinforcement and sometimes it was a form of censure. Positive examples include the compliments residents receive for items placed in the doorways. One apartment resident surveyed indicated she always receives positive comments about the quotations she places on her door. Negative examples include direct references to not liking what people put outside. A few residents spoke about the critique of objects during the interviews. Residents also would discourage others from placing anything of monetary value outside their door. In one community, a theft had occurred, and the residents discouraged placing things in the alcoves that are valuable. An example of one apartment resident's interview that supports the peer pressure theme follows:

(Resident)...and I think – people have a lot to say about what people put out on the front.

(Researcher) Tell me more about that?

(Resident) Well yeah - people will say, “why did you put that out?” That I am afraid does influence how they feel about people.

(Researcher) Really?

(Resident) Well you could put out a little—Kind of – if you put a little if it is real cutesy or a very modern piece of sculpture all of them do reflect the people – I think the other residents make judgments about what they like and do not like.

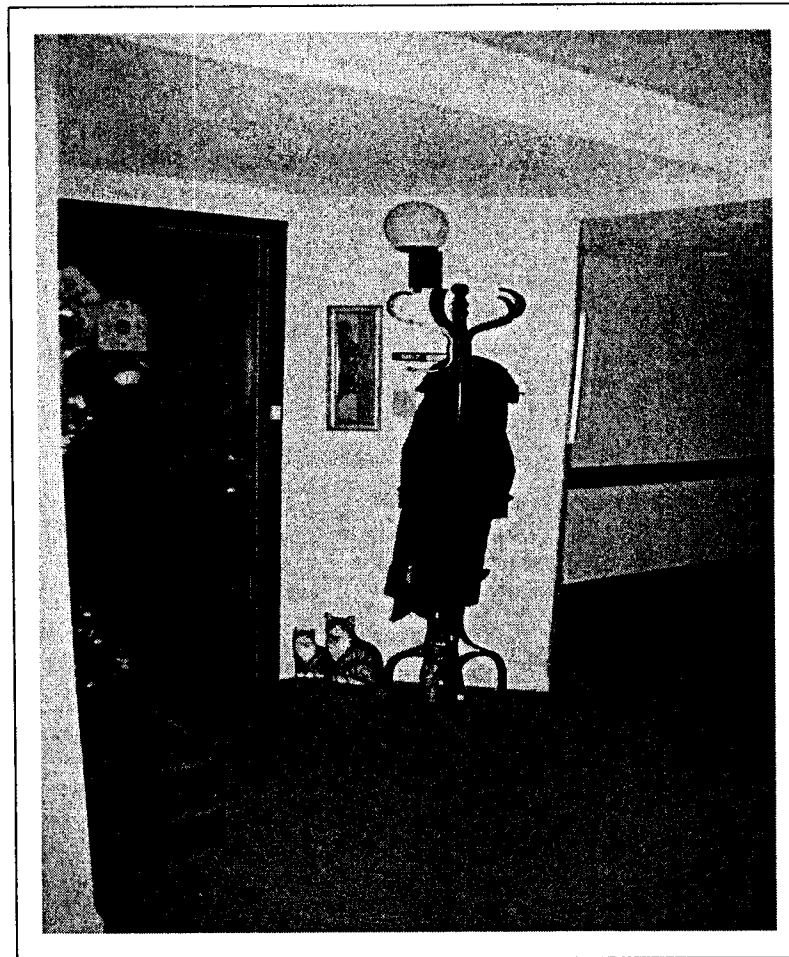
(Researcher) Is this a topic of conversation?

(Resident) Occasionally – I would say it is more—well sometimes admiring. I think it is maybe more questioning or critical. Uh-huh. What ever they have—if they have quite a beautiful piece. Most people do not put fine things in the hall. I have not looked out here. Only in this building, I have not looked at the others.

## Care Level

*Definition: Impact of the residents' physiological conditions upon use of the doorways.*

Eighty-six percent of the apartment survey respondents selected the display items on their own. Only one apartment resident mentioned during the interview that her daughter was responsible for items being placed outside in the hall. Two of the eight people who were interviewed in the assisted living settings mentioned a son or daughter helped with placing items in the doorway. One assisted living resident stated a niece placed items outside for her for the holidays. From these pilot data, frailer residents appear to have more assistance with their displays compared to the apartment residents. However, more comparative data would need to be gathered to determine the extent of this trend.



**FIGURE TWENTY ONE** EXAMPLE OF USING THE DOORWAY LIKE  
THE FRONT HALL OF A HOUSE  
PHOTO BY MARK PROFFITT

Certainly, many residents in all four settings would require assistance with the hanging of large pictures and the installation of heavy furniture. If this help was required, it was not mentioned by the survey respondents.

### Normalization

*Definition: Impact of past patterns and customs on the use of the doorways.*

A pattern emerged from the photographs and survey data that many of the residents perceived these entry alcoves as an indoor front door. Residents treated the area as a foyer and would select items that they had near the front door in their past homes. Some resident saw this area as an outdoor porch and kept plants in the area. Live plants were found in 11% of the apartment doorways photographed. In fact, 68% percent of the respondents to the apartment survey indicated that the items they put outside their doors had been in their entryways before. In many instances, the practical items associated with the entry foyer were placed outside. Examples include coat racks, mirrors, and doormats (See Figure Twenty One). Mirrors appeared in 9% of the apartment doorways and small entry rugs appeared in 39% percent of the doorways.

Decorative customs also reflected aspects of normalization. One assisted living resident who was informally interviewed had placed a poinsettia on a table in the hallway. His unit did not have a recessed entryway, but it was very near the end of the hall. He told the researcher he was only in assisted living temporarily while he recovered from surgery, so the entire unit had very little furniture. When I asked him why he had placed the poinsettia outside, he replied, "It just seemed like the right thing to do." One apartment resident mentioned a lifetime of flying the American flag on her porch for the holidays. Now she flies a miniature version. Thus, it was clear the pattern of decorating for the holidays observed over a lifetime also plays a strong role in the use of these indoor front doors.

## RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

### WHAT MESSAGES ARE THESE EDGES CONVEYING?

Eight primary thematic messages emerged from the study. Some messages were extremely clear and easily understood while others require additional exploration. These eight thematic messages include:

- Who I am.
- This is important to me.
- I am different.
- I am active, energetic, healthy or happy.
- I belong.
- I am contributing to the community.
- This is my space.
- I have a pet.

#### EIGHT PRIMARY MESSAGES

Since many of these messages have been revealed in previous discussions, the summary findings will be presented in an abbreviated manner.

##### Who I Am

“Who I Am” was a message that many of the doorways expressed in a variety of ways. This theme emerged from three primary data sources – the apartment survey, the photographs, and the interviews. When apartment residents were surveyed about what they have learned from viewing others’ doorway displays, 58% of the content themes related to “who the occupant was”. When asked the same question, interviewed residents would also point out other people’s doorways and how they related to a specific person’s interests. These residents also indicated that they personalized the area as an expression of themselves.

- “Well many – like my friend with the railroad has done. It is very clear from what he has put out and you will see an amazing collection of locomotives and models on the whole wall, he will tell you about each one.”
- “And the women next door on this floor also has a piece she has quilted. She’s a quilter, a serious quilter. That is definitely her.”
- (Researcher) “Why did you put things outside?” (Resident) “An expression of me.”
- (Researcher) “Why did you put things outside?” (Resident) “Well it is for an expression.”
- “I like to think the blue jay reflects my personality.”

Only two of the nineteen residents interviewed believed the doorways to be more decorative than forms of self-expression.

- “I think people do not make use of it as much as they should. It does not make a statement of their lives or their interest as a whole.”
- “...a lot of it looks like nothing to me – some of them are nice.”

### This Is Important To Me

The message that “items placed on display were significant to the occupant” was clearly picked up by the other residents. Forty-three percent of the apartment resident respondents indicated they had learned about a person’s interests or hobbies. Quotes that demonstrate this message include the following:

- “Well I think they would not put something outside the door unless it was something that they like, and something that really had significance in their lives.”
- “Well it fit, and I think it makes a statement.”

### I Am Different

There was a great deal of effort put into these displays to reflect creativity and the need to be seen as different. This is evidenced by the following quotes:

- “My room is not like anyone else.”
- “Well we try to put something out a little different.”
- “Not much because you would feel stupid not to put something out. You like to have something good.”
- “I wanted something distinctive.”
- “It just makes one realize there are individuals living in the apartments and each one has a little different taste in decorating.”

### I Am Active, Energetic, Healthy Or Happy

Residents would make judgments about the occupant’s life, outlook and health based upon the displays. The following quotes illustrate how other residents picked-up on this message:

- “(I have learned) their taste, creativity, style, culture, uniqueness, awareness, energy.”
- “They tell me the resident is happy and creative.”
- “And it makes the people interested in who is in there rather than...and notice a person.”
- “Now some people are creative and you are always looking to see what they are going to put out next.”

### I Belong

The use of the displays has also become a shared tradition in these communities, as a method to express belonging and a way to judge others. Furthermore, residents would often display objects that are reflective of the upper socio-economic social milieu of these communities. Examples include exotic travel souvenirs, modern tastes in art and heirloom period furniture. Quotes that relate to “I belong” include:

- “She has better taste than her predecessor.”
- “Outsiders often comment on the displays.”
- “It has become customary to have some sort of display for most residents.”

### I Am Contributing to the Community

Thirteen percent of the residents surveyed were motivated to personalize their doorways based upon making a positive contribution to the hallway. Some of the residents criticized others for not making an effort.

- “Well it is sort of a friendly thing.”
- “I enjoy other people’s doorways so I wanted to reciprocate.”
- “People who visit remark about them and enjoy the variety as do the residents.”
- “I wanted to contribute to the attractiveness of the hall outside my door.”
- “Some want to add to the beauty and interest – a few do not (hence nothing at their doors).”

### This is My Space

Residents also indicated that they personalized the doorways because it was “their space” or “their home.” Ten percent of the respondents to the apartment survey indicated this was the reason they chose to personalize the area. Clearly, residents took ownership of the areas outside their doors. Moreover, one assisted living resident also indicated that she appreciated the doorway alcove as a separation between the public corridor and her one room, private living unit.

### I Have a Pet

The pet alert message was found in many of the doorways in Community One. Frequently, this message was posted pictorially rather than in the form of written communication. Recognizing a person has a pet was mentioned by 14% of the respondents in Community One. Comparatively, only one doorway photographed in Community Two showed a pet alert.



## RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

### WHAT IS THE EDGES' INFLUENCE ON PERCEPTIONS OF THE SETTING?

As mentioned before, edge personalization influenced residents' perceptions both positively and negatively, but primarily the perceptions were positive.

#### POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS

The main sources of information for answering this research question are the apartment surveys and the interviews. Assisted living residents were also asked about the use of the spaces outside their doors, but no negative statements were made by these residents during the interviews. Overall, apartment residents saw the displays as a positive aspect of their community. Fifty percent of the apartment survey respondents from both communities viewed the doorways as very positive and 31% percent indicated they had some positive impact. In contrast, ten percent of all respondents indicated the doorways had no impact and 2% indicated the doorways had a negative impact. Quotes that illustrate positive impacts of displays include:

- "The doorways give me insight into the occupant."
- "It makes one realize there are individuals living in the apartments."
- "They give the corridor a lived in look."
- "Promote friendships."
- "The variety is important. A stranger can tell we are a community and individuals."
- "Makes the place looked lived-in not sterile."

Statistical significance was also achieved when measuring the relationship between the positive impact of the displays and how satisfied are residents with the apartment building décor (.324,  $p < .01$ ). Therefore, it can be inferred that these displays contributed to the positive perceptions of the community by the residents.

#### NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS

As stated above, the numbers of respondents who saw the displays as negative or having no impact is quite low. However, residents who are heavily invested in their communities may not wish to indicate dissatisfaction; thus, there may be some bias in the respondents' answers. To add additional support to these findings, the survey needs to be issued to more residents in communities with less personalization, as well as in assisted living settings. However, the open-ended comments and indepth interviews from this study indicated that only a minority of residents had an issue with some of the displays. In other cases, the need for self-expression versus what is viewed as an appropriate community image conflicted. Some of the resident reacted to what they believed created clutter. The following quotes illustrate these respondents' issues:

- "Never thought about it, some are fastidious, others are chaotic."
- "Most of us do not decorate except perhaps at holidays and like the hall uncluttered. It could be junky if we all hung stuff out. An occasional piece is eye-catching, but a hall full would not be neat or fetching!"

- “Tastefully done it adds to the décor. Artificial flowers and pictures detract.”
- “I do not know how others feel about the displays. As a whole the displays are okay, but one or two have too much in the small space.”
- “Too much clutter would increase the work of the housekeepers, they are discouraged in some residences for the elderly.”

## RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE

### WHAT IS THE EDGES' INFLUENCE ON SOCIALIZATION?

Key themes that emerged about the effects of the unit's edge on socialization are Conversation Starters, Group Formation and Group Acceptance.

#### Conversation Starters

People who move into a retirement community often do not previously know one another. In both retirement communities, several residents had relocated from other states. However, in Community Two, 42% of the residents were affiliated with the local college in some way. Therefore, it is possible several residents knew one another before moving into the community. It was hypothesized, providing residents with a form of self-expression via decorative displays would help to support the creation of social networks both small and large. This is a difficult question to answer definitively, given the limited resources of this exploratory study. The best indicator that displays have an effect on socialization is the strong relationship found between the rating of knowing others in the apartment building and the positive impact of the displays from all apartment surveys (.294,  $p < .01$ ). To support these findings, the survey would need to be issued at more places, with varying degrees of personalization. In addition, the method of determining how well residents know one another would need to be further refined. Assisted living residents also need to be added to the survey sample. However, there are some clear indicators in the survey data that doorway displays helped residents to start conversation as evidenced by the following quotes.

- "I learned of others' interests - provided conversation areas – a way of getting to know other residents."
- "Often it's a conversation starter and helps to get to know a new resident easier."

#### Group Formation

Similar to the idea of conversation starters, displays also helped other residents learn about common interests. It was hypothesized that personalization would also help to form groups of residents with common interests. Similar to what is stated above, the study does not provide enough information to determine if smaller group formation is a direct outcome of personalization. This trend was not identified in assisted living in this study and more research would be required to determine if it exists. However, it is clear from the apartment survey answers, people are aware of other residents' interests from the displays and it can be inferred that the displays played some role (e.g., 43% of the respondents indicated they learned of a resident's interests or hobby from the displays). Quotes from open-ended responses to the question "What have you learned from another resident's display?" further illustrate this connection.

- "She likes the same hobbies as I do."
- "An appreciation of what is important to them."
- "She likes exotic things. She likes animals. She reads."
- "I learned another was a gardener by her changes of potted plants."

#### Group Acceptance

Both retirement communities see themselves as intact entities where strong feelings of group membership exist. Doorway displays have become a custom at both retirement communities. Residents who contribute to the displays are noticed. The positive comments received by people who change

their displays often help to reinforce these actions. Thus, the creation of displays helps to reinforce group behavior, as well as indicate group membership. Indicators that residents see themselves as members of a community group are evident in the following statements.

- “Outsiders often comment on the displays.”
- “People who visit remark about them and enjoy the variety as do the residents.”
- “A stranger can tell we are a community and individuals.”
- “Visitors must notice the difference in our interests.”
- “Learned about our various interests.”

The custom of creating a display is highlighted in these quotes.

- “It has become customary to have some sort of display for most residents.”
- “I noticed interesting displays when I arrived and had numerous small items, which I could display.”
- “Recently moved to the apartments – everyone does (create a display)”

Doorway displays are seen as means to contribute to the group and to receive affirmation that you belong to the group. This trend appears in the following quotes:

- “By comments, questions, requests to keep some items longer; pleasure at seeing some again, “Oh you’ve got dear old Don Quixote out again.”
- “To share my treasures with others.”
- “Often I display things I picked up on recent trips. Flowers bring cheer. Unusual items bring the outside world closer.”
- “I have learned “the talents of individual and interests in creating a house atmosphere.”
- “I have bare tree branches in a vase. In October, I hang jack-o-lanterns; in November, I hang pilgrims, Indians, turkeys; in December, I hang ornaments; in January, snowflakes cut out of paper: in February, hearts; in March, shamrocks; in April, jelly beans, eggs, bunnies, chickens; May—pictures of flowers posted on cards. I always have a quotation posted on our door. I regularly receive comments from people walking by about how they enjoy the changing display and quotations.”

# FUTURE RESEARCH

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Manipulating the unit's edge to create a spatial zone for residents to use has been shown from this study to have many positive attributes. Several of the findings from this study follow widely accepted environment-behavior theoretical findings in the housing literature. Clearly, use of the home's edge is a pattern that is being recreated successfully in the retirement setting in these two communities. This exploratory study was only able to identify key patterns. Further research needs to be conducted to provide additional information and to fill in some of the gaps in our understanding.

### Future Research in Apartment Settings

- More comparative research needs to be conducted in settings with more and less personalization to determine to what extent having varying degrees of personalization impacts socialization and perceptions of these living environments.
- More information needs to be gathered on a number of external influences on personalization. For example, does the fear of items being stolen limit the items placed outside? Moreover, how do administrative policies, building regulations and licensing agencies promote or restrict the nature of what is displayed?
- More information needs to be gathered on intra and intercommunity variation in residents' as well as visitors' perceptions of the displays. For instance, do residents who are heavily emotionally invested in the community feel differently about these personalized display areas than others? Was the data from this study generally representative of how retirement community residents perceive and utilize this architectural feature?

### Future Research in Assisted Living Settings

- More comparative information is needed for assisted living settings on the use of these edges; such as who assists with the selection/placement of items and how frequently do these displays change?
- Does the size of the assisted living unit influence the placement of items outside for storage and display? For example, is there less need to personalize if there is more private space inside the unit? How do older people in these settings make difficult decisions about the downsizing of their possessions? Also, how do they personalize their interior and exterior space with the remaining items?
- Do residents form social networks within assisted living, or do they maintain stronger connections throughout the retirement community? What role does the unit's edge play in socialization in assisted living?
- Does the creation of a display help to orient residents and encourage wayfinding in assisted living? Are there other possible therapeutic benefits associated with this architectural feature?

- More information also needs to be gathered on the external influences on personalization in assisted living settings. For example, does the fear of items being stolen or borrowed limit the items placed outside? Do assisted living residents typically receive their newspaper or packages at their dwelling's door and have less use for a package shelf?

Moreover, what restrictions do administrative policies, building regulations and licensing agencies place on personalization in these settings? What is the nature of assisted living residents' roles in community governance and how does this affect their abilities to personalize their spaces?

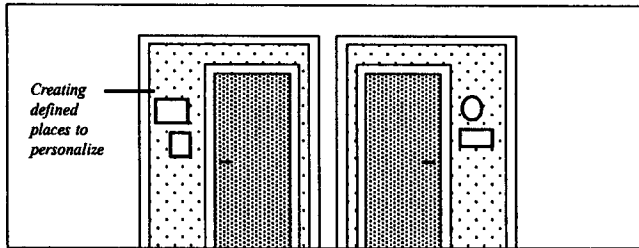
# **D E S I G N   G U I D E L I N E S**



## DESIGN GUIDES

Based upon this exploratory research, the following preliminary design guidelines have been created.

### CREATING AN EDGE



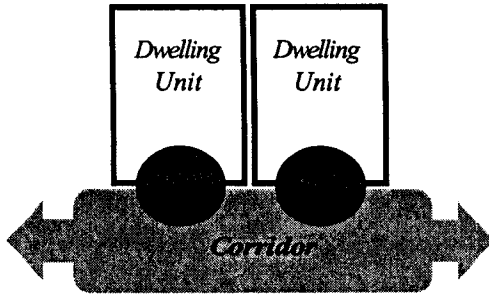
#### Criteria

Frequently, the use of the doorway for personalization was impeded because a clear boundary between the area that is public and the resident's semi-public zone did not exist. Doorway areas should have a clear demarcation of what areas are under the resident's control. Furthermore, having a clear boundary helps to reinforce community policies on the use of public areas.

#### Design Response

Clear boundaries are inherent in most recessed alcoves, but should be enhanced in places where alcoves are shared with other doorways. This can be done with a different wall treatment or moldings. This same tactic can be used in hallway style doorways, which lack any defined space for personalization. Moldings could be used to create a defined area around the doorway. Using different colored paint within the bounded area could also further separate this area. Residents should then be informed they are welcome to personalize this defined area on the wall. At the same time, residents should be cautioned not to hang any items which protrude more than four inches from the wall that might create a potential hazard.

## POSITIVE SPACE



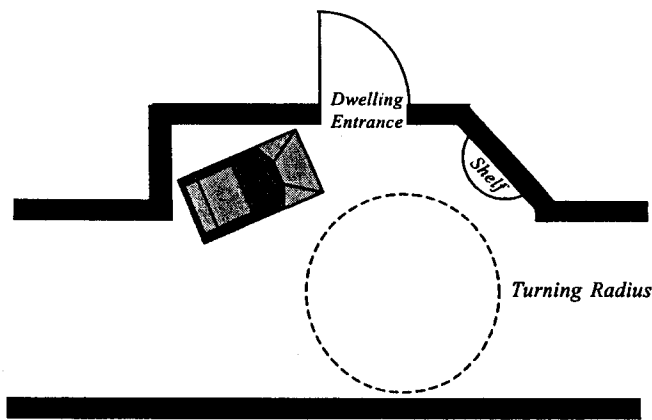
### Criteria

When a recessed alcove is provided for the resident's use, the design should be configured to provide maximum usability. These entranceways should be large enough to be distinctive, and not be impeded upon by door swings. As private living areas are compressed in size, particularly in assisted living, this zone becomes very critical in establishing a sense of ownership and privacy.

### Design Response

Larger alcove sizes, which create a clear, separate zone, are encouraged in assisted living settings with small studio apartments. While apartment settings are more likely to have a foyer, which separates public and private areas inside the unit, larger entry alcoves are also encouraged in these settings. The larger alcoves provide more opportunities for a variety of uses such as the display of heirloom furniture. Moreover, larger alcoves provide more opportunities for residents to express their individuality. If space is restricted, then a narrow shelf should be provided at a minimum.

## PARKING PLACES



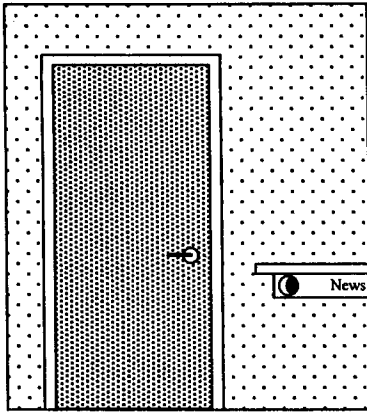
### Criteria

As residents age in place, assistive mobility devices may become a necessity. These devices can range from as small as a cane to as large as a four-wheel electric scooter. Residents may not need these items inside their unit and may primarily use them to assist with trips to the common spaces in the community building. Furthermore, dwelling units do not always provide a convenient place for residents to place these devices. Thus, doorway alcoves become the frequent parking places for walkers, rollators, and scooters.

### Design Response

Alcoves should be designed to accommodate the parking of electric scooters whenever residents are expected to travel long distances to get to common areas. The average space needed to park a scooter is twenty inches wide by forty-eight inches deep. It may be acceptable for some portion of the scooter to intrude upon the hallway. To support scooters, hallways must also be wide enough for resident to complete a turn. If a scooter is used there still should be some place for residents to place personal items in the doorway such as a shelf. Additionally, residents will still need a shelf for findings keys and receiving the newspaper, etc. A resident should not have to give up identity and function for an assistive device.

## THE PACKAGE SHELF



### Criteria

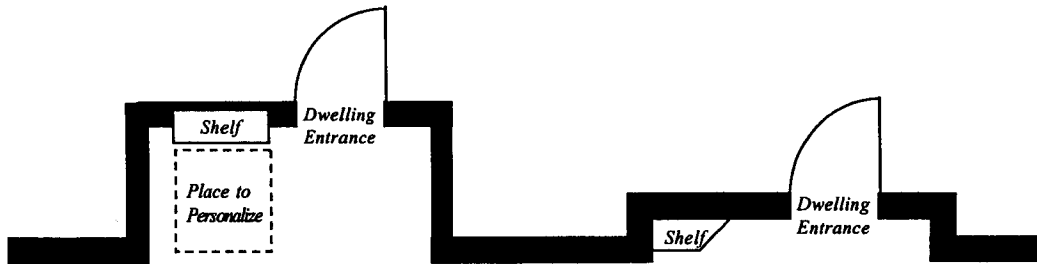
Physical changes that occur to a person as they age often limit the ability to bend over and retrieve items placed on the floor. An entryway should provide or facilitate creating a place for residents to conveniently accept regular deliveries. The entranceway should also provide or facilitate creating a temporary resting-place for items while searching for keys.

### Design Response

Newspapers and community newsletters are frequently delivered to the resident door. The doorway areas should provide some type of receptacle for receiving these papers. Newspaper delivery should be accommodated in both apartment settings and in assisted living settings.

A temporary resting-place for packages should also be incorporated as a minimum treatment for the unit's edge. If a convenience shelf is provided in the entranceway, the preferred location for the shelf is adjacent to the doorknob. If additional space is provided to accommodate a piece of furniture for this purpose, the preferred location is also adjacent to the doorknob.

## ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES



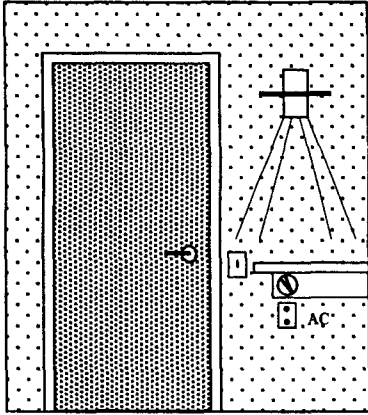
### Criteria

Architectural features such as a shelf are not only convenient, but also provides a means for display. When both space and a shelf are provided the maximum amount of personalization can occur, particularly in assisted living settings.

### Design Response

If doorway alcoves are compressed to being less than eighteen inches deep they should include some type of shelf. In assisted living, a shelf as well as space should be provided, so residents can easily create a display without always depending upon the assistance of others.

## LIGHTING AND OUTLETS



### Criteria

A part of the aging process is a reduction in vision. Older people are known to need increased lighting levels to see as clearly as a person who is younger; therefore, alcoves need to have adequate lighting. Many current residents, who experienced the Great Depression, do not like wasting electricity, and therefore do not want to leave the light on for such a temporary need. Thus, the placement of the light switch and the placement of electric outlets should be carefully considered to address these issues. Additionally, electric scooters need to be recharged, and require an outlet near their parking places.

### Design Response

Lighting in the alcoves should be under the resident's control. When light switches are provided outside the door, a resident can flip the light switch on to momentarily illuminate the area when it is needed rather than always leaving the light on. A three-way switch is also preferred, so residents can also flip on the light inside the unit and screen any visitor through the peephole. The switch should be within easy reach and not be located in the center of an important area to personalize. Providing an electric outlet in the alcove for residents to install lamps, other electric features and to recharge electric scooters is desirable. Outlets should be accessibly located between twenty-four inches and thirty-six inches above the floor.

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## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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# A P P E N D I X



Architecture  
Planning  
Interiors

**D O R S K Y   H O D G S O N   +   P A R T N E R S**

CLEVELAND   FORT LAUDERDALE   WASHINGTON DC

Date

Dear Apartment Resident:

I am an architect who is conducting a research study on how people personalize the entrances to their apartments. Specifically, I am looking at doorway displays, which are alcoves, shelves, doors and walls where you have placed personal items for display. Personal items can include plants, pictures, artwork or figurines. (Community Name) has generously permitted me the opportunity to study how you are personalizing your doorways.

Since I am unable to speak directly to everyone, please take a few minutes and fill out this short survey. Your responses should only refer to the items you display outside your apartment.

Your participation is voluntary and your answers will be kept anonymous. The information gathered from this study will be used to inform architects and designers about the importance of providing a doorway display area in future retirement communities.

This study is being partially supported by the Center for Architecture and Urban Planning Research at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me at 216-464-8600.

After completing the survey, please seal it into an envelope and mail it back to me. If all possible, please return the survey before (date) I really do appreciate your help with the study.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Proffitt  
Architectural Researcher

23240 Chagrin Boulevard Suite 200 Cleveland, OH 44122 T 216.464.8600 F 216.464.8608 E mail-cl@dph-arch.com  
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2700 West Cypress Creek Road Suite D126 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309 T 954.975.8138 F 954.977.3963 E mail@dhp-arch.com

# Doorway Display Survey

1) Did you personalize your doorway area? (Check one)

a) Yes \_\_\_\_ b) No \_\_\_\_

Please explain why you did or did not personalize your doorway?

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If you answered no to above, please skip to question six.

2) Who helped you select the items to display outside your door? (Check all that apply)

a) Myself \_\_\_\_  
b) Relative \_\_\_\_ e) Other \_\_\_\_  
c) Friend \_\_\_\_ (Please indicate)

3) Why did you select the items you decided to display? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) Have any of the items you chose to display been on display at your previous residence? If your answer is yes, please describe the item and where in your previous residence you had it displayed. An example would be: Brass plaque given to me as a wedding present – always hung in the front entrance hall.

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5) How often do you change your doorway display? (Check one)

a) Never change it \_\_\_\_ d) Every year or two \_\_\_\_  
b) Seasonally \_\_\_\_ e) Other \_\_\_\_  
c) About once a year \_\_\_\_ (Please indicate)

- TURN OVER -

6) Have you ever learned something new about another resident from his or her doorway display?

a) Yes \_\_\_\_ b) No \_\_\_\_

If yes please explain what you learned? An example would be: I found out he collects American pottery.

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7) On a scale of one to five, please rank how well you feel you know the other residents who live in the apartment building? (Circle one number only)

1	2	3	4	5
I do not know them	I only know them a little	I somewhat know them	I know them well	I know them extremely well

8) Please rate on a scale of one to five, how these doorway displays influence the decor of the hallways in the apartment building? (Circle one number only)

1	2	3	4	5
Negative Impact		No Impact		Positive Impact

Please explain why you think the doorway displays impact the hallways either positively, negatively or have no impact?

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9) Please rank on a scale of one to five how satisfied you are with the design and interior decoration of the apartment building? (Circle one number only)

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unsatisfied		Neutral		Very Satisfied

10) Gender? (Check one) Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_

11) Age? (In years or months) \_\_\_\_\_

12) How long have you lived at (Community Name)? (In years or months) \_\_\_\_\_

13) How long have you lived in the Apartments at (Community Name)? (In years or months) \_\_\_\_\_

*–Thank You –  
for your participation*

Please seal the survey in the self addressed stamped envelope and mail before (Date)