



Marta Fagundes

By Ann Kreiman
Senior Spotligher



Marta Fagundes is the star of our September/October Calendar. Marta tells us that she was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the daughter of Chrysantho and Seabra Fagundes. Her father was an engineer and teacher and her mother was a school principal. She has an older sister, Vera.

She carried on the family tradition by becoming a teacher for eight years, and went on to apply for a scholarship from the Pro-Deo University, in Rome, Italy to study Public Relations, Psychology, Communications and other subjects. Marta fell in love with Italy and she noticed that all Italian men were gorgeous!

While Marta was in Rome, her father came to a business meeting there. He was staying at a hotel and he invited Marta to use the public swimming pool nearby while he was in town. It was there that she met the love of her life, Roberto. He was so beautiful, she thought he was a statue! They started talking and after a courtship they became husband and wife. They had a daughter Antonella. Although they did divorce after a time, they are still talking!

However, after Marta finished her studies she took Roberto and her luggage back to Brazil. "We were young and had our illusions", Marta revealed. The couple lived in Rio and she returned to her executive position in Public Relations at Varig Airlines. She looks back at a wonderful career, where she was privileged to meet and greet many celebrities such as Frank Sinatra, Michael Jackson, bank presidents, and more.

Roberto visited Rome at least once a year to see his father and other family members. They were able to fly frequently because of the benefits Marta received as an airline employee. Her husband had his own business and was an editor of books. Their daughter Antonella graduated from Medical School in Rio and worked in healthcare with those affected with HIV and AIDS. She also lectured to inform people about these afflictions that began to affect an increasing population.

She had a dog, a mutt named Pitico, that she gave to a friend because of her declining health worries.

Marta moved alone to Florida in 1945, and bought a home in Coconut Creek. Around the time of 9/11, Marta experienced her own horrific personal event. She was sleeping and woke up at midnight to find her house with flames all around her. Fortunately, she was able to escape the burning house but it turned out to be a total loss, and her car was also consumed by the fire.

She tells us this tragic occurrence ended the first half of her life. Her possessions were gone, including all the necessary documents so important in our lives. She rented a room from a friend, lived there with her dog and bravely set out to rebuild her shattered life. She believes in destiny but also asks herself, "Why me?" She now lives in an efficiency in Deerfield housing.

Marta is an accomplished artist and her work has been installed in murals in nursing homes, shown at fairs and bought by many who recognize her unique talent.

With determination and courage, Marta has lived her second half of life. She looks forward to her daughter, Antonella, moving to be near her from California. At this time in her life, she is facing many health issues. Her involvement at our Center for Active Aging brings joy to her life. Here, she has found supportive and caring friendships with staff (she singled out Kelly, Joy, and Liz for special recognition!), center members and counseling all in one special place – the Center for Active Aging!