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'We Love This Place'

As new residents of Arbour Square of Harleysville, Barbara and Frank Roach enjoy an “unbelievable” lifestyle rooted in enrichment, independence, and peace of mind.

by **BILL DONAHUE** | photos by **JODY ROBINSON**

Francis J. Roach saw much of the world in his career as a submarine service engineer. The work took him far from his home in the Philadelphia area—to Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Greece, Taiwan, and Turkey. His wife, Barbara, joined him once their children became old enough, and when she could take time off from her job with a property-management firm in Bucks County.

“I was very pleased with the things we got to see and the work I got to do,” recalls Frank, a veteran of the U.S. Navy. “There was one year when I ran out of pages to stamp in my passport book.”

Married in 1962, the Roaches lived in Doylestown for 25 years before moving to New Jersey in the mid-1990s. They spent more than 20 years rising with the sun along the coast—first in Ocean City, then in Ocean View. While in the Garden State, Frank became heavily involved in community service, volunteering his expertise to support worthwhile causes such the Upper Township Community Emergency Response Team and the Cape May County Board of Elections, among others.

“Despite all we had accomplished, Barbara and I realized we were getting older,” Frank says. “I’m 82 and Barbara is almost



The Roaches' apartment has an outdoor patio that enables them to enjoy the natural beauty surrounding Arbour Square of Harleysville.

80, so we were coming to terms with the fact that we were not able to do all of the things we wanted to do. We also knew that family is more important than anything else, and we wanted to be closer to our daughter."

So, even though they adored life down the Jersey Shore, the Roaches began exploring active adult communities closer to where they had raised their family. In all, they vetted five communities in the Philadelphia suburbs, and one rose to the top: Arbour Square of Harleysville, a part of True Connection Communities. They especially liked the 22-acre campus located in an idyllic neighborhood in Montgomery County, the amenities they could enjoy, and the many ways in which the all-inclusive community could support their ability to live independently.

The Roaches made the move in early 2023, opting for a spacious two-bedroom apartment in Hillside at Arbour Square. One of the two bedrooms has since been remade into an office for Frank and a craft room for Barbara, where she likes to knit and crochet.

Frank says the apartment is in such a desirable location that the community's marketing department sometimes asks to show it to prospective new residents.

"We love this place," Frank says. "There's really no reason to leave the campus, if you don't want to. Our daughter lives in Perkasio and works [as a nurse] in Lansdale, so she drives by this place every day. We've been here for 10 months now, and the things we found and the people we met when we got here confirmed that this was the right decision for us."

Perhaps the Roaches' favorite aspect of their apartment is something that reminds them of living down the Jersey Shore, where they spent as much time as possible outside. The outdoor patio enables them to take in the area's abundant natural beauty—watching the deer graze, listening to birdsong as finches, sparrows, and other birds flit from feeder to feeder, and enjoying the sunsets Frank characterizes as "unbelievable."

New friends have been easy to come by, facilitated by the nametags Arbour

Square provides to all residents. The Roaches appreciate the many onsite amenities they can share with fellow residents, including a casino, a billiards hall, a movie theater, live entertainment, and happy hours in the onsite bar. Then there's the food; Frank insists the chef-prepared meals are "the best food I've ever eaten." He says he and Barbara head down to the dining room for lunch and dinner every day, with the exception of days in which the extraordinarily kind weather lures them outside so they can dine on their patio.

The Roaches' daily schedules have filled quickly. If they so choose, they can partake in enriching activities such as arts and crafts classes, woodworking, and exercise classes such as yoga and tai chi. If they want to get off campus for a few hours and prefer not to drive themselves, they can make use of Arbour Square's scheduled transportation for group outings and events.

Of course, Arbour Square offers many ways in which residents can volunteer their time and talents. Barbara volunteers at the thrift store, while Frank has found ways to rekindle his fondness for community service. Recently, for example, he was nominated as a candidate to lead the community as president of the board. He hopes his prior leadership experience helps him prevail in the election scheduled for the last week of November.

The Roaches and their family members appreciate another benefit provided by communities such as Arbour Square: peace of mind. While Arbour Square is strictly an independent-living facility, healthcare providers come on the campus by appointment or are just minutes away. Plus, Arbour Square now offers massage therapy as another perk of living at the community. In other words, Frank and Barbara have the confidence of knowing that they are in kind and capable hands.

"Access to good medical care is a necessity as you get older," Frank says. "Not everyone wants to talk about it, but as you get up there in years, you start to notice that you're not able to do some of the same things you used to do. Your family members probably won't be able to take care of you if your health takes a turn, but you won't need anything with a place like this. I'm glad we made the move here when we did." ■

Arbour Square of Harleysville

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