

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# Southwest NOW

Cedar Hill | DeSoto | Duncanville  
MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2016

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For the Duncanville High Marching Band, championships are a familiar tune

## A Caregiver's Journey

At Home With  
Veronica Shanklin

## 2016 Holiday Shopping Guide

All About Intention  
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Moving Ahead of the Curve

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LaCracha Holley

# A Caregiver's Journey

— By Debbie Durling



## At Home With Veronica Shanklin



*Manicured and lush is the landscape of a corner lot situated in the Hidden Canyon area of DeSoto. Beautiful crepe myrtles, perfectly rounded shrubs and a slightly curved walk leading to the front door give an aura of a well-cared-for home and family. The architecture of the house, bricked in shades of brown, is timeless. Two gables face the front lawn. A chimney, well placed to the side, gives warmth to the structure, while a unique arched, picture window is located to the right of the arched entry. The windows surrounding the front door were ahead of their time when the home was built in the '80s, and they still look modern today.*

Ron and Linda Shanklin bought this home in 1997, after spending the early part of their marriage raising their family in the Oak Cliff area. With both of their daughters off to college and out of the house, Ron, a retired professional football player and UNT football coach, and Linda, who worked in the insurance industry, found DeSoto to be the perfect area for transitioning into their new life as empty nesters.

Even though Ron has passed, the den of this 3,500-square-foot home echoes memories of his life and legacy with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Drawings given to him by fans, trophies, memorabilia and a unique handmade bar he adored are the decor



of this comfortable living space. Parquet wood flooring stretches out beneath the recliners and sofas that give comfort while the family rests and relaxes.

In 2013, Vernell Shorter, Linda's mother, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Soon thereafter, she moved in with Linda to ensure her safety and care. Linda's daughter, Veronica Shanklin, was living in Chicago, Illinois, at the time. She had completed her master's degree at Columbia College and was working as an account executive at a national advertising agency. From there, she moved on to serve as the director of marketing at a community college. When she got the news about her grandmother and saw the challenges her mother was facing with Vernell's care, she decided to leave her life and career in Chicago and move home to help her mom. One year later, her mom was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, too.



Veronica felt blessed to be able to pick up and move back home. The amazing attention to detail and upkeep of the home only reflects the sweet care the family gives to each other. Three bedrooms, two living areas, two dining areas and a large kitchen give ample space for medical needs and the ability for each of the three women to have a space of their own. Pink is the signature color of the carpets and furniture. A brick fireplace adorns the formal living room. The kitchen has raised panel cabinets surrounding a matching island. The sink is in the corner with two windows overlooking the backyard. The cabinets end in a bar that separates the actual kitchen area from the breakfast room.

A tile that has the pattern of parquet wood is found throughout the hard

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surface areas of the home. Vaulted ceilings create a large, spacious feel in each of the living areas. "Three baths make the home very practical for three adults living together," Veronica said. The attention to detail makes this house an elegant showplace with a wet bar in the formal living room, wainscoting in the

formal dining room, a plant shelf under the windows over the kitchen sink and a second fireplace in the master bedroom.

Lighting is elegant throughout the home. The entry houses a staircase to the second floor, and over it hangs a beautiful, teardrop-

shaped, crystal chandelier. To the left in the formal dining room, another crystal chandelier defines the room as a place for elegant dining with family and friends. Unique lamps accent each room. Some are crystal with gold metal, others are silver and look like stacked little balls, and all have uniquely shaped shades.

After returning to DeSoto, Veronica started her own business, Ron25 Creative. She does freelance marketing and event planning to make a living while she cares for her mom and grandmother. "I knew God had a plan for my life when I left





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Chicago. I knew if I took a leap of faith and took care of my family, God would take care of me," she said with a smile.

She also became very intent on finding out all she could about the disease that is trying to claim her loved ones. "I researched the Alzheimer's Association. I started volunteering there and helping out with events and administrative work," she said. One event she has been heavily involved with is the "Walk to End Alzheimer's." The Dallas walk effort is ranked in the top five in the country for fundraising for the association.

She is passionate about the topic and considers her involvement a "win-win." As she helps the association, she gets help for her mother and grandmother by becoming more knowledgeable about the resources available to those suffering with the disease. For instance, she learned about Senior Source, a local agency that provides respite care to caregivers, free of charge.

She is now on the board of directors for Greater Dallas Alzheimer's Association. She wants to dedicate her life to being an advocate for caregivers and those suffering from the disease. A blanket is placed on the couch in the living room that was given to her by a close friend who appreciates the work she does. It reads, "#endalz, #advocate, #caregiver, #friend ... that's you, Veronica." Behind the kitchen, Veronica has remodeled a small room to use as an office for her work and advocacy. Coming home gave her new goals, a new mission and a purpose for her life. She has a blog that provides tools and resources for caregivers and keeps a record of her caregiving journey — [veemyselfandi.com](http://veemyselfandi.com). Veronica has also been interviewed on television and radio as an advocate for Alzheimer's. Her research is branching out to music and memory, as she seeks ways to help her family members keep their present cognition and precious memories alive.





The back door of the house leads to a well-manicured backyard with a patio and grill for entertaining. Veronica often invites friends and family over for fellowship and fun. For this family, their beautiful house is also a refuge where comfort and care are offered to one another in a difficult time. It is not a time of despair but one in which they celebrate and try to hold on to memories of a beautiful life, while finding ways to help others. **NOW**

## Thomas Deacon, M.D.

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# Pediatrics

## Southwest

*Happy Thanksgiving!*

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