

Rosa “Rikki” Marie Doyle

She had planned to become an artist, but pursued a career in medicine. As a physician’s assistant, she’s seen it all. She’s delivered babies and tended to accident and gunshot victims. She completed her education as a single mother of four children. She’s been to many places, including the continent of Africa. This year, at age 65, she’s retiring, but definitely doesn’t plan to sit back in an old rocking chair on the front porch and swat mosquitoes and watch paint dry. She always pursued life aggressively, forging ahead through life’s bend in the road. She’s a role model for young mothers who are forced to make it all on their own. Every challenged single mother should consider her story.

Meet Rosa Marie Doyle, also known as “Rikki.” Rosa Marie is the oldest child of Rosa and Edward “Penn” Doyle and the granddaughter of Pearl and Spencer Doyle. She currently lives in Round Rock, Texas near Austin, and is the mother of 4 children and 9 grandchildren.

Rosa is also sister to 7 (2 deceased) brothers and sisters who affectionately tagged her with the nickname “Rikki.” At that time, young Rosa was known as “Marie” but her younger siblings could not pronounce “Marie.” Instead, they called her “Reke,” as in “sneaky.” Later, a childhood friend felt “Rickie” was more appropriate because he did not know of anyone named “Reke.” So, “Rickie” stuck for awhile until her Aunt Marge felt that the spelling of “Rickie” was a boy’s name and needed femininity and flair, so the spelling was changed to “Rikki.” Decades later, Rosa Marie is commonly known by her nickname, particularly among the Doyle Family.

Rikki spent most of her youth in Austin and a few early years in San Antonio, Texas. At one time, during her early elementary school years, Rikki briefly stayed for a spell on the family’s property at Saint Mary’s Colony where Bom and many of our ancestors lived and died. At that time, Bom needed help with the farm, and her father Edward “Penn,” being the oldest grandson, temporarily moved his young family onto the property to help out. Most memorable to Rikki of this experience was her mother never adjusting to country living. Her mother Rosa was a “city girl” and disliked the bugs and other critters always about. Rikki also shared fond memories of Bom. As a young child, she remembers most Bom making buttermilk, butter, and clabber milk and being a strict disciplinarian, particularly for the teenaged children.

Besides her experiences on the farm, Rikki’s interests and talents today were shaped largely by the talents of her parents. As a young teenager, Rikki loved art and fashion. She loved to sketch and her dream was to become an artist. She picked up this skill from her father Edward “Penn” who was builder who drafted many of his own projects, and, in fact, twice designed and built his home church. Her mother, on the other hand, was an excellent seamstress who tailored clothes for practically everyone within their church family. Rikki, sharing the same love for fashion, loved to go into town and gaze through department store windows at the beautiful dresses on display. During those days, in the mid 50’s, people of color weren’t always allowed inside downtown stores, so Rikki stayed outside and sketched pictures of clothing through the window. Then, she took the sketches home to her mother who made patterns and clothing from her sketches.

Years passed and Rikki’s love for art and fashion continued through the moment she needed to make a decision regarding her college education. One of her favorite

teachers encouraged her to apply for a scholarship to major in art at the prestigious historically black college Prairie View A & M University. However, at that time, Rikki was considering an alternative, a move to California to attend college there. The later option was difficult to resist and Rikki packed her bags and moved west to Southern California. The plan was for her to live with her grandparents, Pearl and Spencer Doyle, but she preferred living closer to campus, so she moved in with an aunt on her mother's side of the family. Incidentally, after Rikki's move out West, Prairie View awarded her a scholarship, but Rikki chose to remain in California.

Soon after Rikki enrolled in college, her plans changed. She married and began a family. She decided to delay college and career ambitions to concentrate on raising her family. Unfortunately, her marriage ended. However, she married again, but this marriage eventually ended as well.

Four children later, with no reliable or substantial support from either ex-husband, Rikki began searching for ways to make money. She tried a few opportunities in the fashion industry, even owning and operating her own clothing manufacturing business. However, the fashion business in the Los Angeles area proved very competitive and tough to make a consistent living, so she continued to pursue other options. By coincidence, she found her calling somewhere that she did not expect.

It all began with her sister Joyce. Rikki had observed that Joyce studied diligently while attending a certain technical medical school and successfully landed good jobs after completing a training program at Technical Health Career School. Rikki decided to try the same training program. Incidentally, a few of her other cousins attended the school as well and went on to build successful healthcare careers.

After completing the program at Technical Health Career School, Rikki's talents caught the attention of others. Soon, she was asked to return as a teacher. A few years later, on the advice of a medical school instructor and a very good friend, she was encouraged to advance further in the medical field, to become a Physician's Assistant (PA), which required much more education and training..

Though a physician assistant education is not quite as lengthy as a doctor's education, advanced education is required due to the close working relationship between physicians and physician assistants while providing patient care. Physician assistants independently perform the same work as a doctor, but remain under the doctor's indirect supervision. Physician assistants can diagnose disease and write prescriptions. Also, they can assist in surgery and perform many medical procedures. As a result, education and training is required beyond the four year degree. Today, PA training programs are longer than most graduate degree program.

For Rikki, deciding whether to pursue this opportunity was very difficult. For one, already in her late 30's, she was beginning later than most. Also, she was a single mother with four children, two, of which, were teenagers and the other two were in their pre-teens.

In spite of the challenges, Rikki enrolled in college and subsequently completed her undergraduate degree at California State University at Dominguez Hills in 1985, while concurrently attending the Physician Assistant Program at Charles R. Drew School of Medicine (MEDEX Program) in Los Angeles, completing the Physician Assistant program in 1983. As part of the program, Rikki received her clinical training at Martin Luther King/UCLA Hospital. The field of medicine she enjoyed most while training was

orthopedics. In orthopedics, she has reset a lot of broken bones and observed a lot of interesting cases, such as gunshot and motorcycle accident victims. When asked what her most memorable and strangest case, she told a story of a man involved in a fight whose ankle was dislocated and totally twisted until his foot upside down and backwards, which she and her supervising resident had to reset. Rikki also shared that the most memorable time in all of her healthcare career has been the time she spent with her sister Joyce as co-owner of their own medical practices and businesses during a 17 year long period.

Subsequently, Rikki moved to Texas, entering into private practice and has continued in practice up until March 2008, except for a 3 year stint with the Texas Medical Board as a medical investigator.

This year, after many years of practice, Rikki is calling it quits. Though she will continue to be involved in medical seminars and conventions, she is officially leaving fulltime private practice. Now, she plans to travel and spend time with her family. Rikki also enjoys traveling tremendously, and has been to many places including Africa, Europe, and the Virgin Islands. She also intends to spend more time with her children and grandchildren. Three of her children live nearby in the Texas area. One remains in California. By the way, when asked whether she loved fashion or medicine more, Rikki replied that fashion is no longer her passion. She continues to enjoy medicine, particularly patient care giving and the challenge of diagnosing diseases, but likes to occasionally sit and draw and paint with her grandchildren. .

Children of Rosa Marie “Rikki” Doyle:

Clark Dewayne Mills – Lives in Round Rock, TX. Married to Freda; three children

Derrick Mills – Lives in Yucca Valley, CA. Married to Pamela; two children

ReShawn Castille – Lives in Round Rock, TX; one child

Cyrstal Castille - Lives in Houston, TX. Married to John; three children.

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