

PINE KNOLL SHORES
Women's Club

By Michelle Powers

Pine Knoll Shores Women's Club honors Mary Kanyha

Members of the Pine Knoll Shores Women's Club gathered at the Crystal Coast Country Club on Sunday, July 7, to honor a very special lady—Mary Kanyha. The club voted to award Mary an Honorary Lifetime Membership in recognition of her exemplary service to the Women's Club and to the town of Pine Knoll Shores. Ms. Kanyha served as club president in 2004 and was the first woman to serve as mayor of Pine Knoll Shores. She was a town commissioner and held many leadership positions in the Women's Club.

In addition to club members, Mayor Ken Jones and Commissioner Clark Edwards joined in the celebration, as did Mary's grandson William Kanyha.

Kanyha retired as a math teacher in 1995, and soon thereafter she and her husband moved to Pine Knoll Shores—a place she called “paradise.” Today, she has found, in her words, “Paradise #2” in Sugarland, Texas, where she lives part of the year in a senior community. She enjoys the proximity to her children, grandchildren and, recently, a great grandchild; however, she returns to her Pine Knoll Shores home with family members whenever she can.



From left, Women's Club presidents in attendance at the luncheon: current President JoAnne Ferguson, past Presidents Betty Thomas, Mary Kanyha (holding the Honorary Lifetime Membership certificate), Elaine Tempel, Bonnie Ferneau and Pegge Knecht.—Photo by Carroll Beckham

During the luncheon, club members reflected on Ms. Kanyha's contribution to the club and town. Many of the club's traditions were introduced by her, including the segment on Famous Women that is a part of every club meeting. That segment is currently researched and presented by Pauly Brown, another honorary lifetime member of the club.

Club members recalled Kanyha mowing her lawn in her bathing suit, chatting with all passersby; faithfully walking the beach to keep in shape; voicing her opinions at community meetings; and enjoying all that Pine Knoll Shores has to offer—and her exuberance for life has not diminished with age. At her community in Texas, she remains active, participating in an investment club, serving in leadership positions in the tenants' association and enjoying cultural events and excursions. Ms. Kanyha's commitment to her community—no matter where she finds herself—is an example for us all. Thank you, Mary, for enriching the lives of all Pine Knoll Shores residents by your volunteerism, charisma and zest for life.

The Women's Club will resume its monthly meetings in September. Meetings are held at the Pine Knoll Shores town hall on the third Friday of the month, beginning at 9:30 a.m. with coffee and conversation, followed by a guest speaker and a short business meeting. Guests are always welcome.

The Dreadful Hoop Snake

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abacura. Mud snakes are shiny black with reddish or pink bellies, mixed with white, and yellow highlights on the head. Occasional *anerythristic* specimens are seen that lack the red pigment and have white bellies. I have seen one of these killed on Highway 58 near Stella. Mud snakes can grow to a fairly prodigious size, with exceptional specimens reaching over 80 inches, but not even the largest of these gentle and very reclusive snakes can be induced to bite a person for any reason. Highly aquatic, they live in dark, quiet waters that are choked with vegetation, especially roadside ditches and are rarely seen except when crossing roads on rainy nights. Sadly, many are killed by vehicles as they are so large and slow moving, and many motorists no doubt feel they are performing a public service by running over these harmless and vulnerable creatures.

Adult mud snakes feed exclusively on amphiumas and sirens, large eel-like salamanders which were covered in this column a few months back. They have a pointed scale or spine on the very tip of the tail that might possibly assist them in holding their slippery amphibian prey, though I have never personally observed them doing this. This projection is perfectly harmless and incapable of even breaking the skin, but it does seem to echo the deadly stinger in the hoop snake story.

Mud snakes are also given to lying in a loose, open coil, further reinforcing the idea that they may have inspired the hoop snake myth. For my own part, I have seen king snakes, famous for their snake-eating habits, actually trying to swallow their own tails, so perhaps they helped inspire this ludicrous story as well. Personally, I think it a bit shameful that people would concoct such wildly inaccurate tales in order to defame and slander a fellow creature, but as anyone with any real familiarity with actual snakes will attest, most of the other things people tend to believe about them are just as untrue.

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Source for Hoop Snake material in this article: Wikipedia