

**GENERAL NEWS**

# Cheerful Chamness recalls less happy times in book

By Julie Pfeiffer  
 of The Carlisle Mercury Staff  
 Cay Chamness is an energetic mother of two small children, Mary and Pruitt. She talks a lot and laughs a lot as she visits around town, many times taking orders for her adorable appliqued sweatshirts.

It is surprising to discover that she had time to write a book of poetry, but the title, "Rays from Sunshine," isn't as surprising, knowing her positive, cheerful attitude. However the focus of the poems, the loss of a treasured relationship, is surprising. The poem Chamness, then



Cay Pruitt Chamness

Pruitt, expresses in very real in her verse. Chamness said she never let anyone read the poems, written around 1975. She put them together for herself, like writing a journal.

They were a release," she explains. "Finally someone did read them and told her they were good. At that point she decided to let another published author read them, a respected teacher at MUI, where she was working at the time.

Colonel F.H. Hall, who wrote "In the Lamb White Days" and other books, read the poems and returned them with a note Chamness still keeps in a scrapbook.

"Executive," he said "Heartfelt...a pleasure to read," he concluded the note. "Here," as everyone called the teacher, encouraged her to publish the collection, she said. Of course, he told her there was no money in poetry and that she should look into subsidy publishing.

In this kind of publishing, Chamness said, you pay your fees and the company pays

you royalties. So in 1980, Durrance and Co. out of Ashmore Pa, published her volume. They succeeded in selling 500 copies of the book while Chamness participated in interviews by radio stations, and lectures to Rotary Clubs in this section of the state, as well as other groups. Mason County's Straub Elementary invited her to speak to their gifted and talented program, which she enjoyed greatly.

Also preserved in her scrapbook are notes from "fans." "I've gotten notes from Chamness met her future husband, Peter.

people who have said 'your every in many different places, book' apply to me," she said as candy wrappers explained. "It was really g sat that so many people were she said. 'To preserve it, otherwise, you'll never have it again."

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