



Aerobics Guru

by Reid Pierce Armstrong

If you've ever seen somebody walking around the Northern Neck YMCA with a shirt that says "I survived Violet," they are referring to 87-year-old aerobics instructor Violet Lewis.

Violet has been teaching aerobics since 1981 when she took her first aerobics class at the Oakwood Fitness Center in Kilmarnock. Six months later,

Violet was a certified instructor.

Now she teaches four exercise classes per week, including water aerobics, Body Design and a senior exercise class called Senior Specialty.

Violet said she has always been active, but until she was 60 the only formal exercise class she took was Scottish Highland Dancing.

When Violet's husband died nearly a decade ago, it was the

exercise classes that saved her, she said.

"It gave me a reason to get up in the morning," she said.

Violet said that she too feels the aches and pains of exercise, but that when she's teaching a class she doesn't have time to think about it.

Weighing in at only 95 pounds, Violet said she doesn't have any special diet or health regimen. She takes vitamins and lives a life of moderation.

"I eat to live, I don't live to eat," she said.

When she's not teaching exercise classes, she's likely taking one herself. Two of her favorites are personal training and weight training.

Violet says she hopes she's still teaching when she's 90. With spunk in her step and only a few years to go, that's looking like a real possibility.

Name: Violet Lewis

Age: 87

Village: White Stone

Occupation/Hobby: Aerobics instructor

Describe Yourself in Three Words: Caring, Christian, Motivator

What is your idea of perfect happiness? I couldn't have it any better than I have it right now, at my age, being able to do what I do, working with and helping people.

Which living person do you most admire? Jack LaLanne, the "Godfather of Fitness" who, at the age of 94, continues to work out every morning for two hours, spending 1½ hours in the weight room and ½ hour swimming.

What is your greatest extravagance? Body massage.

What do you consider your greatest achievement? Raising four children.

What motivates you? I always have to be doing something. I can't sit still.

Exercise advice: Be consistent. Listen to your body.

Favorite workout music: "Your Mama Don't Dance" by Loggins and Messina, and "Celebration" by Cool and the Gang.

Motto: Live and learn.