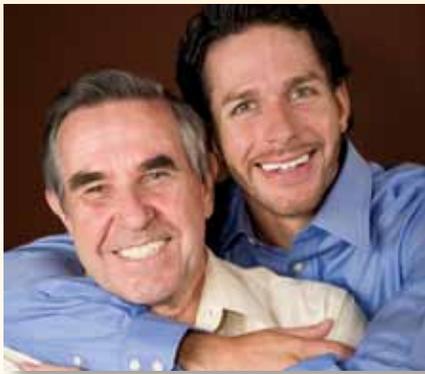


# Working Together to Choose a Senior Living Community



## Lenbrook Family Spotlight



Lenbrook  
*Inspirement*  
The Retirement Community.

**C**hoosing a senior living community is a process that often spurs much family conversation, research and contemplation before the optimal choice for all becomes clear and rises to the top. Meet two Lenbrook families who have skillfully navigated this search and offer their insights and suggestions.



### **About Lenbrook**

Lenbrook is the first and only Continuing Care Retirement Community in Atlanta to achieve national accreditation. This extraordinary not-for-profit senior community in Buckhead is dedicated to enabling its residents to enjoy the gifts of independence, good health and personal fulfillment through engaging and inspiring programs and services, and through high-quality, on-site health services for all levels of need.



**404-264-3386**

*[www.lenbrook-atlanta.org](http://www.lenbrook-atlanta.org)*

## The Haleys



Atlanta resident Betty Haley and her daughters, Kathy Herman of Vinings and Susan Brumfield of Sandy Springs, had the advantage of already living fairly close to one another during their search for the ideal senior living option. Betty had already downsized from her long-time home when she and her husband retired into a condominium in midtown Atlanta over a dozen years ago. She continued to live there for a couple years after his passing.

### **Safe, Secure Home With Full Service Campus**

With the youngest of Betty's grandchildren soon to be in college, Betty sensed it might be time for a change. "I want to be independent and I want my grown children to be independent," explained Betty. "I especially want them to have the opportunity to go do what they want to do, and travel once they have an empty nest. My husband and I loved to travel when we retired. I want them to have that same opportunity and not to worry about me being by myself."

### **Warm, Welcoming Social Environment**

"We wanted mom to be somewhere that she can enjoy friends and have access to fun activities and events," said Kathy Herman. But she wondered if they could actually find a warm, friendly and fun culture in a senior community.

"It's easy to hang on to an outdated image of a retirement home, perhaps like your grandmother lived in," explained Kathy. "It wasn't until we all (Kathy, Susan, their brother and his wife, and their

mother) visited two different communities that we saw what was possible and became clear about what we wanted."

### **Online Research Started the Process**

Like most adult children today, before any visits were scheduled, Susan Brumfield started her research on line. "I hadn't even heard the term CCRC (Continuing Care Retirement Community)," Susan said. "I wanted to make sure we made the right decision and so I did lots of research. Pretty soon, a CCRC made perfect sense; you only have to make a major move once."

### **Online Resources**

#### ***LeadingAge Association***

[www.LeadingAge.org](http://www.LeadingAge.org)

Comprehensive research studies and data on nonprofit senior communities and service providers nationwide.

#### ***CARF International/CCAC***

[www.carf.org/Accreditation](http://www.carf.org/Accreditation)

Directory of accredited CCRC communities and service providers who have met CARF-CCAC's 800 standards of excellence.

### **Onsite Visits Completed the Search**

"We visited one facility and, while the amenities were impressive, we barely saw any residents. We didn't get much of a feel for the people even though we took a tour, had lunch and met with the management. Lenbrook is the total opposite – everyone is so welcoming in the halls, on the elevators and in the restaurants. They even brought dinner up to us the day we moved in. They think of everything," Kathy said. "And once mom saw the views from Lenbrook, our decision was made."

The word "everything" comes up again when you ask Betty what she likes about her new home in Lenbrook. "Everything, and everyone," she promptly answers. "The employees actually know all of our names" (over 450 residents live at Lenbrook). Betty especially likes that because it makes her feel at home.

## The Edwards Family

Otis and Clemie Edwards of Columbia, S.C. and their two sons, Paul of Atlanta and Carl of Mt. Pleasant, S.C., worked through the search process from three different cities.

Otis and Clemie fondly describe how much they enjoyed their home of 27 years about 20 miles outside Columbia. Carl and his family lived nearby in Lexington, S.C. until a career move took them to Mt. Pleasant. And, as a few health events occurred for Otis and Clemie, it was logistically harder for the sons to be in Columbia to help.



### Proximity to Family Paramount

“We had talked about what our plan might be for emergency care or longer-term care for a good while,” Clemie recalled. “We did a lot of thinking, but not a lot of doing,” Clemie admitted. Originally the Edwards considered moving to a smaller home or condo in Columbia, “but we would still need an emergency care plan and a relative close by,” she said. She also realized it would be best to make the decision to move while they were both independent. Family discussions began and Paul lobbied for an Atlanta location and won, added Otis.

### Talk With Friends, Make Multiple Visits

Paul started checking with friends, coworkers and fellow church members about which communities they had selected with their parents. They narrowed it

down to two, and Paul began making the first visits, and then more follow-up visits with his parents.

“Every time I went to Lenbrook, I saw lots of activity in the halls, in the lobby, everywhere. I saw the way the staff and residents interacted, and I got this sense of genuine caring and friendliness – you just can’t fake that,” he said. He felt good that his parents would have opportunities to make new friends and have a life well beyond waiting for his visits.

That warmth, plus the fact that the Baldwin grand piano in the main lobby area was perfectly in pitch, Paul said, “Made me even more confident that Lenbrook was not only taking care of the small details, but taking great care with the big important things as well.”

“We’re delighted that we can have our social life and Paul can have his,” Clemie agreed. But she’s quick to say that, at first, she didn’t want to admit that she was “old enough to be here.” That’s not something that crosses her mind these days. They enjoy being near Paul, and she’s busy serving as choir director of a new group she helped start called “The Lenbrook Singers.”

### Key Considerations in Selection:

- Accreditation by outside organization
- Not-for-Profit
- Quality and accessibility of future health care and services; Medicare certified
- Quality: facilities, services and dining options
- Community culture: warmth and friendliness of staff and residents
- Lifestyle enrichment: social, educational, recreational, spiritual and wellness activities
- Location, proximity to family
- Overall value: tangible and intangible

### Quality and Availability of Health Care

The quality of health care and the full continuum of care offered at Lenbrook were also key drivers for the Edwards’s choice of communities. “Lenbrook’s

nursing staff is always here for us. One day we had just finished lunch in the Bistro and Otis wasn't feeling well. He had broken into a cold sweat and walking was difficult," Clemie recalled. "Several nurses in the Bistro immediately came over, helped get him seated in a wheelchair, and checked his blood pressure, temperature and blood sugar. They saw to it that Otis got the medical attention he needed for his situation and he's feeling fine now. This let me know we are in the right place."

### Sooner Rather Than Later

Mother and son both agree it's better to start the decision making and moving process earlier rather than later. "Start the conversation before you have an urgent need for it. If you wait to develop your plan later, you'll be in a crisis mode," Paul said.

Clemie adds, "It's a lot of work to sort through all the household items you've accumulated. Moving here was as much an act of love for our children as it was for us," she explained. "If you don't start early, your kids will have to do all the work."

And, Clemie advises, "When people tell you not to bring so much stuff with you when you make the

move, listen to them." She rarely uses all her kitchenware and cookware with three restaurants on-site at Lenbrook.

Otis, very tan and trim, says the food is one of the things he enjoys most. Next is the valet parking service, which he says makes going out and about at their leisure easy.

The Edwards are looking forward to discovering all that Atlanta has to offer. As a former teacher and Historic Columbia volunteer, you can bet Clemie has a full itinerary of things to do in Atlanta.

### Tips for Downsizing Before a Move

- Take photographs of key possessions and give the actual items to family or friends. This preserves the memories without taking up space.
- Consider hiring a professional "de-clutterer" or organizer to help. An independent third party helps keep the process on track and moving forward.





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