

# Lake Sherwood

A SOCIAL PUBLICATION EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE  
RESIDENTS OF LAKE SHERWOOD

# Life

NOVEMBER  
2016



MEET PHYLLIS J.  
**PIANO,**  
AUTHOR





meet  
*Phyllis J. Piano*

meet your neighbor

Phyllis J. Piano spent more than 30 years as an award-winning corporate communications expert for some of the world's largest companies.

A world traveler, Piano has left the corporate world and has fallen back into the arms of her own first love...writing. She and her husband split their time between California, England and the Midwest. When she is not packing a bag, making artisan sourdough bread or cooking with lots of garlic, Piano is working on a screenplay and her next novel.

Phyllis had a dream since childhood of writing a novel. After more than thirty years, and a long corporate career, she did it. *Lake Sherwood Life* sat down with our neighbor to learn how she made her dream come true.

**This is your first novel, tell me about your life and career leading up to it?** Writing has always been a core skill in all of my jobs. I started my corporate career in communications for the health care business of GE and was fortunate to work in other great companies, including Raytheon and Amgen, serving as the chief communications officer with broad responsibilities.

My jobs were always demanding, and I worked a lot of hours and traveled quite a bit, including internationally. Because of the hours I worked, I didn't even think of starting to write a novel, as there just wasn't time. Once I wasn't in the full-time corporate grind, I started to think about starting to write.

To be honest, my life experiences have been critical to my writing, so starting later in life seems to have worked out for me. It is so exciting to hold my first book in my hands.

I love to cook and taught myself how to make sourdough bread from scratch, so these activities find their way into my novels.

**What aspects of your former career influenced the novel?** There's so much I learned throughout my career that I was able to apply in the novel. The main character, Molly, is a corporate lawyer who works with her boss, the CEO, to take over companies. But when her company is threatened with a hostile takeover by her former love, the sparks fly. While the book is totally fiction, I was involved in many acquisitions and worked with scores of lawyers, so I was able to use this knowledge in the novel. Of course, I was able to use my

corporate communications experience and insights gained by working with the media as well.

**Where did you go grow up and go to school?** I am originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I studied journalism in college and always loved to write. I went to school in Wisconsin and graduated from the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee. My key job during college was working at the college newspaper, and I loved it. I guess that's where I knew that I would build a career around writing and become an author someday.

**Where/how did you meet your husband?** My husband, Roy Jones, and I have been married for more than thirty years. Roy is English and went to school in Coventry, United Kingdom, graduating with a degree in physics. He got his MBA after he came to the United States to work at GE. How we met is a really funny story, but I can't tell it, as I may use a fictionalized version of it in an upcoming book!

**How long have you lived in Lake Sherwood and where did you live prior to moving here?** Roy and I have lived on Lake Sherwood for ten years. It is truly a magical place. It is so beautiful, and we have enjoyed it immensely. Prior to here, we lived in the Boston area for six years. We have also lived in Houston, Texas, and Connecticut. The only U.S. time zone that we haven't lived in is Mountain. We have loved everywhere that we have lived, but there's no question that the weather is the best right here. I can't say I miss snow; although Roy misses the rain, as he is English!

**Is there another novel in your future?** My second novel is being edited right now, and is set on Lake Sherwood. I can't wait to share it with my neighbors and friends here. It's very different from the first one, and I've got some work to do, but

hope that it is out next year. I am finishing writing a third book as well. All are quite different.

**You mentioned that you travel quite a bit. Where to?** Roy and I love to travel and frequently visit his family and our friends in the UK. Roy is from Liverpool, but we travel all around the country as we have friends in different parts of the UK. My travels are very helpful in my writing as well, as I recall details of beautiful places that end up in my novels.

We travel to Milwaukee frequently, too, visiting family and friends. Trips in the last few years have included: Australia (including Tasmania), New Zealand, Fiji, South of France, London (visited friends and Highclere Castle, where *Downton Abbey* was filmed), Italy (including Rome, Sicily and Pompeii), the Greek isles, Turkey, Boston, New Hampshire and Vermont.

**Book Summary: Hostile Takeover: A Love Story**

Long-lost love, a hostile corporate takeover, and the death of her beloved husband turn attorney Molly Parr's life into a tailspin that threatens to ruin everything she has ever worked for or loved. Molly's all-consuming job is to take over other companies—but when her first love, a man who she feels betrayed her, appears out of nowhere to try and acquire her business, long hidden passions and secrets are exposed. She must suddenly decide if she has the courage to follow her heart and expose her painful past—a decision that may cost her everything.

A Book Launch Event and signing was held October 5 at Barnes & Noble in Thousand Oaks. Additionally, *Hostile Takeover: A Love Story* was selected for *Redbook*, *Working Mother* and *BuzzFeed's* suggested reading lists for Fall 2016. For info:

<http://phyllispiano.com>



photo by Dave Peloso, Peloso Photography