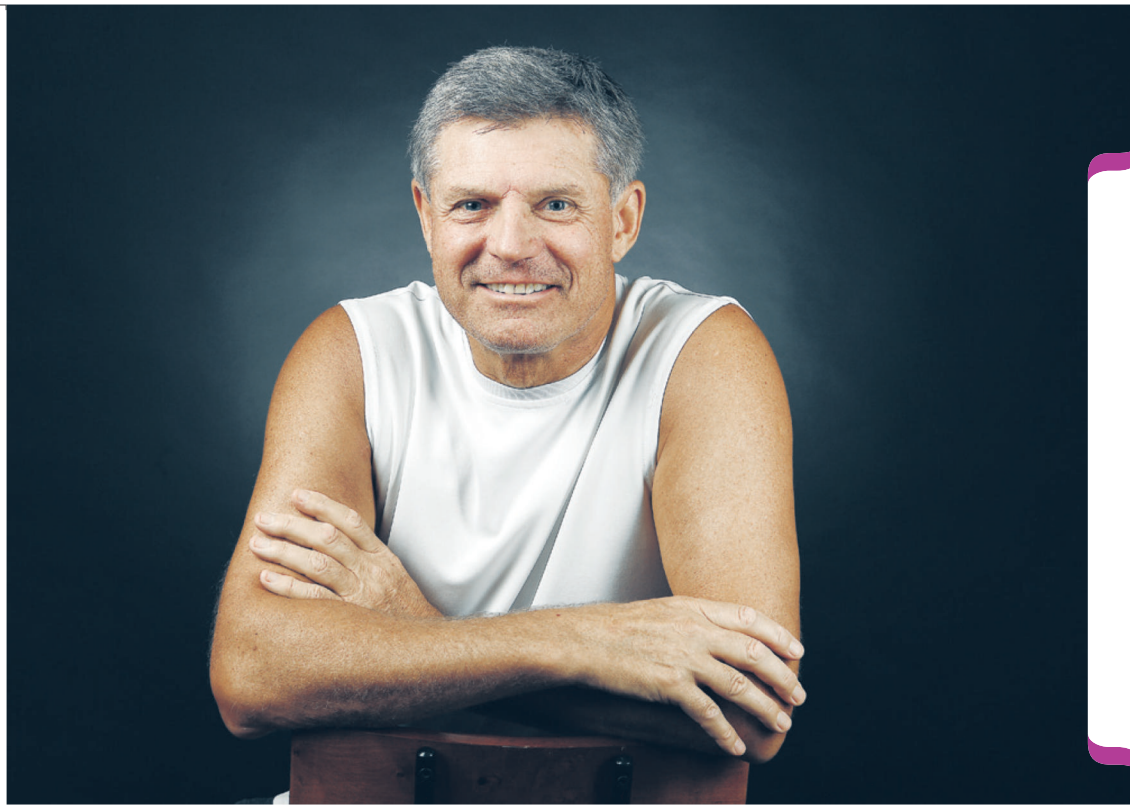




VILLAGER BACKSTORY

**You may know Chris Harrison from his recent performance in Evolution Dance's show at Savannah Center, but what you may not know is that he had a career as a professional figure skater.**



Bill Mitchell | Daily Sun

**GETTING TO KNOW CHRIS HARRISON**

**Age:** 67  
**Village:** Charlotte  
**Partner:** Judi Henke  
**Family:** Blended family of four kids and three grandchildren  
**Moved Here In:** 2020  
**Moved Here From:** Pacific Grove, California  
**Favorite Villages Activities:** Pickleball, ballroom dancing, Evolution Dance, chess, ballet, trivia and golf



**Kristen Fiore**

THE VILLAGES DAILY SUN

*Do you know someone with an interesting backstory to tell? Email kristen.fiore@thevillagesmedia.com, or call 352-753-1119, ext. 5270*

Chris Harrison describes his introduction to ice skating as a "freak thing." Harrison grew up in Birmingham, England, where he enjoyed rollerskating, playing soccer and running.

One day, his mom and sister were out shopping and stopped by an ice rink that had just opened and was offering a two-for-one skating deal.

When they got home, his mom said, "Guess where we were today? We went ice skating. If you behave yourself, I'll take you next week."

"I guess I behaved myself, and we went," said Harrison, of the Village of Charlotte. He said when they got there, he just stepped onto the ice and went.

"I really liked it," he said. At first, Harrison said he

played tag and "had mischief" around the rink, but soon enough he was throwing himself into jumps and spins.

An ankle injury when he was 17 switched his focus to doing lifts, and soon he got into pair skating.

By the time he was 20, he had won a British figure skating championship in pair skating.

Soon after, he came to the United States and was hired by Ice Follies as a soloist, but when they saw him skate with one of the other skaters, they found him a partner. A few years later, he and his partner won the World Professional Figure Skating Championships in pair skating.

"I represented the U.S. in that competition," Harrison said. "I wasn't going back to England. The weather sucked

and the taxes were worse."

After the Ice Follies, he went on to perform with the Ice Capades and then did Scott Hamilton's Stars on Ice show, which allowed him to travel all over the world.

"I was like, you're going to pay me for this?" Harrison said, joking that being able to make money traveling and always being surrounded by girls was a no-brainer for him.

Harrison lists a trip to Shanghai for the Stars on Ice show as being right up there in his proud moments with his championship wins.

"It was the best audience we ever had," he said. "They wouldn't let us get off the ice. They just wanted more and more. It was such a great feeling."

When he retired from

skating, he began working as a general contractor, got married and moved to Las Vegas to raise his kids.

After he and his wife split up and his kids had gone to college, he bought a sailboat and moved to San Diego.

"That's where I started playing pickleball," he said. "That was one of the national centers for pickleball. I was surrounded by really good players, so it was a good place to learn."

He also got involved in ballroom dancing.

He was teaching ballroom dancing on a cruise ship when met his partner, Judi Henke.

"We got together about 10 days into the cruise, and at the end of the cruise, she thought she'd never see me again," Harrison said.

He headed back to Las

Vegas to help his daughter with a car issue, but found himself missing Henke.

"I called her up and asked if she wanted to go to Vegas," he said. "We went to Vegas for four or five days. It was like a honeymoon. We've been together ever since."

They discovered The Villages early in 2020 and bought a house soon after.

"California was shut down," he said. "So we came here and could dance three times a week, play pickleball every day and go swimming."

Harrison and Henke still live in California part time, but they're loving their new life in The Villages.

"This is a great place to keep healthy and active as you age, and that's why we love it so much," Harrison said. "The people here are just terrific."

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