



*MerLynn Harris Pitcher*  
Tells Her Life Story

## Forward

*“Life is a great big canvas and you should throw all the paint on it you can.”*

Danny Kaye

This is MerLynn’s story told in her own words. Family History Preserved has captured her story on video, her family legacy, a gift to her posterity and to her community. FHP interviewed her and recorded her words and memories. This book reveals the most poignant and important events in her life. All the words are her own. Pictures were added to enhance her story. Editing was limited to clarifying facts, grammar and organization.

We have all been living the great American story. This is MerLynn’s.

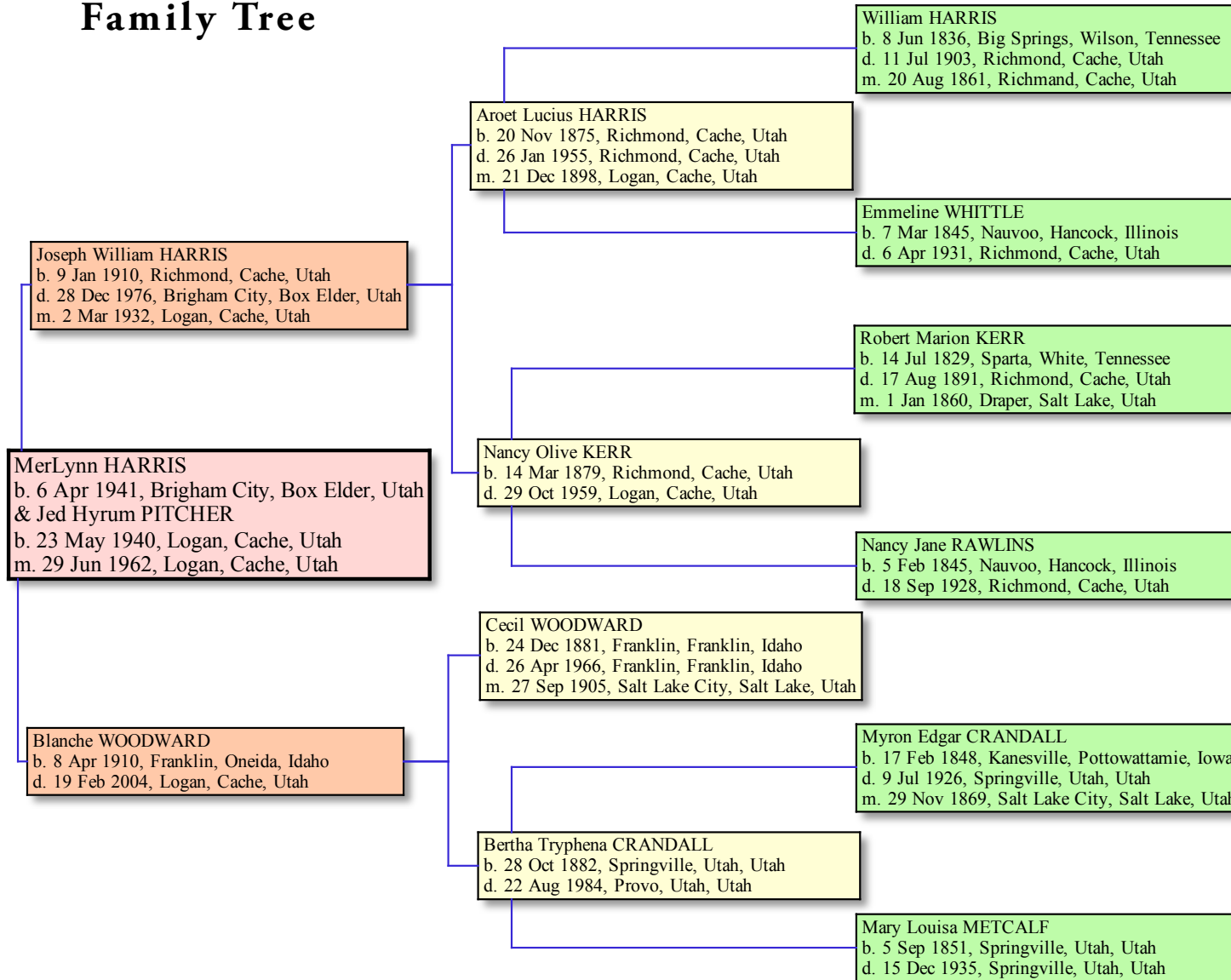
(Belle needs to sign it)

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# Family Tree



# Family Group Sheet

## MerLynn HARRIS

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Birth: 6 Apr 1941, Brigham City, Box Elder, Utah  
Father: Joseph William HARRIS (1910-1976)  
Mother: Blanche WOODWARD (1910-2004)

Marriage: 29 Jun 1962, Logan, Cache, Utah  
Spouse: Jed Hyrum PITCHER  
Birth: 23 May 1940, Logan, Cache, Utah  
Father: Darrell Merrill PITCHER (1919-1996)  
Mother: Lois HANSEN (1919-2005)

### Children: **1. Jeffrey Scott PITCHER**

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Birth: 8 Apr 1964, Brigham City, Box Elder, Utah

Spouse: Jessie Melissa Eve STAPLEY  
Birth: 26 Jul 1966, Mesa, Maricopa, Arizona

#### Children: **1. Scott Stapley PITCHER**

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Birth: 17 Nov 1989, Provo, Utah, Utah

#### **2. Colton Killian PITCHER**

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Birth: 21 Feb 1992, Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona

#### **3. Serena Mathea PITCHER**

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Birth: 26 Apr 1995, Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona

#### **4. Caroline Elizabeth PITCHER**

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Birth: 12 May 1999, Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona

## 2. Holly PITCHER

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Birth: 2 Jun 1966, Brigham City, Box Elder, Utah

Spouse: James Matthew ROBB (Divorced)

Children: **Emily Lynn ROBB**

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Birth: 25 Mar 1995, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake, Utah

## 3. Corie PITCHER

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Birth: 8 Aug 1972, Brigham City, Box Elder, Utah

Spouse: Eric Donald WUEHLER

Birth: 30 Jun 1970, Fresno, Fresno, California

Children: **1. Samantha Grace WUEHLER**

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Birth: 7 Jul 1999, Provo, Utah, Utah

**2. Rebecca Faith WUEHLER**

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Birth: 11 Mar 2003, Portland, Washington, Oregon

**3. Tynan Eric WUEHLER**

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Birth: 23 Jan 2006, Portland, Washington, Oregon

## 4. Candice PITCHER

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Birth: 18 Jul 1977, Brigham City, Box Elder, Utah



*Brigham City Tabernacle*



*Harris Home*



*Old Central School*

## My Family



I have always loved my name – MerLynn. It was different, it was unique. There were lots of Marilyn's in school but there were never any MerLynns and I loved it. I was the first girl in the family. There was my brother Robert and then there was me and then Rita came along.



## My Parents



Brigham City was a great place to grow up. We could walk anywhere and we were safe. It was a wonderful place.

My mother always had African violets in her home. She was joyous. She loved to have fun. And I think she passed it on to me. She reveled in and was so delightful about all the fun I had with my friends. After I would come in from being with my friends, she would want to hear every detail.



*Bill & Blanche Harris*

Mother would invent ways to have fun. She would take all of us who worked at Peach City to Lagoon and to a place north of town, Crystal Springs, and up to the canyon. Mother would invent reasons to go up the canyon. We had to get all of our work done and then she'd get a big

watermelon and take us up. I grew up in the canyon and I grew up loving nature because we'd go there often.

Mother let me have all kinds of parties. I would gather everyone and we'd go to my house. I would come home from school and bring all my friends with me. We walked everywhere in those days. Mother would have a big pan of cinnamon rolls waiting for us. She would just magically have them, just out of the oven. Took me years to figure out she did that on purpose. She made bread, rolls and best of all cinnamon rolls. They were so good. They were to die for.



*Bill & Blanche at Bear Lake*

The other thing she made was fry bread. Brigham City had opened up the old military Bushnell Hospital to make a school out of



*Intermountain Indian School*

it for the Indians. That's what we called them – The Indians.

They were a cross section of Hopis, Navajos, and one other group. The policy was that they needed to be educated in one place so they started the Intermountain Indian School.

Mother taught seminary in the seminary system for the Indian students. She gathered the Indians and had them come to our home on weekends and they'd work for us. Fry bread is like a scone only a little bit bigger. We'd put butter on them and honey and they were so good. She was such a giving woman. I don't ever remember her being selfish. She shared everything she had with anybody. I think that's a gift I got from her also. I've never coveted things and I don't think Mother ever did. That is a nice heritage.

My Daddy was an amazing ice cream maker and a successful business man. It was on West Main Street right by the now famous Brigham City sign. He opened The Peach City in 1936. It was a cheery little ice cream parlor on South Main known for banana splits and The Walt Mann Special. In order to survive financially he had to build a drive-in because that was the up and coming thing. He

opened the Peach City Drive-In and he added hamburgers, milkshakes and malts plus the soft drinks and ice cream. It was a big success, with those darling teenage car hops and it made jobs for lots of teenagers. It also attracted lots of families and became the place to go after dragging main.



*Bill Harris at The Hollywood*



*The Peach City on South Main Street*

## Grandparents



One of the joys of our lives when we were young was to go up to Franklin, Idaho where my mother's parents lived – Bertha Tryphena and Cecile Woodward. On the way we would have to stop and visit my father's parents. My father's name was Joseph William Harris. He was called Bill. My Grandmother Harris was a Kerr – Nancy Olive Kerr Harris. Would you believe she liked to be called Olive not Nancy. We called her Grandma Harris but all her friends called her Olive. There was such a difference between going to visit Grandma Harris and my mother's family, the Woodwards. She would invite us in with open arms. Grandpa, Aroet Lucius, was a little, tiny man and the only thing I remember about



*Cecile and Bertha Woodward*

grandpa that really stands out is that he always gave us hard tack candy. In the house there was a little entry way, the dining room and then into the living or sitting room and we would have to sit around and visit. That's all we did – sit around and visit. If we got bored, we could go into the bathroom and there were some drawers in the bathroom with two toys – Lincoln Logs and an old erector set. Compare that to all the fun we had up in Idaho. There were horses, fields to explore and we were joyous when we could leave and go up to visit our cousins in Franklin Idaho. So, passing Richmond, Idaho on occasion, not very often, and not stopping at Grandma Harris' was a great triumph to us as children.



*Aroet & Nancy Harris*

My mother's parents were farmers and our family had this wonderful, delightful saying that some of us have been stricken with the Woodward curse. That means we would get up before dawn, before the chickens get up. My Uncle Marlow, mother's oldest brother, would get up at four o'clock and start calling people. I don't call anybody, but I do get up sometimes at four o'clock.

Mother lived and grew up on the farm. I was there all the time in the summer. We would go up to the farm and stay. I had cousins. Roger and Wayne belonged to my Uncle Boyd and we played. It was just a marvelous time. I could hardly wait to get up and ride the horse. Their house was not fancy. It was actually a very plain home,

but inside was love like you cannot believe.

In the mornings we always had the same breakfast – eggs and wheat cereal, and a glass of milk. If we were really, really lucky we'd have homemade bread, but that was usually saved for later. Rita was such a little, teeny, tiny soul and grandpa would say to her, "Rita, if you want to

ride the horse, you have to eat all of your cereal – all of it." It was a huge bowl and we wanted to ride the horse with all of our hearts. So bless Rita's heart, she would eat that cereal and then she would have



*Rita, 1945*

to lie down on the day bed until she had digested some of it. She would say, "Oh, MerLynn – sometimes I would be just so sick." It never bothered me.



*Bertha Crandall with her family in Springville, Utah*

Grandpa had two horses when I was growing up. One was an old horse named Old Daff and the other a young spirited horse named Tony. I always wanted Tony, but I always got Old Daff. Roger, my cousin, always got Tony. We had a delightful time riding the horses and then we had to do all the chores. One time it was muddy. There were two barns – a new barn and an old one. We had baby chickens out in the new barn. It had been raining, and Rita and I wanted to see those new chickens with all of our hearts. We decided to take a shortcut up to the new barn and our boots got stuck in the mud. We had to leave our boots up there in the mud close to the new barn and

walk back without them, and it was traumatic. It was just one of those fun experiences.

My grandfather, Cecile Woodward, was the heart of the home.



*Cecile Woodward*

He would take all the children when we were little and put us on his knee. He would bounce us up and down, the way a lady rides and a gentleman rides. Then he would tell us stories. He would tell us wonderful stories. One was about when he met a bear and he got away. It was very memorable

and we'd ask him over and over

to tell us that story. Later on, he would tell us the story, but we got quite bored by it.

My grandmother, Bertha Tryphena Crandall, was from Springville, Utah and she was a lady. The two of them met when grandpa went to Brigham Young Academy. His family sent him down there to get him away from some girl who was after him. His

parents did not want him to marry her. He met Bertha and then he went on a mission. They wrote to each other, and when he came home they were married. He took her up to the farm on the Dixie bench in Franklin, Idaho. Theirs was probably one of the most memorable love stories. They loved each other intensely.



*Bertha Crandall Woodward*

We had a family tradition of women canning fruit or vegetables. As a child, we went to grandma's and canned corn, apricots, peaches, plums and cherries. We were always together canning.



*Holly, Candie & MerLynn Canning Applesauce*

## Siblings



My brother's name is Robert Dayle. The name Dayle was just an absolute burden to bear for Robert, because mother spelled his name



*Robert Dayle Harris, age 5*

Dayle. He hated it forever and ever and ever. Even at the end of his life he was telling us how he hated it and wondered why Mom spelled his name Dayle. I have no happy memories of Robert when we were kids. He was awful. He teased me, he was merciless and he probably had good reason to be. Mother

wasn't able to have children

and she'd been married for five years when Robert came along. Then she wasn't able to have any more children for five more years so he was the crown prince. Trust me, he was. We have lots of stories about mother keeping his hair long in ringlets and dressing him up in

all these fancy, dancy, frilly outfits. I can't remember who it was – Uncle Buss, daddy's brother or maybe Vic Dober, our friend - who took him down and cut off all his ringlets. And mother cried and cried.

I remember Robert telling me recently, when we were visiting toward the end of his life, how he used to think how wonderful it would be to be an only child. Mother would send him off to Idaho in the summers, and while he was gone it was the only peace we got. I remember going up to Idaho and Robert and I would always start out in the backseat and Rita was up in the front seat. First of all, mother would turn around and tell us to stop fighting, stop arguing, stop teasing and then finally she'd stop the car and she'd put me in the front with Rita where I should have been in the first place. And Robert would be in the back seat all by himself where he wanted to be anyway, and then we'd go on up to Idaho.

When I think about my brother, it took a long time for me to forget all of his teasing. To be right honest, I used to plot and plan when I grew up how I was going to beat him up. The tragedy was when you grew up you didn't beat anybody up. So, I never got to beat him up. He knew all the ways to push my buttons, and one time he was going to cut Woofy's hair. Woofy was my dog and I loved him with all my heart. Cut Woofy's hair! What a big deal! I got so frustrated with him that I threw an apple at him. He ducked and it went right through the plate glass window. He got in trouble,

not me. Mother and Daddy were gone, and when they came back he got into such big trouble. Did I love it? Yes, with all of my heart.

Robert grew up, I grew up. We would send him off up to Idaho in the summers and he didn't have much of a relationship with Daddy. Daddy didn't have the skills to have a relationship with any of us except me. I was very fortunate.

When Robert would go up to Idaho, my Uncle Paul, mother's youngest brother, and grandpa literally wrapped their arms around him and gave him a life. They introduced him to the gospel and to the church and scouting, and literally made him the man that he grew up to be. It was a nice thing.

It was later on when Robert and I were finally able to overcome that childhood and he grew up to be a wonderful man. He passed away on September 8, 2009. We had some wonderful experiences before that. He was compassionate, he was unselfish. He grew up to be a caring, deep and rather exciting man. We would talk about anything and everything in our later lives. We would talk about



*Uncle Paul & Grandpa Cecile*

politics, about the latest book that was written, and our families. We would share with each other how our families were doing. He was able to express himself and was very articulate. We loved books. All of us in the Harris family loved books and Rita, Robert and I would get together and go the bookstore. We'd call it

the Harris outing, and go to the

bookstore and see what the latest book was – usually it was the latest church books. I'm really grateful that Robert lived long enough that we could get over being children and enjoy ourselves as adults.

One of the things I always admired about Robert is his love of learning. He got married right out of high school. He went to college and got his degree and eventually got his Master's degree. He married Shana Warren and took his little family to Colorado. While he was there he and Shana lived and grew up together, and he became who he was. They bought a place in St. George when he retired, but he became the bishop before he was able to move there, so they leased their home there for 5 years until he was released and then he moved to St. George. He was heroic. Both Shana and Robert were heroic.

He had prostate cancer. When he passed away, he had succumbed to a 25 year battle of health problems. He had heart attacks, sugar diabetes, and cancer. Shana was just wonderful in shouldering the load and taking care of him. As they became more dependent on one another they fell more deeply in love until in the end it was a very tender relationship.

Robert and Shana had three children – Christi, Warren and Victor and, when they moved to Loveland, Colorado they had three more, Cassie, Byron and Blair, the twins.



*Robert, Warren, Christi and Shana*

Rita and I had a very interesting relationship when we were younger. I was a tomboy, that's what they called us. I could hardly wait to get home from school and get in to my Levi's. Rita, on the

other hand, was this cute, petite, little girl with curly hair. We used to laugh when we were growing up. I used to say mother loved her best because she got her curly hair and I got the straight hair. Rita loved clothes and my sweet mother fixed a rack, a clothes rod, at the bottom of the linen closet in the bathroom for Rita so she could hang her clothes. Rita said she used to go to sleep mixing and matching her clothes. I had two dresses, two too many and that's what I wore to school. We would go to JC Penny's and pick out two dresses for school and mother would wash and press them on the weekends and I would get up in the morning and say, "Mom, what should I wear today?" Clothes were absolutely not on my radar screen. BB gun, oh yes, bicycles absolutely, pocket knives absolutely. My cute little dog Woofy – oh yes.



*Rita, about age 5*

Marbles – for sure. But not clothes. So Rita and I kind of grew up in two different worlds. There was Rita's world with all of her clothes and there was mine with all my friends. We didn't have a lot in

common back in those days. But, we have grown up to be the very best of friends. We can share and tell each other absolutely anything. We have grown to love each other dearly. We are so fortunate.



*Chris & Rita Pella Family*

Rita married her childhood sweetheart, Chris Pella. They have loved each other for ever and ever. They have three children: Brian, the oldest who lives in Smithfield; Jake, who lives in Midway; and Nicole, who also lives in Smithfield where Rita and Chris live. They all have children.

We were a trio – Robert, Rita and I - all of our lives. Since he's been gone, it's been very difficult to learn how to be a duet. I suppose we'll learn.

## Robert's Atomic Bomb Experience



Robert had the most interesting experience when he was first



married. He joined the Navy shortly after he got out of high school. The Navy loaned his platoon, or whatever they were called to the Marines, and at that time in the history of our country they were testing and exploding atomic bombs in Nevada. They took Robert's group of men three miles away from the atomic bomb test site. They sat in their fox holes and the atomic bomb was

exploded, and his job was to check and see how much radiation his men had been exposed to and tell his sergeant. Each of them had some kind of material patches that tested what exposure they had experienced, and everybody's was black which meant they

had the maximum exposure to the atomic bomb. He told his sergeant that everybody's was black. His sergeant said that there must have been a mistake; there must have been defective material. Then after they saw the exposure, they were marched right up to ground zero, and the only decontamination was brushing themselves – brushing the dust off with a broom. Robert said that everyone he knew in his company



*Robert in the Navy*

had some form of cancer. Everyone. Is that just astounding? I did not know that until years later in his life. Somebody in high school did a report on the atomic bomb blasts in Nevada and they found out that Robert had been there and interviewed him. We got to see a

copy of the report he had written and that's when we really found out what had happened.



## Woofy



I've loved and enjoyed all the dogs I've had. Ali, the dog I have now, has my heart. She just doesn't give up. But, when I think about Woofy, the first dog I ever had, there's one story I hold very close to my heart. When I was in fifth grade our family always went hiking on the Saturday before Easter. It was a tradition, and unfortunately we don't do it anymore. We went to Little Mountain west of Tremonton. We called it "Eastering." Isn't that a kick? We would fix hard boiled eggs and pack a lunch and away we'd go. One Easter, mother and Marie Nelson, her dear friend, took all the children. Little Mountain is kind of a mountain out in the middle of nowhere, west of Corinne. There is a cave there. The cave might have arrowheads and cool things. Maybe Indians had lived there and we thought we could find something. Woofy went with us. He always went everywhere I did. We hiked around and didn't find any arrowheads. We ate our lunch. At the base of the hill was an old dilapidated house and a big puddle of water where the alkali had run off and settled. Mom had picked us up higher in the mountain in the car. Gary Nelson, one of my good friends, had hiked closer to the house and we drove down to get him. Someone found a wood tick



*MerLynn & Woofy*

on one of us and we put it in a cup and were poking it with a stick. It was cool to see a wood tick – not on us but in a cup. When Gary opened the door to get in, Woofy jumped out, but we didn't notice and we went home. When I was a kid, we never kept the dogs in the house. They ran the neighborhood. There were no fences that kept them in. Woofy was a gallivanter, a lady's man. I followed him around one time and he went all over town visiting his friends. So, when he didn't show up, we didn't miss him until Sunday. We thought he was probably out gallivanting, but when he didn't come home that night I got really worried. I talked to Mom and Dad and they said to wait one more day.

Monday we went off to school and he didn't show up and follow me. He wasn't waiting for me after school when I came home. Thinking back to the last time we saw him, we realized it was on Little Mountain on that Easter hike. Daddy said we would get up and go look for him Tuesday morning before school if he didn't come

home Monday night. And he didn't come home that night. Even talking about it now I get weepy. I talked to Heavenly Father and told him how much I loved Woofy and how he was mine. I told Him I would be most grateful if we could find him out at Little Mountain when we went to look for him. I made a deal and told

Him if we found Woofy, I promised to pay my tithing the rest of my life. We got up in the morning and Daddy took us to Little Mountain. It was probably a half hour or so to get there. We went by the dilapidated house and called and he came limping out from behind that house. His little feet were all cracked and bleeding, but there he was. He'd been there four days. I always thought the cracked and bleeding feet were because of the alkali, but he might have tried to find us. It was a fabulous gift for a little girl and I have paid my tithing

ever since. You have to keep your bargains.



*MerLynn & Rita with Woofy*

## Polio



The reason I chew gum is because when I was a child I had polio. Not only did it affect my arm and my neck, but it also affected my voice and vocal chords in my throat and so I chew gum to keep my throat moist. Otherwise, I would probably have to be drinking water all the time. It's not a big piece of gum, it's just teeny tiny – just enough to keep my throat moist. I work really hard at being very subtle about chewing gum because when I was a child Mother taught us how to chew gum. She actually did. She said whatever you do, don't chew with your mouth open and don't pop your gum. Then she gave us lessons on how to chew our gum. We only got half sticks of gum because back in those days we didn't have a lot of money. Then the best thing was we saved it on the bedpost at the top of the bed and we would eat it the next day. A stick of gum would last for weeks. It was such a different time.



But actually, to be right honest with you, I think Mother loved me best. The reason I think she loved me best is because when I was

a child I had polio and that was quite an experience. I was five years old. It was back in the days when no one knew anything about polio. They didn't know where it came from and they didn't know how one got it. They just knew that it came and you were stricken. They used to call it infantile paralysis because it attacked you and you were stricken with paralysis.



*MerLynn, age 5*

We had a great neighborhood. There were kids who we could play with from almost every door step. Across the street and up a couple of houses lived Donna Compton and she had this fabulous, marvelous old house. It was so cool. And once in awhile we could play hide-and-go-seek in her house which was the ultimate. In August of that year, all the kids were over there playing hide-and-go-seek in her house and I got so tired. I was absolutely exhausted. I couldn't pick up one foot after the other. They had a deacon's bench in the hallway and I lay on the bench and could not get up. Donna carried me across the street home and I was so ill. It was if I had the flu. There was a lot of that going around. A lot of kids had the flu, but I never got better. There was a doctor in town named Rasmussen who came

and diagnosed me after two weeks and said, “Blanche, your daughter has polio”. That was a death knoll. Polio. Children were maimed and crippled and parts of them never moved again and some of them were in wheelchairs, legs shriveled up and their body parts didn’t



*General Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah*

move. It was a horrible disease – a horrible illness. He went right in and picked up the phone and called the General Hospital in SLC and found out that there was one bed left. It was a raging epidemic. Mom took me in the family car down to Salt Lake City and Mother said I kept saying, “You won’t leave me, will you?” And, of course, they did. Mother said they took me through the swinging doors and brought my clothes back and said, “You may come and see her in two months”. In those days they thought complete separation was much better, but it was horrible.

I was in an isolation wing with one other girl who was older than I was. I was lying very, very still and not moving my right arm

because if I right arm it The pain – if fallen asleep go to sleep when you there’s all



and pins - it was like that, only not needles and pins, but daggers that were shooting through my arm. I lay really, really still and didn’t move my arm and then, after a little while, I couldn’t move it. It just wouldn’t move. But, the pain of being separated from my parents was far, far greater than I ever experienced with polio. I remember to this day how hard it was.

moved my would hurt. you’ve ever and your legs and then stand up these needles

When we were in this wing, the other girl was a year older than I was and she had somehow got the comics, the funny papers. We read them growing up as kids and Mother would always read the comics to us. This other girl would not share the comics with me. Can you imagine remembering that? Another memory I have that is very poignant is how cold I was. I only had a sheet on me and after two or three days, or what seemed forever, a wonderful, sweet nurse asked me if I was cold and I said yes. She said she would put some blankets on me. She put two blankets on me. I remember how wonderful it

felt. I was  
I had no  
could ask  
blankets.  
food – I  
chocolate  
they only  
liquid in



isolation room – that's all they gave us - chocolate milk and juice. I hated chocolate milk. Later on when we moved, we had to eat everything. They used to feed us canned spinach. Trust me, I like canned spinach. Is that just amazing? Every once in awhile in high school we would get canned spinach and everybody would leave their canned spinach and I would just love it.

I have some other memories about having polio that are quite poignant. There was a woman who volunteered and, unfortunately now I've forgotten her name, but she used to read to us. Three days a week she would come down with her big roller stacked with books and she would read to us. We just waited for her to come. She became one of our dearest and best friends. I remember wanting with all of my heart to go to school. I was in the hospital from August to September, five years old. There were children there who went to school and stayed there the longest.

a little kid.  
idea you  
f o r  
A n d t h e  
h a t e d  
m i l k a n d  
g a v e u s  
t h e

As a child, I had a fascination with wheel chairs and I thought it would be so cool to get in a wheelchair. They had little ones and I just begged and begged to be put in a wheelchair. And finally, after it seemed like forever and ever, they let me get in a wheelchair and all I could do was push it with my left arm. I just went around in circles and couldn't make it go anywhere, so I never asked again to be in a wheelchair.

I moved in to a ward and the ward was big – beds after beds on this floor, small beds. We were all together and they would come around and visit us. The treatments we were given were hot packs. They would come with a thing that looked like a wet pack and the inside was heated. There were strips of woolen blankets – looked like army blankets. They were torn up and they would wrap those around the body parts that were afflicted or had been paralyzed. Then there was some kind of experiments with shots. I don't know what they were, but they were going to try this new experiment. I remember them asking Mother if I wanted to be part of the experiment. I was just a kid and I didn't know. So I said sure and they gave us shots three times a day in our hips. First of all, I had wasted away to nothing. It was just dreadful. I remember one time when they hit a nerve on my hip and the pain was endless.

They used to take blood out of us – enough to start a blood bank. And they used to clean the needles. They were big enough they could clean them. When I came home, I told Mother I never wanted to

have another shot in my life. She said I didn't have to. I never had any immunization shots when I was a kid. Mother would not allow it – she just wouldn't allow me to have a shot. I didn't have a shot until maybe the end of my high school. Every kind of medication had to be oral.

One thing that really made an impression - a deep memory - was the iron lung. Those iron lungs were in a ward off from where we were and I never got to go see them until just before I went home. Iron lungs - long, metal tubes - were breathing instruments for people who had polio. The nurses would push me in to the iron lung room and when I got well enough I could walk in to see them. Two people were in the iron lungs. One was a young mother and another one was a teenager. They both would tell me



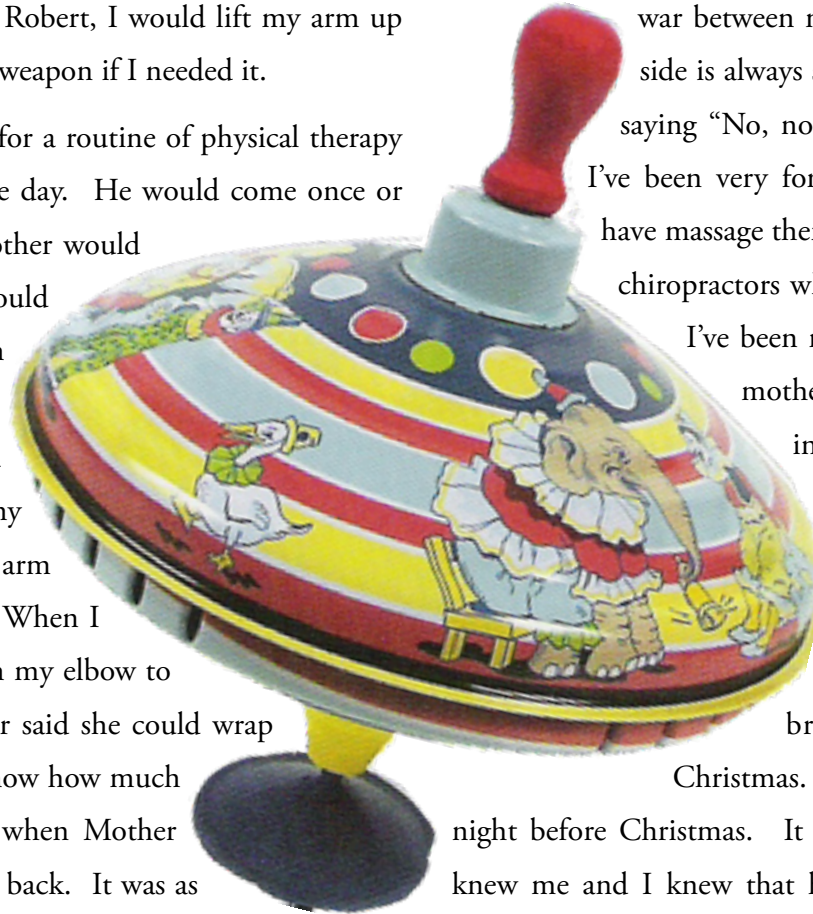
*MerLynn, Blanche & Rita*

stories about their lives and also fairy tales. It was so sad when the younger girl left. I had become really good friends with all of the people who were there. We were all in a little community all of our own.

What kind of paralysis did I have? I couldn't move my arm, my voice was very, very small and tender and not loud, and my left leg eventually had some kind of paralysis. It was short, half an inch shorter than my right leg and when I came home I was in a cast. In those days, they felt that if they cast that part of the body and kept it perhaps where it should be, it wouldn't droop or hang or there would be a better chance recovery wouldn't be so deformed. So when I came home, I had a cast that wrapped around my body and lifted my right arm in an L- shape. I slept in that cast until I could be fit for a brace. The brace came under my arm and down my side and wrapped around and attached

into two belts on the side and I had to wear that for months and months. It had a steel grip so I settled my arm in it and there were little straps that came over and I'd hold on. Actually, it wasn't a bad weapon. When I would get mad at Robert, I would lift my arm up and just swing at him. It was a great weapon if I needed it.

A gentleman came to our home for a routine of physical therapy that I had to go through every single day. He would come once or twice a day and every single day Mother would go through this routine. She would move my arm. I had to strengthen my back so I would lie on the floor and be a beached whale or beached turtle. I would lift up my legs and my head and she would move my arm through all these series of exercises. When I came home, there was nothing from my elbow to my shoulder except a bone. Mother said she could wrap the skin around my bone. I don't know how much therapy I had, but I do remember when Mother felt a little teeny tiny muscle coming back. It was as big as a kidney bean and I remember her in joyous rapture going in to the kitchen telling Daddy and anybody else who was listening. She was wonderful. I was never an invalid. I was never allowed to be. It was always "Show Aunt Ruth what you can do now. Oh that is so good, look what you can do". And little by little I was



able to regain muscle mass. I was able to gain a lot of use with my biceps and triceps. The muscles through my upper back and upper neck have always been very slight so throughout my life, I've had a war between my right side and left side and my right side is always saying, "Let me rest" and my left side is saying "No, no, no, straighten up." So over the years I've been very fortunate, especially in my later years, to have massage therapy. They have some very good natured chiropractors who help me keep my back in alignment.

I've been really fortunate. When I was a kid, my mother saved me. She kept me from being an invalid because she would not stop. I owe her the use of my arm, the use of my body actually. I was such a tomboy; you couldn't keep me down.

Coming home was fabulous. They brought me home two days before Christmas. Santa Claus came and visited me the night before Christmas. It was just the most fabulous thing. He knew me and I knew that he knew me and knew who I was and brought me wonderful presents. I asked why he came through the front door instead of down the chimney and Mother said he had his reindeer out there in the front of the house and not on the roof so he came through the door. I believed in Santa Claus until I was in the fifth grade because he came to see me when I got out of the hospital.

Growing up we were very frugal. We didn't have a lot of money. It was just the way it was. Mother and Daddy would come to the hospital and I could ask for any toy I wanted. Lo and behold, the next week, it would show up. It was just fabulous. David Reese, my next door neighbor, had a spinning top and I wanted a spinning top with all of my heart. So, I asked for it and I got a spinning top. David had a jack-in-the box and I asked for one and there it was. I amassed this wonderful group of toys. Then Mother brought me a doll, a Madame Alexander doll. It was a soft baby doll and her name was MaryAnn. I had no use for a doll, none whatsoever. I just sort of kept her over somewhere. When it was time to leave, Mother asked me if I didn't want to leave my toys for the children who were less fortunate than I was. I didn't want to leave my toys. Are you kidding? I mean I had all these toys that David Reese had. It was just fabulous. We left my toys. Guess what came home with us? MaryAnn. I had a doll and no toys. It was a doll that I had absolutely no use for – none whatsoever and no fabulous toys. I was heartbroken. I happen to have MaryAnn still downstairs in the basement. I have MaryAnn. What a waste. Rita, on the other hand, loved all the dolls and she and Marlene Bosley would play with dolls from dawn to dusk. I was outside with Woofy hunting birds with my BB gun and I was playing with all my

fun boy friends because they were the ones who played with me outside.



*MerLynn's Doll, MaryAnn*

## My Knives



When I was a child, I was watching my brother and his friends play mumbley peg. I asked if I could play. They had Boy Scout pocket knives and he told me to go away because I was girl. He thought I couldn't do it. So, I worked and worked and worked. Eventually I could do it.

I have loved pocket knives all of my life, from the time I was little. The first pocket knife my mother gave me was a little small one. It was stainless steel. I promptly lost it and it broke my heart. The next spring, I found it between Marilyn Mann's house and the next door neighbor. It was all rusted and I did not get a new pocket knife for quite some time. When I did, it was absolutely the best pocket knife I ever had. It was a little switchblade. It was so cool. It had a big blue button on the back and my Uncle Boyd, mother's brother, fixed a chain (probably came from a plug they had to plug up the sink) and I could slip it through my belt buckle and the chain and put it in my pocket and I never lost it. It was so fun because no one could figure out how to open it. I would often say, "I have this cool pocket knife. How do you think I open it?" Nobody knew.

They pressed all the buttons and then I would suddenly pull the chain and it would pop open. I thought it was so cool.

I've always had knives. When I could afford it, I began to collect



them. I always carry a pocket knife. The one I currently is a William Henry and it

opens very easily. The reason I love this knife is because it never goes dull. It is the most fabulous pocket knife. It has a nice feel. I can hold it very easily and it has good balance. I prefer a knife that opens and closes very easily. That's important, too, in my old age. I have other knives that the kids have given me and they are more important than others. Just recently, I bought an automatic. I call them switchblades. It's a William Henry.

I like to go up to Oregon to a knife shop called Excalibur. They have the most fabulous collection of knives. I never miss an opportunity to go there. The kids go shopping and I hang out in the knife store. I've bought a lot of really nice knives. I suspect that I have probably 15-20 knives. They are not inexpensive, but I have

cheap ones too. The cheap ones work well on a trip. You don't want to lose the expensive ones. I have all kinds of knives in my closet.

I have one switchblade with my initials. Holly got it from Sundance from the Year 2000 to celebrate the new century. It's a cool knife. I love it because she and the kids gave it to me. I have a Benchmade knife. It's very thin and I can put it in my pocket. One

knife was given to me by Jeff and his family. They went to Germany and he came back with the most



amazing knife. It's gold and ivory and the name of it is Hellskit. It's a very exclusive European knife.

When I was going with Candie and her basketball team, we went to a tournament in Texas and I picked up a knife to keep for sentimental reasons. It's just a pocket knife. I have two knives that were Darrell's, Jed's father's knives. They are really interesting. Darrell had sharpened one until he wore it down and then he got a new one. Darrell was such a sweetheart. When we were first married, he used to always come and sharpen our knives. I loved him for that.

I have one William Henry that I love because of the carbon coating on the blade. It's pretty and I like the style and it's easy to hold and open and close. I have a knife which Holly got for me in Switzerland. It's got my initials on it and I cherish it and love it with all of my heart. Holly went to BYU Israel abroad. Before she got to Israel, she and some friends took a tour of Europe for two weeks. Holly knew how much I loved knives, so while they were in Switzerland she picked up a knife for me, had my initials printed on it and almost missed the train waiting for it. It means a lot to me.

One knife is not particularly easy to hold or carry, but it opens and closes like butter. It's a little cumbersome for my pocket, so I suppose I'll give it to the children some day. I recently picked up one of my very favorites of all time. It is an automatic – a switchblade. It's a William Henry and they went to great lengths to make this gorgeous and beautiful. It has 24 layers of metal on the blade and a mammoth bone and etching with some really beautiful copper. This knife cost \$900. All the William Henry knives cost a lot.

I buy knives because they are cute, I like the way they look, they keep their edge and because they fit in my pocket. I have one William Henry knife that means a lot to me and it's quite unique. It has no way to keep the blade in its place; it has no catch except for the thumb holder and any time you are cutting with it, you are pushing against the blade so it won't automatically collapse. I love



this knife because Corie bought it for me and all the children gave it to me for a birthday present. It maybe cost close to \$200. There isn't a William Henry that isn't expensive. They are works of art. The steel is very hard and Blade Magazine said they use the best steel that you can get. The joy is having the knives and being able to use them, open and close them. I think they are so fun. Are they worth it? Probably not, but to me they are. I love every one of these knives. I go into the closet, kneel down in front of the shelf where I keep them and open them one by one. I look at them, hold them, remember where they came from and they just bring me great joy. Is that silly? I think so.

## School Days



When I came home from the hospital, I was five years old. I was home January, February, March, April, May, and June and then went to summer kindergarten for six weeks. Central School burned down and they had to find a place for us. We went to the Intermountain School when I was in the first grade. I was really lucky because I had Mrs. Mills. I wanted her with all of my heart.

We moved to Lincoln School when I was in second grade and I got Mrs. Burrows. Mrs. Burrows, if I can be kind, was homely and not pretty. I remember thinking I don't want an ugly teacher. By Christmas time I was thinking she was beautiful, really pretty. Years later Belle Call, my very dear friend, and I went to visit Mrs. Burrows and when she opened the door, I thought she was unattractive and homely. I finally made the connection in my little immature mind that you only know what a person truly looks like the first time you

see them because after that their personality begins to color their looks. I was really fortunate to have Mrs. Burrows because she was a very kind, very wonderful teacher.

Brigham City had a closed military hospital, Bushnell, at the south end of town. After the war, it was empty so we were able to have our school in some of the buildings there. I remember a very poignant experience in school. There was a girl named Sharon Jensen who was a year older than I was. She would have been in second grade. She was in our ward in Brigham City and she was a very overweight child. In those days, there weren't a lot of overweight kids. We were skinny. The boys chased her at recess, calling after her, "Sharon's mother is dead, Sharon's mother is dead". Her mother had just passed away and these boys were taunting and chasing her around the playground. Tears were streaming down her face. I told Mrs. Burrows. I wanted with all of my heart for her to punish those boys. Even thinking about it today makes me tear up. We found out



*Bushnell Indian School*

later that Sharon had a thyroid problem, a hormone problem which made her heavy. Her parents owned Jensen's Coal Company down on Main Street. When we were growing up, that's how you kept warm in the winter. You loaded up your coal bin with coal and put it in the fire. You took out the clinkers every morning

and made sure they got out with the dump.



In the third grade, Judy Olsen moved to Brigham City and Jude and I were bosom buddies from the third grade on. She and I were like two peas in a pod.

She would come over and play at our house. We would go down to J.C.

Penney's, which was just down the block, and get in their dumpster to get their great big packing boxes. We would bring them up to my house and we would cut those boxes up and create forts. We had a fabulous cherry tree in the back that you could climb up. It was better than any gym and we'd swing off it and drop down. She played marbles too. She and I

would count our marbles and we'd play marbles at recess with all the boys while the girls were doing jump rope and jacks. Who had time for that? Jude and I would be right there playing marbles and she was a lot better than I was. We'd practice on one of the area rugs in our living room. I have all of my marbles still. They are downstairs in a box. We cleaned out mother's house and there they were. I was so excited. I have a marble that is as big as the bullets that killed Joseph Smith and hit John Taylor. I used it as an object lesson for my



*MerLynn, Drum & Bugle Corps*

Sunday School class. I have my brother's marble collection too. When Emily was little we used to have marble games. The tau is the one you use to shoot the other marbles out of the ring. It was a perfect fit for my hand when I was younger.

Judy was always finding things for us to do. We picked beans in Hyrum in the dark before dawn. We picked berries. The most delightful thing though was she got us involved in the drum and bugle corps in Brigham City. It was



just the most amazing experience. One didn't travel outside of Brigham City in those days. The

farthest I had been

was to Franklin, Idaho to visit my grandparents. Judy was telling us needed to belong to the Drum and Bugle Corps because they were going to take a trip to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She said there was a kid who was younger than me and he played the cymbals. She told me to just go tell him that I was going



that we



*MerLynn*

to play the cymbals and so I did. I can't remember if Judy played the drums, but that first trip I played the cymbals. We marched in Philadelphia. Clyde Christiansen was the director and a fellow named Bywater did the drums. He had a linoleum store on Main Street close to the Peach City.

We practiced in the summer. It was a marching band so we were in parades. We marched and did formations and presentations and then off we went to Philadelphia in this bus. We had never been before and we saw places and things that were just amazing to us.

I remember we were in some museum somewhere and this little boy went running up to his mother and said, "Listen to them, they have a western drawl." The next year we gathered some more friends and we went to Texas that year. There was me, Judy, Belle Call and a whole bunch of wonderful kids in town. When we were in Texas, we saw these little kids smoking. We were absolutely stunned. That trip was very memorable for me and we saw a lot of people who were different than me. In those days, we called black people Negroes. Belle told me she didn't judge them and that they



*MerLynn*

were as good as we were. She would welcome them in to her home. I was stunned because that's not how we grew up back in those days in Brigham City. We were very, very judgmental and it was a nice lesson to learn. Belle really believed it. The Veterans of Foreign Wars sponsored a big long parade and Jude and I played the drums. We played the tenor drums and it was pretty cool. We twirled our drum sticks and it was a delightful experience for us. We went on turnpikes, ate in restaurants, saw museums and experienced the time of our lives.

I have fabulous memories of high school. Our group continued to be friends and then we started dating. I went with a boy named Robert Whitaker. I dated him from the ninth grade until I was a Freshman in college. I think at one time we thought we were going to get married, but when I went to college and saw all the wonderful, gorgeous, handsome, young men who were there, I thought, "What a pool of fish!" Robert was nice, but there were other fish in the pond.

High school was delightful. Brigham City was kind of small. Seventh, eighth, and ninth grades were junior high school. Junior high and high school were all together. We had a total student body of about 700-800. Our graduation class was 140, somewhere around there. It wasn't really very big and everybody knew everybody. If you wanted to belong or join anything or be involved, you could. Our group was involved in everything and it was just delightful. I was looking at my yearbook recently because it was our 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion.

I was stunned at all the activities I was involved in. I was sophomore class vice president, President of the Future Homemakers of America, President of the Future Teachers of America. I was a flag bearer for the band and got to march with the band. I was in the choir and it was fabulous. I loved to sing. I didn't have a clue about music, so I learned the notes and sang them by ear. Someone would play the notes for me and I'd learn them. We were able to go on these marvelous choir trips and I would sit by Sydney Reeder. She was a soprano or second soprano which is what I think I ended up being. I loved to sit by her because I loved the way our voices blended.

Being the president of the Future Homemakers of American was a real trial to Mrs. Harris. I was absolutely not the best homemaking student she had. In fact, I was a real trial to her even though being the president was delightful to me. I had a great time. I was on the Executive Council and loved every minute of it. We did wonderful things in the FHA. We went to Salt Lake to a convention and had many activities. Mrs. Harris was leading and guiding because I didn't have a clue about leadership experience. I learned that later on when

I went to college and joined a sorority and had kids and joined the PTA.

When I was looking through the yearbooks I was with Newell Norman, the sweater boy and I was the sweater girl of one of the dances.



*Sydney Reeder*

Judy was queen of everything; she had all kinds of honors. All my friends were student body officers or cheerleaders. Belle, Judy and Dalene Burnett were cheerleaders. Sydney Reeder was the yearbook editor. The student body officers were Linda Jensen and Lola Jean Mills. I had a big crush on Lynn Poulter, the student body president. I think everyone had a crush on him. He was the master of ceremonies for our 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion. I think we were finally able to tell him that we all had crushes on him and he was surprised and actually shocked.



*Dalene Burnett*



*Lola Jean Mills*

One story about my friends means a lot to me. My friends were just very near and dear and choice friends in high school. We were all good kids and there were 13 of us. We were very loyal and we cared

about one another. models for each other, friends was and is in eighth or ninth party at her house. I thought 13 of us was opened her arms and I've never had a friend



*Verabel Call*

We were good role too. One of my Belle Call. We were grade and she had a was very exclusive. I enough, but Belle welcomed everybody. who was less judgmental and more caring about everyone and their sensitivities. I learned a lot from her. I didn't know I'd learned a lot until years later and all those memories of Belle and how she cared about others were deep inside of me. I hope all my children have friends like I did.

They were great friends. We all went to seminary and I graduated from seminary. We had teachers from the community and they were awful and dreadful. The exception was when we were seniors and we had a genuine, authentic seminary teacher named Kent Singleton. He was the best thing that happened to us because he listened. It was the New Testament that year and we were really curious about the last days. He stopped absolutely everything and gave us a whole unit on the last days. It was quite delightful.

We all graduated. I still have my seminary pin in my

jewelry box. It was a big deal to get a seminary pin.

Another big deal was getting a class ring. There was a jewelry store in town called Palmers Jewelry and we all made our pilgrimage to Palmers to order our class rings. I still have mine. The other ring I still have is my sorority ring from college.

Judy and I are still friends. Judy and Belle Call – it was such a gift to have those two friends. When we were in junior high, there was this marvelous group of girl friends. Judy and I decided we wanted to be with their gang. It was Sydney Reeder and Verabel, and we were just forming this group. There was Linda Jensen and Karen Hadfield at the time. Eventually there were 13 of us and we had

more fun than you could ever imagine. We'd have get-togethers. We'd have sleepovers and

we'd go out to the cement plant and swim. Every week we'd have a sleepover at someone's house. Sometimes we would sleep over at Betty Huggins' house. The

thing that was so cool about sleepovers is that guys would always come to them. The boys would always be there – boys our age and older. One time



*The Gang*

when I was in eighth grade and still trying to get in to the gang, Jude and I decided what we were going to do. I had this great sleepover up to the canyon and I invited anybody and everybody.



*Karen Hadfield*

Mother was there and Aunt Ruth and we had boys from seventh grade to high school come to visit us. I was launched. I had the greatest party. I was “in”.

Jude was always finding jobs for me. Her parents owned the local pool hall. Judy was brought up by her sisters and she had hand-me-down clothes until she started working for my parents at the Peach City. We had an ice cream store, but grocery stores were getting ice cream because they had the mechanism to freeze products. So, Daddy opened up a drive-in restaurant north of town. That was a God-send to all of the teenagers because many of them were hired at the Peach City. Some of my friends were hired – Sydney Reeder, Judy, and Betty Huggins. They had a job and they finally had money. Belle’s father owned the Idle Isle Restaurant and she had to work there. It was much cooler to work at the Peach City. We had so much fun. We would go after work and do all kinds of fun things. We would go



*Linda Jensen*



*Betty Huggins*

bowling in Ogden. Sometimes I wouldn’t get home until four o’clock in the morning and my mother would let me do that. I don’t think Belle’s father ever let her do that.

There was a brand new outdoor swimming pool built in Brigham City about this time to keep us out of the cement plant where we would go swimming. The cement plant was used during the war. They had left big pools of water out on the alkali flats where they had dug out the alkali. Maybe it was runoff of their excess ground water, but there were these two big pools of water and we would swim there. Dangerous? Oh, it was terrible. It was dirty, but it was the only place. It wasn’t great by today’s standards, but we had lots of fun. It was great for us. The town fathers eventually built an outdoor pool for us and after work we’d sneak in. Every time, we got caught. The police would tell us not to do it again and send us home. We kept coming back.



We’d go up the canyon many times with all the kids who were working at Peach City. We would gather all the friends after work and go up the canyon. There was a little finger of the Wasatch

National Park near Mantua in the mountains, all of us would go up there. We'd have weenie roasts and big bon fires. We'd gather anybody who would go. We had a lot of fruit stands in Brigham and Perry and Gary Nelson would go steal watermelons. He worked at the Peach City, too. I would say that we really shouldn't steal watermelons, but I ate them anyway. We had fun times after work. We'd close at 12 o'clock and then off we'd go. I remember being absolutely exhausted at 11 o'clock, but by 12 o'clock I had a shot of adrenaline that would not stop. Mother would give us quarters that we put in the jukebox and in those days you could have a tune for a nickel and six for a quarter. We'd clean up the Peach City and play all the latest songs – Johnny Mathis singing "When Sunny Gets Blue" and "The 12<sup>th</sup> of Never" and Elvis Presley.

My life was fashioned around fun and get-togethers. We used to have get-togethers all the time and my mom was wonderful. We would open our house and have slumber parties out in the back, parties inside. Mother was always there enjoying and making friends with all of my friends. Judy had an interesting background. She lived down the street from us about two blocks and she came to our Ward with us. Mother just opened her arms and gathered her in. She went with us wherever we went to our Mutual Improvement Association and to our ward. When it came time for us to have our patriarchal blessings, Mother just gathered Judy in and we all went together and had our blessings. Jude had four sisters, two older and two younger. Every one of them had rocky marriages and multiple

husbands. One time I asked Jude why she wasn't like her sisters. I wasn't quite that blunt but I asked her why she and Robert were still married and not like her sisters. She told me it was because of my grandma and mother. She said they are the ones who made a difference in her life.

It's interesting what we remember about our childhood when we are older. Judy and I did all kinds of fun things together. Belle was



*Sheran Jepperson*

great because of whom she was. Sydney was the leader and Linda knew how to handle boys and how to get a date and get along with boys. Karen Hadfield had this beautiful singing voice and Lola Jean Mills was gentle and kind. If we wanted anything



*Janet Hardy*

broadcast to the rest of the world, we would tell Betty because she couldn't keep a secret worth a darn. Sheran Jepperson was a very close friend to Karen and Cathy Smooth was just joyous. She lived out in Corrine and had a great family of sisters and we all knew each other. We would go to Cathy's on the way to the cement plant. Janet Hardy lived out in Bear River and she was lots of fun. Janet Williams lived up by



*Janet Williams*

Sydney. Janet later joined the same sorority that I did, Alpha Chi Omega. Louise loved to sing. When I was a senior, we were in choir together. She had voice lessons, so she could improve her voice. We



*Louise Evans*

I had a fabulous life growing up and I had the best friends. We were all close and loyal and we had so much fun. We'd say "Let's have a get-together" and do it as often as possible.



*Judy Olsen*

were in Louise's home often, but we actually went to everybody's house. We just made the rounds.



*Graduation, 1959*

## College



Most of us went to college. Judy didn't because she got married



*William Kerr, President*

and so *Utah State University* did Sydney. I went on to college. Dalene, Janet and I joined Alpha Chi. Belle joined Chi Omega. Linda Jenson and I were roommates. Linda's father had

passed away and her mom was a widow. So, Linda was only able to go to college for two quarters, leaving when she was a freshman. I always felt sad about that.

school, it was college. College was Utah State University. My grandmother's brother, William Kerr, was the President of Utah State. It was ingrained in us. Mother graduated, Daddy graduated. Everybody graduated from college. That's just what we did. My grandmother graduated from college, although it might have been a two year degree. She had a degree in home economics, Daddy had his in dairy sciences and Mother had hers in teaching.

Mother was a teacher. Actually, I have her genes. I'm a teacher, too. When I was in college, my major was history. My minors were physical education and teaching. I probably would have had a major in teaching but they had dreadful classes. They were so boring and so awful. There was one teacher worth his salt in teaching and that was Edgar Carlyle.

I went to Utah State and lots of my friends went there and we all joined sororities. I graduated in four years. I was President of the sorority when I was a junior. It was very unheard of. It was such a nice ride.

We had all kinds of fun dances and activities. Back in those days, the school was run by the sororities and fraternities. One of the things we had to do was be involved in college campus life. I joined all kinds of committees. Alpha Chi members were chairmen of those committees and I joined because it was a requirement. There was a



*MerLynn at the Greek Formal*

union building committee called the Gallery committee and I became the chairman. We had the most exquisite exhibits in the union building, beautiful art work, and amazing sculptures. My committee and I would take down the old exhibits and hang up the new ones. I can eyeball a picture on the wall and tell you exactly to a millimeter whether it's straight or not.

I was chairman of the intramurals for Alpha Chi Omega. There weren't any organized women sports, any basketball or volleyball. We all did intramurals and interacted with the other sororities. We had softball and water softball where we would get in the pool and go around different bases. We had half court basketball. We didn't have enough stamina to play full court, so we had six on the front and six on the back. There were forwards and guards. I was always a guard. I lettered in volleyball in intramurals. For a long, long time I had my letterman's sweater. The thing I was most proud of was getting an additional letter, a leadership letter. I took enough physical education classes to fill a notebook. I loved every one of them. I really wanted to teach history, but who teaches in their major? I got second best and taught water aerobics.

## Jed



I met Jed and fell in love with him. He was handsome, good looking, but to be right honest, I couldn't have cared less about him



*Jed Pitcher*

in the beginning. I think that's why I caught him because I acted less interested. But, catch him I did, fall in love I did.

We were in his car going up Logan Canyon one time. We all went up to make out in Logan Canyon. We went up a little ways and found a side road. It wasn't a big deal. It was broad daylight. He got out and opened up his trunk and got out two mitts and a

baseball. We proceeded to play catch in the canyon. At that time, I decided I better pay real close attention to baseball. He loved baseball and still does. We watch the World Series together. Jeff played baseball and Emily is now playing softball and we go to all her games. It all started when I was in college.



*Jed - Baseball*

Jed was a Phi Kappa Alpha.

Did Jed and I make out after we played softball that time? No. I remember we did not. What was the matter with him? Another time it had snowed and Jed and I went up to the canyon and we got stuck in the snow in some little off the road place. We had to get out and hitchhike home. It was very embarrassing because one of Jed's fraternity brothers came down the road. Now Jed has never been able to tell a lie.

He's awful at it. I'm pretty good at it. He was making up some absolutely ludicrous story why we were there in the canyon and how we got stuck. We were really making out. That's what we were doing.

In those days, you got your sweetheart's fraternity pin and that meant you were engaged to be engaged. There were wonderful formals in college, both sorority and fraternity. You invited them, they invited you, you hoped. Jed's spring formal was at Memory



*Jed & MerLynn Pitcher on their wedding day*

Grove in Salt Lake City and that's where I got pinned, on some little bench there as we were walking through Memory Grove. That was my sophomore year and we were engaged for a whole year and got married in the summer of my junior year.

We switched things around. He worked and put me through school. He was a teller at First Security Bank that first year we were married. Later, he went to work for LeGrand Johnson in their construction, cement, and asphalt business. Then I went to work after I graduated and I taught physical education at South Cache Junior High. Then I got pregnant with Jeff and stopped teaching. Back in those days you didn't teach if you were pregnant or a mother. It was a delightful experience. I have had a great life.



*The Logan Temple*

We got married in June. Jed wanted to be a June groom so we were married June 29 in the Logan Temple. My grandparents came. Jed forgot the marriage license, so he had to turn around and go all the way to Brigham City and get it.

Our honeymoon was a road trip to the World's Fair in Seattle where they had the Space Needle. It was really cool. We could have



gone anywhere and enjoyed ourselves, but we really had a nice time just driving through the countryside we'd never seen before. We saw the

Columbia Gorge and all the beautiful trees. At that time, there were big patches where the forest had been cut out for lumber. I was not offended at all at the big swatches of timber cut out like I am today.

One of the things I love about Jed is he is very caring. I can ask him any question and he always has these wonderful answers. Handsome, good looking – oh my gosh – and he still is, he's never deviated from being handsome, good looking and caring. I think when you get married, it's just a big Russian roulette crap shoot and you are darn lucky if it works out. The thing that meant so much to me was Jed's loyalty. You don't think about that when you are dating. You don't think about it until you are married and years down the road. We have always, always been loyal to one another. I would be the first one to say that marriage has not been easy. My lifestyle and background were different than his background. Meshing the two

personalities has been a lot of work. But, it has been worth it.

We have wonderful children. We've had a marvelous life together. As I have aged, I've appreciated more and more the fine qualities Jed has. He has a gift of working with people and bringing out the best in them. He has a gift of setting a goal and achieving it. Me - on the other hand - I'm "where's the party". So, we have been good for each other. He sets his goals and achieves them. I set goals, too, but if there's a party or fun on the way, I'll just make a little detour. A good example is he's done all the winterizing of the house and when it snows, it's all done. It's all taken care of.



*Jed & Marilyn Monroe*

He was able to set goals and achieve those goals and we are financially secure in our retirement. When you are raising kids and going through life and being really careful with your money, you think about those things but Jed made sure we had them. There is



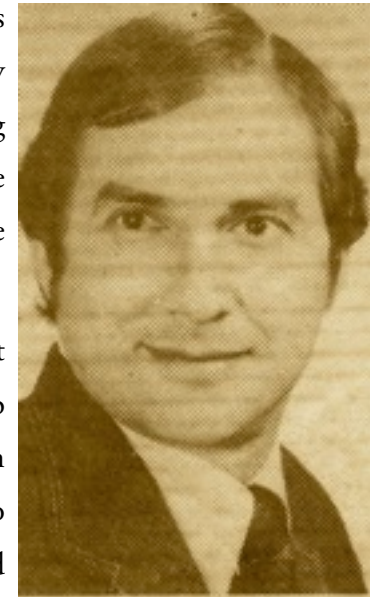
*Jed, MerLynn, Corie, Holly & Jeff*

enough and more and we are able to share with others. That means a lot to me. He has a generous heart and I do, too. My heart is a little more generous than his so consequently it's important that we balance. I'd give away the kitchen sink and he'd make sure we kept it.

As far as gifts are concerned, I have a gift. I like people. I like to have fun. Jed's gift is working with others and bringing out the best in them. He has an amazing memory. He remembers phone numbers and people's names. He is good at that. Jed decided ages ago that one of his goals was to climb up the corporate ladder and be President and CEO and he was able to do that. Not a lot of people

are able to do that. His talents and gifts combined and his drive and his ability to see in to the future concerning business enabled him to achieve those goals. He's very focused. He was able to become CEO when he was young.

Jed's first job was a teller with First Security Bank and then he got a job with LeGrand Johnson in construction in Logan. Then we decided to move to Salt Lake. He applied many places and there was a little ad in the paper for a cost accountant at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Utah. The other option was going to Colorado and working for IBM, but we didn't want to go out of the state. So, we sold our home in Logan and moved to Bountiful. One of the reasons we decided to move to Bountiful was my grandmother advised me to have a place closer to my mother in Brigham City and her in Franklin, Idaho. So, we found a home built for



### *Top official*

**JED H. Pitcher, a native of Cache County and 1962 graduate of Utah State University, has been appointed senior vice president and general manager of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Utah. Pitcher joined the accounting department of the firm in 1967, and during the past 10 years has served in several positions. He, his wife and children live in Bountiful.**

*Mar 27-77*



us in 1968 in Bountiful. We have lived in our home all these years and have loved where we are. We have added on to the back of the house and changed the front a little bit, but it's our home and we love it.

Jed started out as a cost accountant and worked his way up to be President and CEO and Chairman of the Board. He became President when he was 39 years old. It seems that's really young now. Back in those days, we thought we were experienced and knew everything. Jed came home one night and said how really lonesome it is at the top and what a tremendous responsibility it was as it all fell on his shoulders. He did a marvelous job of making it work. When he started, there were 200 employees and later on 400. He walked through the building and knew everyone by their first name, knew their children, knew what they did and their interests. He had a knack for remembering and knowing what they could do, who they were and for bringing out the best in those people and letting them do their jobs. He believed in them.

He's really good at promoting from within. He made Blue Cross Blue Shield and every other organization that he's worked for family friendly. He promotes the family – their own family and then, the big corporate family, so they feel they belong. There was a dramatic increase in job retention when he was President. Later on, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Utah joined a regional group called Regence BCBS. He went to Oregon for five years and was COO. He would commute, leaving

Sunday and coming home Wednesday or Thursday. For five years he commuted back and forth and meshed those companies. He



*Jed & Rebecca*

helped Dick Woolworth who was the President of Regence. The two of them worked together beautifully. It was harmony. Jed was able to bring firmness to the management which was needed to make the companies work. He had a real understanding of who could work together. He was able to help Dick put together Presidents of Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Utah who could work together.

We were very successful. Jed and I made a really good team. I took care of everything at home and, in the beginning, I raised the

kids. He was busy climbing the ladder of success and that was all right. It worked for us. Later on, when he was in charge of his life, he was able to step back. In the midst of all this, he was PTA President of Bountiful High School and I was PTA President of the junior high at the same time. He coached Jeff's little league baseball teams until he was a senior in high school. They took the State championship. He's supported Candie. When she went to college and played basketball for Fresno Pacific University, we went to all of her games. We became travelers. Jed missed maybe two of her basketball games in two years. We saw them all.

We've been great supporters of our children. Jed made sure each of our children had counselors in high school, and that made a difference. He was always checking on their grades. I was too, but it was really important to him to be involved. We knew the principals and vice principals. We became their friends and it worked well for our children.



*Jed at ease*

Jed retired and then he was home all the time. What do you do when your husband is home all the time? Bless his heart; he became involved in other things – community activities and business committees. He believed it was very important to be visible in his community and help the image of the company. He's been on the Opera Board, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Symphony board. I could make a long list of the boards and committees he's served on.

It's always been important to Jed and me to be involved in Utah State's well being. It is our university. We have always had a real closeness to Utah State. Jed was on the Board of Trustees at Utah State. He went on to be a chosen member, selected by the Governor, of the Board of Regents of Higher Education. He became the Chairman of that Board. He wanted to do those things so he could make a difference. He's continued to do the same with our universities. Being the Chairman of the Board of Regence means all the presidents are answerable to you. During his presidency, men who were presidents of Utah State, College of Southern Utah, Utah Valley University and the University of Utah had ties to Utah. Jed and I believe that Utah has a unique culture and he encouraged those who understood our culture to be the ones who ran the universities. The Board of Regence supported Jed in this effort.

## Utah State



I've had a really delightful, joyful trip being involved at Utah State. I've had a good time. I was asked to be on the Executive Board of the Alumni Association at Utah State and was asked to join the Advancement Council for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. For six years, I was on the Executive Board of the Alumni Association and served with three presidents of the Alumni Association and two presidents of Utah State., Herman Hall and Stan Albrecht. It was nice to see the inner-workings, voice my opinion and be a part of making the decisions of the Alumni Association. I appreciated being able to serve and make a difference. The

Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Development Council has been delightful.

When Jed retired, we set up a small foundation and have been able to share our resources with Utah State and Alpha Chi Omega. We have set up scholarships. We believe the future is in education. It's critical. We have a scholarship in business which is Jed's field. I have a scholarship with the Women's Re-Entry students. I believe giving the women an opportunity to improve themselves after they have been married and had children or are single parents is the greatest gift one can give. So, we've set up a scholarship for the women at the re-entry level. It means they are coming back to school and they can finish what they would like to become and be. We have scholarships to help the Utah State Alpha Chi Omega chapter. We have a scholarship at the University of Utah for AXO to help women there. We have another scholarship through AXO that's called a Love and Loyalty Scholarship. It's for anyone who needs funds and resources to go to school in any way, shape or form. It's not dependent on good grades. It is a much more liberal scholarship. There is a scholarship at Utah State for Amanda Moser who was president of Alpha Chi. She passed way with stomach cancer and left three small children and a broken hearted husband. Tiffany Evans was instrumental in getting that scholarship going with a great deal of support from us. We were able to get that endowed and that will be given every year at the scholarship banquet the University has for student body officers.

Football is not a big deal at Utah State. Football has been an absolute bust. It was great when we were in school, but the last 20 years, it's been just dreadful. However, they started a women's basketball program. Regan Peably, who has been the coach from its inception, is starting over again and I have done whatever I could to help. This

and we given it to I thought it good to give women's program.

I like basketball. Candie and to the women's Final years. We knew Regan was playing basketball Colorado University.

Scott, was the AAU basketball coach in the summer and Candie's coach. I told Regan that I had a couple of thousand dollars and asked if she had a spot for it. She said she would love to use it with her coaches. She said they do so much with so little and she wanted to check to see if it would work. Scott Barns, the athletic director and fund raiser, wanted to meet with Jed and me. They were persistent and because we ran out of excuses, we met with Scott. He's a nice



year we had a few extra dollars wanted to share. We could have Alpha Chi or to Utah State, but

would be to the basketball women's I have gone Four for when she at Boulder Her father,

person and we really liked him. Regan explained there was a new project for the women's locker room in the arena, a men and women's

renovation. She asked if they could use the money there. They were selling lockers to fund this operation. Lockers were \$2500 and they wanted us to put the money there. Scott showed us all the plans and Jed and I decided that we would donate \$25,000 to this locker project plus \$10,000 a year for five years. The total would be \$50,000 which would be half the funding for the locker project. Jed



*USU Women's Basketball Team*

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film room where the women had computers and a lounge, a study area and one other component. The last thing I needed was anything named after me, but if they were going to do it, I thought the lounge would be the best place because that's where the women would get together to study and become friends and develop as young women. So, I have my name on the women's locker room at Utah State and it is one of the joys of my life. There was a ribbon cutting to commemorate the new lockers. It was joyous.

I have co-hosted with Joyce Albrecht, the President's wife and my very dear friend, a luncheon for all the women who are involved in the sports program – the coaches, the wives, and the supporters. We had a fundraiser and got two other women to buy lockers; we raised \$5000 more!

It's a fun thing to be involved in Utah State. I love it. Joining Alpha Chi was a real turning point in my life. I don't think I knew it

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at the time. I joined because everyone else was joining and it was the thing to do. I made friends but the values that were in place because of AXO have made a tremendous impact in my life. I think it enhanced or added to the values I already had which came from my family, the church, and the gospel. They dove tailed. The AXO Symphony is one of the most beautiful creeds that there is. When we were in school, we had to memorize it. Linda Jensen and I memorized it walking to and from town to the sorority house.



*To see beauty even in the common things of life*

*To shed the light of love and friendship around me*

*To keep my life in tune with the world and I shall make no discourse  
in the harmony of life*

*To strike on the lyre of the universe only the chords of happiness, of  
joy, of peace*

*To appreciate every little service rendered*

*To see and appreciate all that is noble in another and*

*To let my lyre send forth the chords of love, unselfishness, sincerity*

*This is to be my symphony*

When I was Province Collegiate Chair I gave a copy of the Symphony to the women of Utah State. I have been on the foundation boards for Alpha Chi nationally and helped raise money for the sorority. It is critical today to fund the organization with resources from our own money, so I've shared in that way. I have been very fortunate to be on some national committees and to know wonderful high-powered women who share their executive skills in a sisterhood of love and caring. One of the values is loyalty. That fit right in. Jed's loyal. Our family is loyal to one another, so that made a big difference.



*MerLynn & Rita in front of the Alpha Chi House*

## Fairy Godmother Fund



Years and years ago, I made a decision to share part of what money I made working. It started back in the days when I didn't make a lot of money. I would deposit money from working at the pool into a savings and loan account and then share it with others.

I knew Kelly and Bobby Ortin from grade school. They had moved, through, and I didn't catch up with Kelly until she joined Alpha Chi at Utah State. She later married Jed's cousin and moved to Bountiful. When Kelly and Bobby were in school, their parents were in an airplane accident and killed. Bobby, Kelly's sister, married right out of high school and she and her husband were as poor as church mice. They moved to Oregon or Washington, I don't remember which one. Bobby's husband was in a terrible automobile accident and had brain damage. Kelly shared the details of this situation with me. Bobby was alone where she lived and had two little children she was

taking care of in addition to her husband. She would call, but often had her phone disconnected because she couldn't pay for it. At Christmas, I thought I would send Bobby money anonymously so she could get Christmas presents for her children. They really had

nothing. I envisioned her opening the envelope and knowing she could get presents for her kids. Christmas came and went and she said someone had given her \$50 anonymously which was a lot of money in those days. However, she told me she used the money to buy food for her children. That really touched my heart. I don't know if she even got presents for her kids.

So, I've kept a Fairy Godmother Fund forever. The money I get from working at the pool never goes to me. It always goes to someone else. I have money now that I keep in a credit union and it's a wonderful thing to share. It's never my money. It's God's money. Shhh! Don't tell - it's a secret.



## Children and Grandchildren



The very best job I've ever had was the "mom" job. I have loved



*Jeff*

uptight and so nervous. was the guinea pig. Then Holly came along. I got a and I sort of figured things I decided Jeff was raised by Doctor Spock and his



*Holly*

being a mom. I didn't have a clue how to be a mother in the beginning. It was one of those "on the job" training things. I think we all have that. I used to wonder why the kids didn't come with a manual. Jeff was born and I

was  
so

He  
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book. When along, I thought better and I was comfortable came along six thought that I it because I had boy and a girl. either one of when I really manual. Then along five years wasn't like any of them. I'm sure every mother figures it out but it was such a wonder to me that they were all so different.



*Corie holding Candie*

Holly came I liked my way finally feeling with that. Corie years later and I knew how to do one of each, a Corie wasn't like them and that's wished I had a Candie came later and she

Summers were the best. I could hardly wait until summer so I could play with the kids. My children were my friends. I would line up fun activities to do in the summer and we would go from one thing to the next. We took the kids to the potato chip factory in Kaysville, a steam engine train out to the Great Salt Lake, excursions to the canyon and Lagoon, and the zoo. We would go any place I could figure out that was different and unique. When school started, it was awful. All my best friends went back to school.

Jeff was a terrible disappointment and I'm saying that facetiously.

He was never a disappointment. He chose to go to the University of Utah, Holly went to Utah State, Corie to Brigham Young University and Candie to Fresno Pacific University and then

finished at the University of Utah. We have a very diverse group of children. All of our children have degrees. We

value education. The one who is going to get the furs and jewels is the one who went to Utah State. Holly joined Alpha

Chi there and Candie joined Alpha Chi at the University of Utah. Corie was an alumni initiate. I think she did that for me, bless her heart. So all of us are Alpha Chis. I actually have an Alpha Chi vintage pin for Emily.

Jeff and Jessie met at BYU. This is a delightful story. Jeff went to the University of Utah and his cousin, Lisa Pitcher, (Jed's brother's daughter) who lives in Smithfield had a full-ride scholarship to Utah State and a one-year scholarship to BYU and she chose to go to BYU. It was bizarre. We could not figure out what she was doing. She met Jessie, Jeff's future wife, and introduced the two. She was there long enough to introduce them and then go back to Utah State. So, Jeff met Jessie, fell madly in love and the two of them got married. Jeff finished school and then went to law school at BYU. Jessie was

heroic. She graduated from BYU after she had Scott. During her senior year, her grandfather passed away. Her grandfather, Ray Killian, was a wonderful man and Jessie had such a connection with him.

Jessie has a connection to Arizona. She grew up in Phoenix, Arizona and has a wonderful family there. Eventually, Jeff and Jessie moved back to Arizona. She's surrounded by all her brothers and sisters. They all live close to each other. They live more than close to each other; they live next door to each other. Jessie's grandfather owned orange groves. That's one of the ways he made a living in Mesa. It was subdivided like most of the orange groves there. Jessie's mother and her uncle are the two children from that marriage. Uncle



*Scott, Colton, Jessie, Caroline, Jeff & Serena*

Max subdivided the area. The place around the farm, the house, the

equipment, the out houses and barns were the last to be developed. Max developed a gated community and Jeff and Jessie were fortunate enough to get a lot in that community. Jessie's mother and father got a lot in the next cul-de-sac and they are back to back. Jessie's sister bought the house next to Jeff and Jessie and Jessie's brother was across the street in the next cul-de-sac. Then Jessie's sister, Melinda, was in the next development to the south. They are all just one happy family and my grandchildren have been surrounded by cousins who are faithful and steady. They've been influenced by aunts and uncles who love them and take care of them. It's been a grand experience for them. Lonesome for me? Would I rather have them here? I would, but it's been a nice place for them.



*Jeff & Family*

Jeff and Jessie have four children. Scott is the oldest and is on a mission in Mexico. Colton is a senior in high school and loves track.

Serena is in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and Caroline is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I really appreciate the relationship that Jeff and Jessie have. They love each other. I don't think you can ask for anything more. They love each other and are strong in their convictions and their love of the gospel.

Holly is two years younger than Jeff. When Holly was born, I cried. I thought God loves me. I have a girl and then I got another girl and then I got another girl. I thought I was so favored. I had three daughters and it's true that mothers are close to their daughters. It's a nice thing.

Out of all my children, Holly is probably the most diverse. She has all the qualities of of Jed and I combined. She has a sense of humor that doesn't stop. She and Jeff both have a great sense of humor.



*Holly, Emily & Samantha*

When she's on a roll, she can make us all laugh. She is so delightful. At the moment, she's working for Rio Tinto, the parent company of Kennecott Copper. The stress of being in the corporate world takes its toll. You just have to look at Jed over the years to know that it

takes its toll. When Emily was two, Holly and Matt Robb got a divorce and Holly's been a single mom now for 12 years. She's done a wonderful job. Jed and I have been there to support and help her. Emily is our only granddaughter here in Utah. She's going to Utah State, so she might get all the furs and jewels. What can I say? Holly is the best cook. She's really good at it.

Corie lives in Portland. I used to tell the girls they could date anyone they wanted, but they had to ask three questions: (1) How would you like living in Utah the rest of your life? (2) Do you care if my mother and I have a very close relationship? and I can't remember the third one. Jeff moved away. Jessie's by her mother and that's alright. That's the way it should be. Corie



*Corie & Family*

moved away to Portland. Eric, her husband, is in computer programming. He's our computer genius, our computer whiz. We are so grateful he's in the family, not only because he loves Corie, but because he knows all about computers. Corie said one time, "I don't

care where we are just so Eric's happy" and that's their relationship – happy. They have three children - Tynan who is three, Rebecca is in the first grade and she's competitive and delightful, and Samantha is in the fifth grade. She's very much like Corie – very quiet, determined, thoughtful and very sensitive.

Candie's the baby. She and I have always been the best of friends. I used to love taking Candie places. She skied with me and we would go lots of places together. She went to Fresno Pacific and played basketball. She played basketball in high school. Something amazing to me about her is she has this astonishing mind. She can remember things and she can focus. In all her career in high school she was a straight A student. She was one of four valedictorians. She went to Fresno on a basketball scholarship and then an academic scholarship. I think all through school, she only got one A- and one B+. The rest were A's. She loved learning. All of my children did, but Candie particularly loves learning and she has the mind to do that. In my next life that's what I'm going to ask for – that kind of memory and mind. Candie is a lawyer and works for Jones Waldo. Jeff is a lawyer in Arizona. Corie is the stay-at-home mom. Holly is in the corporate world. They are all doing well and are contributing members of society.



*Caroline, Corie & Jed*

Candie lives in Salt Lake City with her partner, Colleen Sandor. Colleen is a professor of psychology at Westminster. She's very good at what she does. She's an excellent cook. She has a marvelous mind. She's a delight to visit and converse with. They have a dog that is the love of their life.

One of the things that has brought me great joy is Corie and Candie's singing. They both sang in the a cappella choir in high school. After they were grown up, they joined an exclusive women's choir in town directed by Jean Applony. It was such a joy to go to their programs and hear these beautiful women sing. Candie and Corie sing so well together. If Corie had not gallivanted up to Portland, they could still sing together. Candie sings now with a quartet – really there are five of them. They sing in churches and other places. I love to hear them sing. Maybe if I hadn't had polio and my throat and vocal chords had not been affected, that's what I



*Corie, Holly & Candie*

would love to do – sing. It was such a joy when Candie was in school and so involved in all the athletics. She played softball and volleyball. She was the center in volleyball and point guard in basketball. She got her letterman's jacket and it was as fun for me as it was for her. Her letterman's jacket is still downstairs in the cedar closet. She and Karie Allen both won the outstanding girls athlete in high school. She had a trophy that was as big as she was and I have a picture of her, the trophy and a basketball and graduation picture all together. We were really proud of her because it takes a lot of work for sports, to be good at it and to work so hard at it. She never let her grades falter because of it and that was a nice thing. Mother went with us to San Antonio when Candie's college basketball team went there for a tournament. We went to Hard Rock Café and it was so noisy, decibels out of sight. My mother said it wasn't a problem and she just turned down her hearing aid. I thought if I ever get a hearing aid that I'll be able to do the same. In fact, I'm getting a hearing aid next week for my right ear. I always knew I'd be getting a hearing aid. It will be nice to hear

my grandchildren again without saying, “What? Say that again.”

I thought being a mom was the greatest job anyone could have. But, that’s not true. Being a grandma is

so much better. Belonging to the grandmother club is the best club there is to belong to. When you are a grandmother, you are adored and I love being adored. It’s just the best. I have eight grandchildren – four in Arizona, three in Portland and Emily here in Utah.

First, there was Scott. When Scott was born, I had no idea you could love a little bundle immediately. It was just the most amazing thing to me. Colton came along and he was different than Scotty. I went to Arizona and when we would go out to eat, we couldn’t find Colton. He would be down underneath the chair, benches or tables. They all grew up to be wonderful children. Serena was the first granddaughter and she loved being the only girl. She was precocious and delightful. Caroline came along next and they all fit in.

This summer we had a grandma camp. Caroline and Serena came. Emily, Serena and Colton went to Especially for Youth which I



*Corie & Rebecca*

paid for. I thought it was important that they went to that. I told them it would be a permanent thing, that if they wanted to go to



*MerLynn with Kids & Grandkids*

EFY, they could go. Caroline had figured out that she could get to Utah with the kids going to EFY and she could stay a week and then we could go to Sun Valley. Caroline called plotting and planning, the sweetheart that she is, and asked if she could come for a grammy camp. I said it would be lots of fun and that we’d plan all kinds of things. Then I got thinking about it and thought it would be fun to have Samantha, Corie’s daughter come, so I called her, but Caroline had already called and invited her to come. Eric flew down with Samantha and then went right back home and Caroline came with the older kids and we had this marvelous, fun camp. I took Caroline

to Provo and we saw the Crandall Printing Museum. They have all the printing presses from Gutenberg press to the press that printed the Book of Mormon. We went to Kennecott Copper and the Oquirrh Mountain temple open house. We went to the Lion House in Salt Lake and to the pool so the kids could swim. We didn't go to Lagoon, but maybe next year we will. It was just glorious. I was living my children's days over again. It was so much fun.



*MerLynn with Rebecca*

Emily has been here so she's the one we know and the one we associate with much more often. The relationship she and Jed have is tender and sweet and delightful to see. One time, I asked Jed if there was ever anything Emily could ask for that he would say no to and he said he didn't think so. There's a movie that Walt Disney put out years ago. I can't remember the name of it, but the main characters are Roger and Peggy and Emily calls Jed "Rog" and Jed calls Emily "Peg". I think he'd like to buy her a car like his grandfather bought

him. We'll see. When Emily turns 16, he'd love to do that. Jed and I were at Costco the other day and Jed suggested we go see Emily. I called to see if Emily was at Holly's place, but Emily wasn't home. I looked at Jed and Jed looked at me and we decided to go home. We didn't go see Holly. So, she's been teasing us about that.



*Granddaughters at the Lion House*

Jed and I decided years ago that one place we would go on a consistent basis was Sun Valley. When the kids were little, we would go to Sun Valley and they could bring a friend. Now our families bring their children and they are the best of friends. They can hardly wait until the Sun Valley trip. We have whole family vacations every year in Sun Valley. We have Christmas vacations together. We've gone to Disney World, on cruises, to Del Coronado, San Diego and lots of times to Disneyland.



*Relaxing at Sun Valley, Idaho*

We do things together as a family. I think it's critical for cohesiveness and caring.

In the beginning, Sun Valley trips were in conjunction with Jed's work. He would take his board members and we'd take our family. He would do his "board" things and we would hang out. I would go to dinners and be entertained with Jed. It was during that time we decided no matter what, we would continue to go to Sun Valley. It's such a fun place to feed the ducks and go paddle boating. We would hang out at the book store and go shopping down town. Once in awhile we would go up to Stanley and Galena Pass. We even went skiing in the winter.

Each time we get to Sun Valley we get to be with the kids again and we get to know them better. Sun Valley is a marvelous place to go. I try to do one thing with each of the children like feed the ducks, go paddle boating, or whatever.

Rebecca is Corie's middle child and she's competitive, tender and dramatic. She is so dramatic. Her fish died two weeks ago and she cried for an hour. Eric, the wonderful father that he is, bought her another baby fish and she was joyous. She loves to read. Samantha, Corie's oldest, is such a student. She's in fifth grade and reading at an eighth grade level. She's in every accelerated group they have. She is in a reading group where there are only eight students of the whole fifth grade. Samantha is quiet and careful. She's a Girl Scout and that's good. I was a Girl Scout and sold the first Girl Scout cookies that were ever sold in all the United States. Alice Allston was my Girl Scout leader and we called her "Twink". It



*Jed with Emily & Serena*

was a great diversified experience. Twink was a Catholic and we got to meet wonderful people who were not Mormons. It was a very satisfying experience.

Tynan is three years old. When he was being carried in the womb, we were very concerned for him because his growth rate was very small. He was in the lowest ten percentile. Corie had ultrasounds every week and she had to be really careful. We were so concerned, and when he was born, he was just teeny. He had premie diapers, but he was perfect. There wasn't a thing wrong with him. He's still perfect – just teeny. He's such a tiger. He likes to play with his cars and garbage trucks. He likes to put on costumes. I have a fun picture of him dressed up as a princess. He also dressed up as an alligator and that costume is just a kick. The girls dress him up and play with him. He loves to play in the kitchen. We watched the kids one time while Corie and Eric went on their first vacation in ten years without kids. They are wonderful, a happy family who love each other.



*The Whole Family*

When I call Corie on the phone, she'll be laughing at something Tynan is doing. He'll be making a big noise. For ages and ages, he used to take all the things out of the recycling bin, putting them in and taking them out. She would just laugh and put them back. She didn't have children for five years after she was married and the joy of

having children is very apparent. She's a great mom. Actually, all my children are, which is a joy to me. They love their children and take care of them. They want to make sure they are raised correctly and they are accountable. That's very satisfying to me. Mother told me that you never know what kind of mother you were until you see the grandchildren. Mother must have been a fabulous mother if that's the

criteria.



*MerLynn with her Granddaughters*

## Holly Says...



Having MerLynn as our mother has been a great experience. Dad was busy being the President of a company and Mom kind of raised us. We had two sets of families. Jeff and I are two years apart and we caused a lot of trouble. I think she waited quite a few years and then had Corie and Candie. There's six years between us. It was always a party. She loves to have fun and go and do things. There was never a dull moment.

I remember in school she would tell us to have parties. If it was up to me I wouldn't have had a party. Corie's favorite saying was she thought boy friends liked our mother more than her. Boy friends would come over just to see her. I remember having a party one time when she was gone. She called right in the middle of the party. Stephanie Hewlitt picked up the phone and thought we were busted, but my mother just wanted to be sure we were safe. However, one time Jeff had a party all by himself and she called the cops on him. Jeff was 15 years old and had a truck in the garage he couldn't drive yet. Mom and Dad were supposed to go to a University of Utah basketball game. Jeff



*Holly & MerLynn*

and four of his friends took the truck over to someone's house. About a half hour later, Mom showed up at home with ice cream and toppings for Jeff and his friends. The truck was gone. She finally found out where he went and called the police to report the truck stolen. The police couldn't do anything because she knew where it was and who had it. She called the boys' parents and they went to Johnny's house and got them. They were in such big trouble.

Mom and Corie were in Switzerland at the train station. They were about to go to Zermatt. There was a big group of them, but Mom had to go to the bathroom. She wandered in and came out to see men washing their hands. She thought it was a mixed bathroom, but then realized it was the men's bathroom. The train had left and Corie was on it. There was no one around at the train station and the ticket master did not speak English. Finally, a little man came up to her and asked if he could help her. He helped read the train schedule and an hour later another train came. She wandered around town and then took the train when it came. Everyone was waiting for her at Zermatt.

## Tidbits



I love red. Red is my color. I've always loved Levi's and cowboy boots. When I was a little girl, Mother told me if I stopped biting



*MerLynn*

my fingernails I could have cowboy boots. The second pair of cowboy boots I ever owned are in my closet.

I married the wrong person. It was really sad. I could have lived in the mountains. Jed's idea of roughing it is maid service. Consequently, over the years, I have given up that dream. Mother and Daddy had a cabin up

Black Smith Fork. It was their dream. I loved going up there. It's peaceful and quiet. I would take that cabin over any vacation, over any fancy dance place. We went to Hawaii last year with our children

and grandkids and we had a wonderful time. Yet, the cabin is a retreat and I love it.

I like rice pudding. I think rice pudding is one of the best things next to Great Harvest oatmeal raisin cookies. I like oatmeal and eggs. Our family grew up loving eggs. My uncles made their millions in the egg ranch business. My cousins still have Wrightwood eggs. I love fresh eggs. It has to be fresh eggs. I like custard, custard pudding, pot roast and Sunday dinner when we can all get together. I love all kinds of vegetables. I like snow. I love water, love to swim and I like teaching and making a difference.

I like caring about other people. We have dear friends Frank and Sharon Brown. They've gone to Hawaii with us and to baseball spring training in Arizona. Now Frank and Sharon have cancer. She has ovarian cancer and he has melanoma. I love them. I have a lot of wonderful young friends. Kim Brown, Sharon's daughter and Ann Hewlett who is Jeff's age. She came back from her mission and we started going to the temple together and we still do once a week. We share things that are close to our hearts spiritually. It's nice to have a friend who you can do that with. I have two friends who have known me since grade school and they are Belle and Judy. I have Alpha Chi friends who meet once every quarter or more often now we are all retired. We've watched our children grow up together. We know all about each other's children. We know how hard parenting is and

how easy it can be. We love each other. I think friends are the greatest gift that God has given us.

The world has changed. There have been several big changes in my life. Child rearing is one. When Jeff was born and when I was a child, it was “do as I say” and obedience. We did what our parents said. We didn’t question it. I spanked with a willow. The change in child rearing has been dramatic. It has changed from obedience and “do as I say”, switching with a willow or a little paint paddle which I had for my younger kids, to giving them choices and withholding. We did that, too, but it’s now a softer, more gentle way of rearing children. The roles of fathers and mothers have changed dramatically. Mothers took care of the children and fathers earned the living. Now mothers and fathers take turns like changing diapers. I’m sure Jed would not agree, but I don’t think he changed more than three dirty diapers in his whole career. That’s been a change.

We’ve watched the world change. When we were growing up, the worst things were alcohol and getting pregnant before you were married. This country came from a very Christian background, a

very English European Christian background and that has changed. It is nothing to have a sexual relationship with someone before marriage. I think the world would say it’s expected.

There were no such things as computers and word processors. It was such a gift when spell check came along. Mark Twain said that if you can’t spell a word more than one way, you have no imagination. That was my mother’s motto. Cell phones. I remember getting a cell phone to use for emergencies and now it’s an absolute must. I have an iPhone and it’s my passport to being cool with teenagers.

In our family we are all teachers. It’s in the genes. My mother, grandmother, uncles, aunts and siblings were all teachers. When I came to Bountiful I got a job working at the recreation center as a teacher of water fitness and life guarding and other things. I eventually ended up being a program director to all the pools and have been working there for 41 years. I love to be in the water. It just makes me get up in the morning. I’ve had a great time teaching classes. It’s my “paid to play” job and it’s just fabulous.



*Holly, MerLynn, Jed & Candie*



Mother had the most beautiful, amazing complexion and I always thought it was natural. She worked at it. Mother came to Judy, Belle and I once with a steamer and taught all of us to steam our faces. I grew up with Mother's vanity genes. One of the things I discovered years ago was face tape. I was in college when Rose Marie Reid came to Alpha Chi. She told us that in the business world in the 1960's, a woman had to be wrinkle free and very beautiful. In those days they wrapped packages with pink paper tape that had glue on it. She would cut the paper into wedges and put them on her forehead. I started getting wrinkles there and I thought if Rose Marie Reid could do it, I could do it. We would use it on our spit curls, but I started using it on my wrinkles. I have been using face tape ever since and it has made a difference. Forever and ever I have used sun screen. A friend once told me that everyone knows everyone else's age when you are in high school. I never told anyone my age – not anyone. Why did they need to know? When Candie was born, I was 31 and

holding for all the years she was in grade school. We just had our 50-year class reunion and now I can tell everybody my age. It doesn't matter.



*Blanche Woodward Harris*

## Defining Moments



I've had several defining moments. Having polio was a defining moment. That changed everything in my life. It wasn't because I couldn't use my arm, but because from Mother's perspective, everything I did to make that arm work was a gift. It was, "Aren't you grateful? Look at what you can do". I think gratitude was instilled in me.

I was driving up the road and I had one of those epiphanies. In my mind I could see that I had been in the audience watching the play of life and I had been learning and absorbing. Now it was my time to be on the stage and to have others learn from me. That was an interesting experience. I had been learning all these years and now it was time to let someone learn from me.

Jed and I didn't feel right about a young man Holly was dating in college. I prayed to the Lord to tell me what to do and I would do it. My thought was that the Lord would have me run up to school and put her at BYU or somewhere else. But, the answer was that I should start going to the temple every week. So, for a year I went to the temple every week. At the end of that year I said nothing has

happened and so now what? The next thing I felt I was to do was to fast every Sunday. I never could figure out fasting but I read all the



*Jed & MerLynn at Spring Training*

scriptures on fasting and read all the books that were published on fasting and it didn't make any sense to me. But, for a whole year I fasted every Sunday and still went to the temple every week. Nothing changed and now what? The next thing I had to do was read the Book of Mormon every day. I read the scriptures, mostly on Sunday. So, I read the Book of Mormon. I didn't read pages and pages. Sometimes I would only read one scripture. Sometimes I'd read for five minutes and make little red marks beside my verses to keep track of where I was. Nothing changed. By this time Holly had graduated from college. What had changed was me and I have had a wonderful

relationship with Holly. It's been a gift. We always joked and laughed and got along so well. Sometimes people would stop us in the malls and comment what a nice relationship we had. Holly had friends in college who said they wished they had that kind of a relationship with their mom.



*Candie, Holly and MerLynn*

One time Holly asked me to come to Utah State and be the advisor to the pledges, the new members. I asked her if she was sure. I thought I would be in her space. She said they needed me. For a year and a half every Monday I would drop Candie off at Jed's brother's house and go to Alpha Chi to have meetings. One time we were going to have a retreat at a condo in Park city with all the new members. I told Holly I was really nervous that I would embarrass her. She draped her arm over me and looked at me and said that I had been embarrassing her all my life and she was used to it. That's the kind of relationship we had. And this young man that we didn't

feel right about has not damaged or spoiled that. It was a lesson in learning and understanding and God knows best. I sure don't. I trust in Him.

## Church



The other area that has been very satisfying to me was teaching in the ward. I love to teach classes. It doesn't mean there hasn't been a



big learning curve and difficult at times. I'm a procrastinator. I was walking down the hall one time when I taught Primary praying to Heavenly Father that if He would help me get through this particular class, if He would just let the words come, I would promise with all my heart that I would prepare next time. I bet there isn't a teacher in any of the Wards who hasn't been

reading the lesson as they walk to class.

I think the Church has changed a lot. We've come from a more outward focusing like what awards we got on our bandaloes and getting one hundred percent attendance at Sunday school and MIA. Now we are encouraged to listen to the Spirit and follow what we hear. We never heard any of that when we were kids, at least not in my ward. It really wasn't emphasized. It was more getting things done in the outward experience of worship. We went to the temple

to get married because that's what everybody did. It wasn't the focus of living worthily to go to the temple which I think now it is.

I've done almost every job and held many positions. My grandparents were very devout and religious. They loved the church and we were brought up with that type of love. It was not in our makeup to condemn or criticize or say no. I watched Mother. We accepted the positions we were offered and we served. That's what we did. It's a great religion to serve others and teaching is one of the ways I have done that.

I was the Young Women's president when we first moved in to our home in Bountiful. That was a fun job and I liked it. I've been involved in the Young Women's program and also been a teacher in Sunday School for years. I have taught a whole generation of our ward's children. Actually, I've taught most of them. One period of time I taught the seniors in high school for 12 years. I taught all the brothers and sisters. Sometimes I got really tired of the lessons, so I used to make up my own. Currently, I'm teaching the Presidents of the Church to 12 year olds and it is fabulous. It's teaching history and I love the history of the church. I've been on historical tours,



*The Kirtland Temple*

church history tours to Nauvoo, New York, Pennsylvania and Missouri. I believe if you read the Doctrine and Covenants you have to understand the history of why it was written.

I think Joseph Smith was an amazing man and prophet. I have the greatest respect for Joseph's mother, Lucy, and I have a love for



*The Bountiful Temple*

Emma who loved Joseph. They loved one another. It wasn't easy.

I love Camilla Kimball because she also had an inquiring mind. There was a great article published in the Ensign when President Kimball was the prophet. She was interviewed by Lavina Fielding Anderson, who does interviewing so well. She brought out the very best in Sister Kimball. One of the things Sister Kimball said was that she had an inquiring mind. She had to study things out. I have held that in my heart and loved that. I used to think it was called rebellion to inquire, but it's learning, having to know and find out for yourself. Sister Camilla said there were a lot of things she didn't understand. She had to put them on a shelf and I've done the same thing. I read the Book of Mormon for the first time and had all these

questions. I would put a question mark out in the margin. I had question marks on every single page. What does this mean? How can that be? And over the years all those question marks are gone. I may have one or two left. I thought that I didn't understand, but somebody does. The blacks in the Priesthood was just such a struggle. The women's issues, women's rights – that was another issue put on the shelf. Now it's the gay question. That goes way up on the shelf for me. I'll never understand that. But, someday I will. I'll learn.

Do I have a love for the Lord? Do I have a love for the avenue by which I know Him which is the church and the gospel? Absolutely. Does he answer my prayers? Even to the smallest thing I can receive answers. Am I grateful? With all of my heart. I am so grateful that I'm not alone, that our family is not alone. I'm grateful for the reasons to be together and to love each other. I'm grateful for the values that the Savior has given us. I'm grateful for Him and for the reason we get to be together in the eternities. I don't understand how He could have done what He did, but I'm grateful that He did.

I have loved my life. It's been joyous. I want to continue doing what I've always done and ride off into the sunset. What advice would I give if someone would listen? Life is too short. Eat dessert first. Be nice. And, I am only one, but I can make a difference.



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