

# *MerLynn Harris Pitcher*

Tells Her Life Story

Published by Family History Preserved, LLC  
In the United States of America 2010

Printed by: (Book) Tueller's Press; (Cover) Trade Imaging  
Bound by: Schaffer Bindery, Inc.  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
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## *Foreword*

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

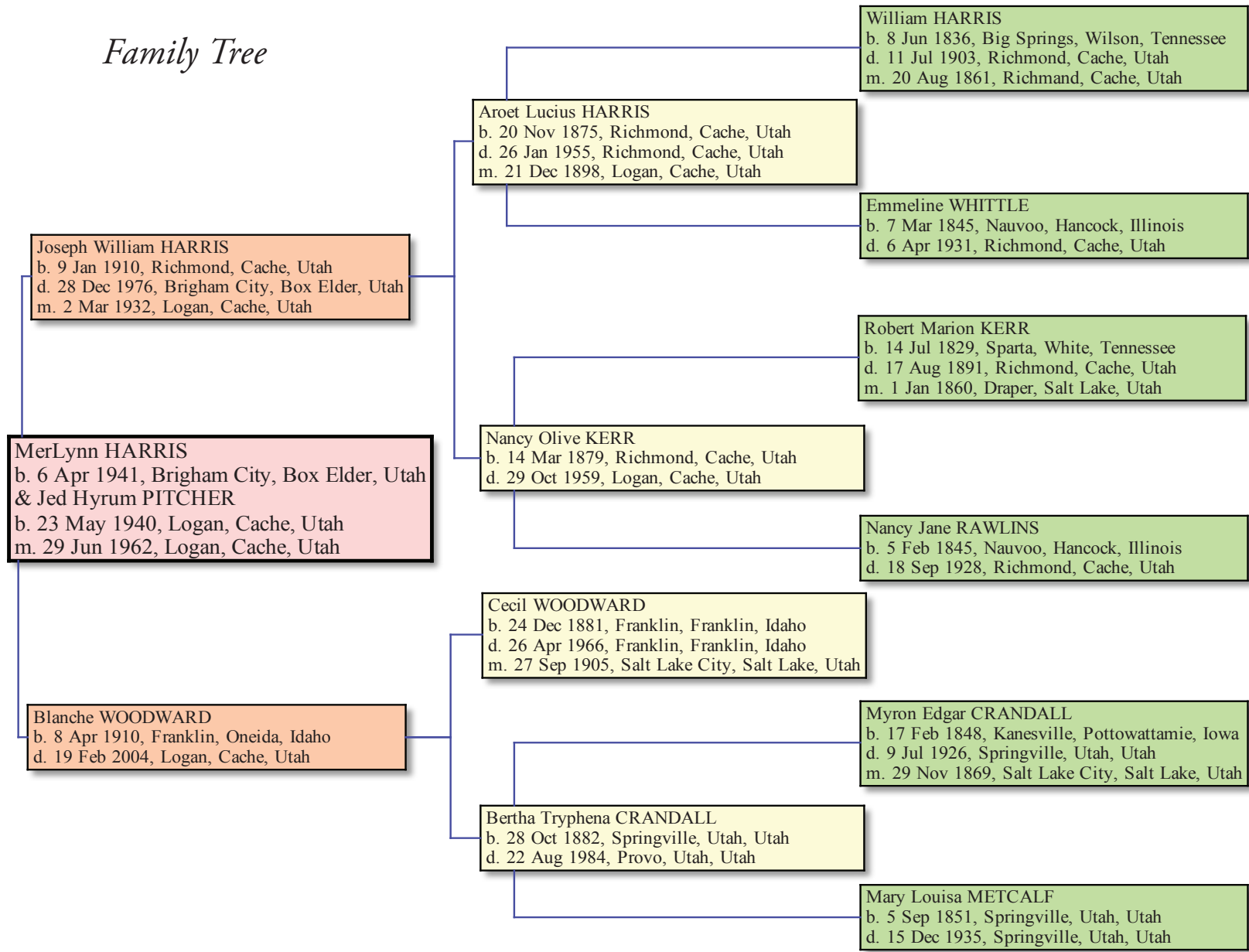
Danny Kaye

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. Family History Preserved 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.

Verabel Call Cluff

*Family Tree*



## *Family Group Sheet*



### **MerLynn HARRIS**

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**

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**

Birth: 17 Nov 1989, Provo, Utah, Utah

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

Birth: 21 Feb 1992, Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona

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

Birth: 26 Apr 1995, Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona

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

Birth: 12 May 1999, Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona

### **2. Holly PITCHER**

Birth: 2 Jun 1966, Brigham City, Box Elder, Utah  
 Spouse: James Matthew ROBB (Divorced)  
 Children:

#### **1. Emily Lynn ROBB**

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

### **3. Corie PITCHER**

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**

Birth: 7 Jul 1999, Provo, Utah, Utah

#### **2. Rebecca Faith WUEHLER**

Birth: 11 Mar 2003, Portland, Washington, Oregon

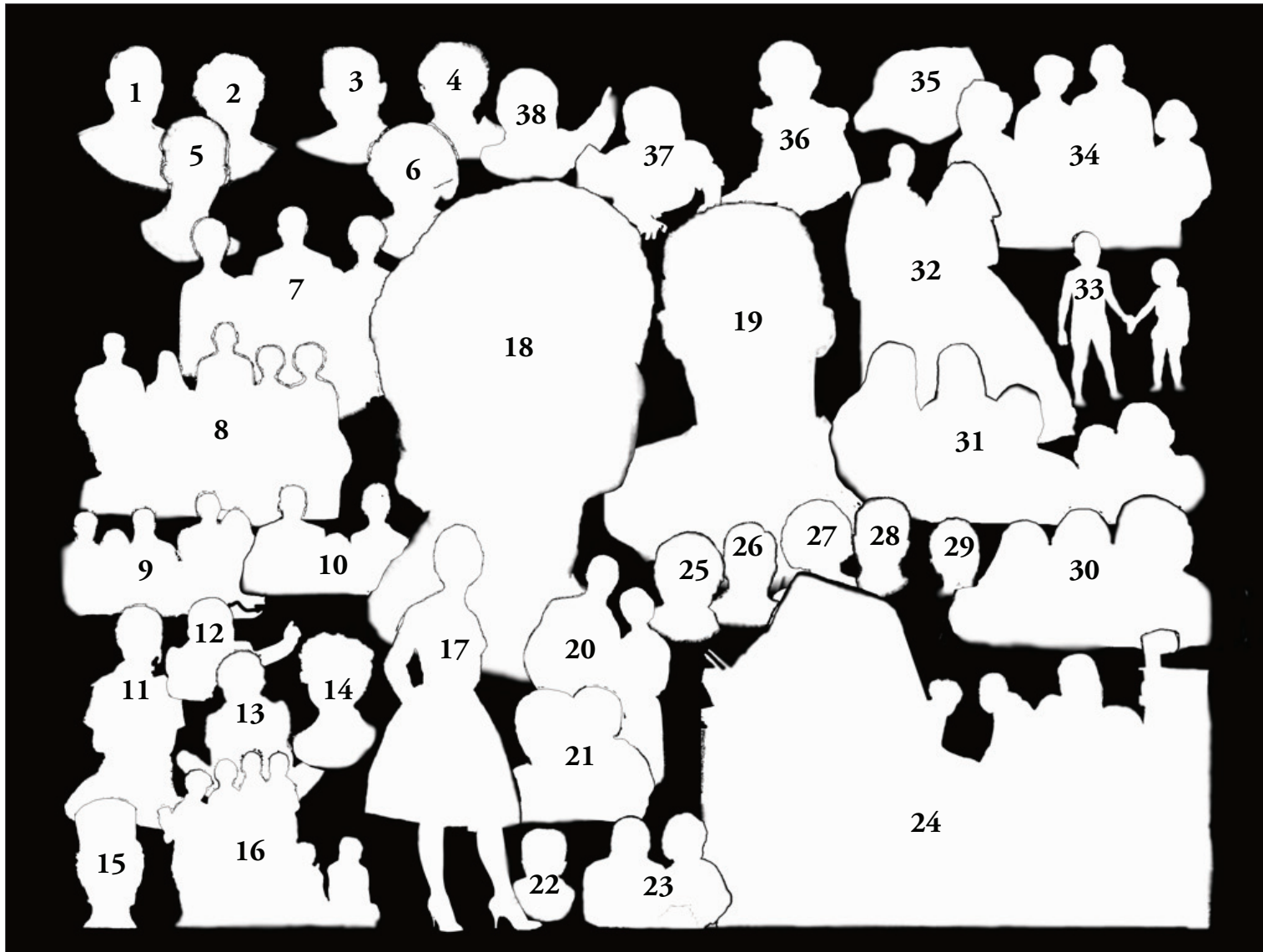
#### **3. Tynan Eric Joseph WUEHLER**

Birth: 23 Jan 2006, Portland, Washington, Oregon

### **4. Candice PITCHER**

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

*Book Cover Photo Key*



1. Aroet Lucius Harris
2. Nancy Olive Kerr (Harris)
3. Cecil Woodward
4. Bertha Tryphena Crandall (Woodward)
5. Joseph William Harris
6. Blanche Woodward (Harris)
7. Harris Family - Back (l to r): Rita, Robert MerLynn. Front (l to r): Bill, Blanche
8. Bill and Blanche Harris Children and Grandchildren
9. Chris and Rita Pella Family
10. Robert and Shanna Harris Family
11. MerLynn and Woofy
12. MerLynn
13. MerLynn
14. MerLynn
15. MerLynn in the Drum and Bugle Corps
16. The Gang
17. MerLynn
18. MerLynn
19. Jed Pitcher
20. Jed and MerLynn Pitcher
21. MerLynn and Serena
22. Tynan Eric Joseph Wuehler
23. Scott and Rebecca
24. MerLynn and Her Granddaughters
25. Jessie Stapley Pitcher
26. Jeff Pitcher
27. Corie Pitcher Wuehler
28. Eric Wuehler
29. Colleen Sandor
30. (l to r) Candie, Holly, MerLynn
31. Back (l to r): Emily, Serena. Front (l to r): MerLynn, Jed, Colton, Scott
32. Jed and MerLynn's Wedding Picture
33. Jeff and Holly
34. (l to r): Holly, MerLynn, Candie, Jeff, Corie
35. Candie
36. Corie
37. Holly
38. Jeff





*Brigham City Tabernacle*



*Harris Home*



*Old Central School*



# 1 *My Family*



I have always loved my name – MerLynn. It was different, it was unique. There were lots of Marilyns 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. We were a trio.





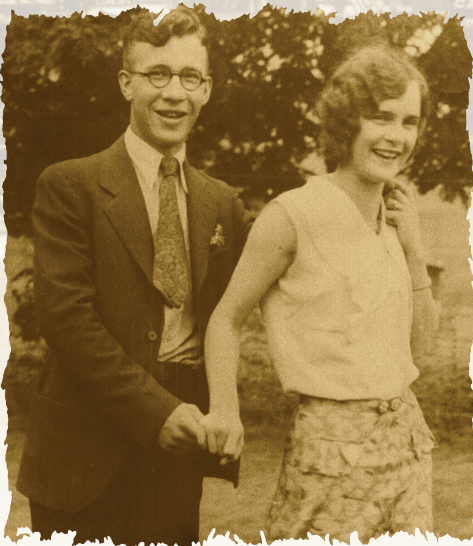
## My Parents



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 our home. She was joyous. She loved to have fun. And I think she passed that 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.

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. When I was young, 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 away we'd go. I grew up in



*Bill & Blanche Harris*

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 out of the oven. It took me years to figure out she did



*Bill & Blanche at Bear Lake*

that on purpose. Mom made bread, rolls and best of all cinnamon rolls. They were so good. They were to die for.

Mom also made fry bread for the Indians. Fry bread is like a scone only a little bit bigger. We'd put butter on them and honey

and they were so good. Brigham City had opened up the old military Bushnell Hospital to make a school out of it for the Indians.



*Intermountain Indian School*

That's what we called them – The Indians. They were a cross section of Hopis, Navajos, and one other group. There was a policy when I was young 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. 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 father was an amazing ice cream maker and a successful business man. We opened The Peach City Drive Inn in 1936. It was a cheery little ice cream parlor on North 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. We opened the Peach City Drive Inn and added hamburgers, hot dogs and cheese sandwiches, along with our milkshakes and malts plus the soft drinks and ice cream. It was

a big success with my friends, those darling teenage car hops and it provided jobs for lots of other teenagers in town. In town it was the place to go after dragging main. It also attracted lots of families.



*Bill Harris at The Hollywood*



*The Peach City on North Main Street*

## My 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 Cecil Woodward.



*Cecil and Bertha Woodward*

She would invite us in with open arms. Grandpa,

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 be-

Aroet Lucius, was a little, tiny man and the only thing I remember about grandpa that really stands out, he always gave us hard tack candy. In their house there was a little entry way, the dining room and then on into the living or sitting room on the left. We would sit around and visit. That's all we did – sit around and visit.



*Aroet Lucius & Nancy Olive Harris*

If we got bored, we could go into the bathroom where there were some drawers with two toys – Lincoln Logs and an old erector set. Compare that to all the fun we had on the farm. There were horses to ride, fields to explore and cows to milk. We were joyous when we could leave to 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.

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 together. It was just a marvelous time. I could hardly wait to get up and ride the horse. My grandparents' 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



*Rita, 1945*

she would have 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 to ride Tony, but I always got Old Daff. Roger, my cousin, always got Tony. We had a delightful time riding the horses but before we could, 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 I remember.

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

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 the time he met a



*Cecil Woodward*

bear and got away. It was very memorable and we'd ask him to tell us that story over and over.

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



*Bertha Crandall Woodward*

to Provo to get him away from some girl in Franklin, Idaho who was after him. He met Bertha and then 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.

We have 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.





# My <sup>4</sup>Siblings



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



*Robert Dayle Harris, age 5*

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

his name 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

of stories about mother keeping his hair long in ringlets and dressing him up in all these fancy, frilly outfits. I can't remember who it was – Uncle Buss, daddy's brother or maybe Vic Dober, a friend of the family, took him down and cut off all his ringlets. 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 when he was gone 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, Mother would turn around and tell us to stop fighting, stop arguing, stop teasing and then finally she'd stop the car and 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.

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 front 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.

Daddy and Robert didn't have much of a relationship together. Daddy and I did, but not Robert. 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 for the summer months, Uncle Paul, mother's youngest brother, and

grandpa 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 they did.

It was later in our lives when Robert and I were finally able to overcome that childhood. 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 exciting man. We would talk about anything and everything in our later lives. We would talk about politics, about the latest book that was written, and our



*Uncle Paul & Grandpa Cecil*

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. Rita, Robert and I would get together and go the bookstore for what we'd call a Harris outing, to see what the latest book was – usually it was the latest church book. 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 was his love of learning. He got married right out of high school. He went to college and got his BA degree and eventually 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. 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. Robert had prostate cancer. When he passed away, he succumbed after 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, Warren, Christi & Shana*

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

Rita and I had a very interesting relationship when we were younger. I was a tomboy, that's what they called those of us who would rather play with marbles than dolls. 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 and say mother loved her best because she got the curly hair and mine was straight. 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



*Rita, about age 5*

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 went to JC Penny's and picked 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 to school today?" Clothes were absolutely not on my radar screen. BB gun, oh yes, bicycles absolutely, pocket knives without a doubt. My cute little dog Woofy – oh yes, marbles – for sure, but not clothes. So Rita and I 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.

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.



*Front row (l to r): Nicole, Rita, Chris  
Back row (l to r): Brent Thompson (foster son), Jake, Brian, Suzanne*