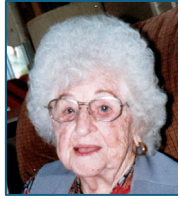


I took a course in Microsoft FrontPage at UCLA in 2000 and, to satisfy one of the class assignments (“create a personal website”) developed a site entitled **Seven Women Who Changed My Life**. I have replicated its contents here, in one file.

I have replaced some images with sharper ones. Also, I felt that some information in the document needed commenting on. *I have added some post-2000 comments in blue italic. I have also updated **The Players**' data to reflect their status in 2024.*

## Seven Women Who Changed My Life

Updated April 15, 2024



Rose, my grandmother, 92



Pat, my mother, 14



Kay, my first steady, about 15



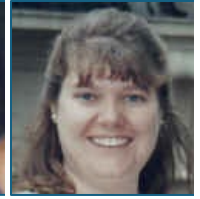
Betty, the mother of my first child



Mary, my wife and love of my life



Cathy, my daughter



Jenny, my daughter

I have a story to tell about each.

If it all seems a bit confusing, you might refer to a guide to some of **The Players**.

Take a look at our family photo from last year (1999).



**Brian, Mary, me, Cathy, Volker, Jenny, David**  
(May 16, 1999 - Chicago's Navy Pier, Northwestern University Law School Graduation)

## The Players

**Rose Rogers** (20 Jul 1895 – 12 Dec 1989), my grandmother, and Paul Francis Rogers (17 Apr 1895 – 29 May 1948) had 3 kids:

- ✓ **Pat**: Patricia Mary Margaret Rogers (13 Nov 1920 – 12 Sep 1964)
  - ✓ **Bill**: William Donald Rogers (26 Jan 1923 – 4 Jan 1983)
  - ✓ **Mary** Faith Rogers (29 Mar 1929 – 16 Sep 2012)
- 

**Pat Rogers**, my mother, had three husbands:

- ✓ **Bob**: Edmund Robert Nowka (14 Sep 1919 – 8 Feb 1999): They were married from 29 Mar 1940 to 15 Aug 1941.
- ✓ **Reg**: Reginald Wallace Rosevear (27 Apr 1903 – 14 Sep 1984): They were married from 3 Aug 1943 to 31 Oct 1949. Reg was born in Ontario, Canada, but became a US citizen. He is buried in Pompano Beach, FL.
- ✓ **Clyde** Riggs (8 May 1922 – 24 Nov 1972): They were married from 6 Apr 1950 to 12 Sep 1964, when my mother died. He had two children from a previous marriage to Lillian May Duggan:

Lillian (25 Feb 1927 – 14 Dec 2010) and he married on 26 Jan 1946 in Fairbanks, AK, where Clyde was serving in the Army, and they divorced in Oakland, MI, on 20 Mar 1950, a week before he married my mother.

- **Linda** Riggs Hosfelt (28 Jun 1947 – 29 Aug 2012): My stepsister, raised by him and my mother.
- **Marshall** Clyde Riggs (10 Jan 1949 [Royal Oak, MI] – 28 Jun 2003 [Homer, AK]): His son, raised by Lillian, meaning he named two of his children Marshall. For reasons unknown, he changed his last name to Rosi, and stated that his parents were Guy Rosi Sr. (died 2017) and Micki Rosi. Yet his wife was named Christine Rosi-Riggs. He was born in Royal Oak, MI, and died in Homer, AK, where Lillian and he returned to after Lillian and Clyde divorced.

and four children:

- **Larry**: Lawrence James (7 Apr 1940...): Father = Regis Sullivan (determined in 2015)
  - **Sue**: Suzanne Lee Rosevear Shoemaker (12 Jul 1945...): Father = Rosevear
  - **Marshall** Paul (18 Aug 1951 – 15 Jul 2022): Father = Riggs
  - **Tim**: Timothy Patrick (16 Sep 1952...): Father = Riggs
- 

**Kay St. John**, my first steady (13 Mar 1942 – 23 Aug 2022): Married Howard Pease (3 Aug 1938 – 23 Jan 2019) on 26 Jun 1966. Her real name was Frances Kay St. John. Her Mom was Freddy Mae [Garner] St. John (14 Jun 1916 – 26 Jul 1980). Her dad was Robert Hugh St. John (1 Feb 1913 – 2 Aug 1979). Her parents married on 15 Jan 1934.

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**Me**: I have five children, one by Betty (8 Jan 1939 – 14 Apr 2024) and four by Mary (15 Feb 1945 – 1 Feb 2018):

- **Volker** Kay (28 Dec 1964...): Mother = Betty Rosenwald. She married Manfred Kay and Volker took his last name.
- **Cathy**: Catherine Kerry (11 Feb 1969...): Police officer
- **Jenny**: Jennifer Lauren (21 Aug 1970...): Lawyer
- **Brian** Lawrence (30 Nov 1973...): Computer specialist
- **David** Michael (1 Aug 1980...): Computer specialist

## Rose – My Grandmother

Rose was one of six children born of German emigrants over a seven-year span in the 1890s. She was born in Detroit on July 20, 1895 — at home like all her siblings. She didn't learn English until she was six and started school.

Judging from her stories, she had a wonderful childhood, enjoying life to the hilt. She said she was her mother's favorite. When the weekly communal baths were given, she always got to bathe first, thus getting the clean water.

### Ty Cobb and Mark Twain

She had occasional encounters with the rich and famous. Once, when visiting an amusement park on Bob-Lo Island in the Detroit River, she and her girlfriend met Ty Cobb and Tris Speaker, two Detroit Tiger ballplayers now of legendary status. The four of them spent the day together. *Rose married Paul Rogers on June 26, 1917, so this legendary meeting must have occurred a year or two before this. Tris Speaker actually played for the Boston Red Sox from 1907 to 1915 and moved to Cleveland in 1916, when he led the American League in batting average (.386), on base percentage (.470), and slugging average (.502). In 1917, Ty Cobb led the league in the same three categories: .383, .444, and .570.*

As a child, she tells of meeting Mark Twain. As an adult, much later, she took a helicopter ride with Ricardo Montalban. She appeared on the Merv Griffin Show and on Bob Barker's "The Price Is Right."

"Bob smells so-o-o good, and is ever so nicely dressed," she said.

### Three Children and Then a Widow for Decades

Rose's first of three children was my mother Pat. Pat was blessed with good looks and very high intelligence, but poor judgment ... but this is Rose's story.

In 1948, her husband Paul died, and Rose lived the next half-century as a widow. "I don't want to wash anyone else's socks," she often said. Although I was eight at the time of my grandfather's death, I don't remember him. Rose and he were separated at the time.

I lived with my mother only into my early teens, when conflicts at home led me to go live with my grandmother. By that time my mother had her third husband, Clyde, with whom I had many conflicts, and when the opportunity presented itself, I moved out. My grandmother took me in and I lived with her until I was 21.

I'm so grateful for this, because life at home had become unbearable. She gave me a stress-free, loving environment, where I could live life as a "normal" teenager. After high school, I continued to live with her while attending college.



May 1936: Rose's parents, Teresa 68, and Adolph, 73



My Uncle Bill, Mother Pat, and Rose (1946) at Bill's Wedding in Santa Barbara

### **Grandma Approves of Mary**

When I met Mary, I took her to meet my grandmother. “She’s a good Catholic girl,” Grandma said approvingly.

After we married, my family became my life, but we attempted to integrate Grandma into the family’s affairs as much as possible, although distance at times prevented this. She enjoyed the four grandchildren Mary and I brought into this world.

She lived to 94, her mind relatively sharp up almost to the end. She had seen remarkable changes during her life. But she also experienced many heartbreaks, including the deaths of two of her three children and a failed marriage. I will always be grateful to her for unselfishly taking me in as a teenager, and caring for me during the years that followed. Her intervention spared me from several years of horror I would have experienced had I remained at home. Thank you, Grandma.



**Rose in 1988**



## Pat – My Mother

Patricia Rogers was Rose's first child, born in Cleveland in 1920, but raised in Detroit. Pat's dad Paul, like thousands of others in the area, worked for Henry Ford, and was a good provider. Yet I suspect that there were many conflicts in the household during her childhood and little love. Paul, according to Rose, was known to philander at times. When Paul died, after Rose and he had divorced, Rose was reputed to have said, "I'll dance on his grave!"

Rose was a very strict Catholic. She raised my mother in the Faith; Catholic schools for all her three children were de rigueur.

### Pregnant and Unwed at 18

Still, despite a strong moral upbringing, at the age of 18 my mother became pregnant. When Rose became aware of the pregnancy, she insisted that my mother marry to legitimize the birth. She had been dating Bob Nowka and designated him as the father. Under pressure from Rose and Bob's mother Gladys, Bob agreed to marry my mother. The marriage took place days before my April 1940 birth.



Mom at 18

In 1997 I contacted Bob, who said he had suspected then he was not my father. He consented to a DNA paternity test and when it turned up negative, he told me that my real father may have been a man named Weinstein, who was my mother's supervisor at a Montgomery Ward store in Dearborn. She worked there and occasionally accompanied Weinstein to Chicago on business trips as his "private secretary." *In 2015 I discovered, through Ancestry.com that my real father was Regis Sullivan, who indeed was a manager at the store. Regis was likely engaged when he got my mom pregnant, and on June 15, 1940, only 10 weeks after I was born, he married Jane Lies in Riverside, IL. Together they had seven children, five of whom are alive today. I communicated with my half-brother Paul in 2015, but at some point he brushed me off, saying "The last thing I want to do is ruin my father's and my family's legacy."*



My Mother  
in 1948

Bob and she never lived together and they divorced when I was one. When I was five, she wed again and my sister Sue was born. *Actually, she married Reg Rosevear when I was three, but Sue was born two years later. I suspect that Mom miscarried in 1943, since Reg divorced his previous wife just before he married my mom; I have no recollection of his ever living with us. Some years later he remarried the woman he had divorced in 1943. I assumed her husband's surname, Rosevear, but that marriage only lasted a couple years. Actually, it lasted six years (1943 to 1949). Sue and I were thus raised by a single mother until she met Clyde.* By the time I was seven, she was living by herself, making a living selling Stanley Home Products. The photo on the left was taken in Westfield, MA, while touring the Stanley factory.

### Clyde Riggs Charms My Mother

When I was nine, Clyde Riggs entered her life. He swept my mother off her feet; she fell for him, even though he was married at the time and had two children. While he was courting her, he spent some nights with his wife and others with my mother. In early 1950, he divorced his wife and married my mother, bringing into the marriage one of his two kids, Linda. In June 1950, the five of us pulled up stakes and like so many others, migrated to California.

I would only live at home for four more years, a time during which my brothers Marshall and Tim were born. I formally assumed the name Riggs in 1953. Earlier I had used the name Nowka, then Nowlin (my mother thought Nowka sounded too "Polish"), and then Rosevear.

### Playing Favorites with the Kids

Clyde and my mother were alcoholics; Clyde had a Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Clyde personality. In public and often at home he could turn on the charm. But in private he often was drunk and abusive, and the children suffered from it. He and my mother pampered Marshall and Tim. Clyde favored Linda and strove to make my and

Sue's lives miserable. I endured beatings and mind games; Sue may have been his rape victim — she tells me she has “forgotten” that period of her life. My mother had no love for Linda, beating her and punishing her frequently.

### **My Escape**

At the age of 14, everything changed for me, as described below in a note I wrote 20 years later.

In mid-September 1954 there occurred an event that truly transformed my life. It almost certainly contributed as well to my mother's death exactly ten years later ...

There was an altercation with Clyde (the last of many fights). In slurred speech, he screamed a threat at me, “If you don't like it here, you can go and live with your grandmother!”

“I'd like that!” I boldly retorted, sobbing all the while.

Unexpectedly, he called my bluff and in spite of my protestations, I was forced to quickly pack, and within minutes, our car, with the entire family aboard, was careening down the road on a wild 20-mile ride from Tustin to Norwalk.

My grandmother, not forewarned of my coming, nevertheless took me in without hesitation.

The next day, when my mother's and Clyde's head were clear, they sought me back.

But it was too late — I had discovered that there could be love and peace in life. And I was determined not to give it up.

Over the next several months they tried several times to get me back, but I refused to go. Clyde told me that my mother cried herself to sleep at night.

### **Booze and Guns**

Mom's drinking got worse. She and Clyde began hiding booze from one another: in the toilet tank, the linen closet, the clothes hamper. The police occasionally had to come by and break up altercations. The abuse continued. The girls each had only one or two dresses, and were often ridiculed for their unkempt appearance at school. Six years after I left home, in 1960, Sue was rescued, when her real father, living on Long Island, discovered her plight, came to California, and took her to live with him.

Marshall tells me that on occasion he, Tim, and Linda would take Clyde's guns and ammunition and play “cops and robbers” with real bullets in the back yard. Marshall cautioned the others to “Always fire to the side of someone, and not at them.”

When Linda asked whether they should worry about ricochets, Marshall fired one round into the ground and said, “See, no ricochet! It's not a problem.” And the games continued.

### **Linda Escapes When My Mother Leaves California**

In my late teens I would occasionally visit home. My mother welcomed me and Clyde turned on the charm as he could no longer control me. Linda was having more and more problems with the juvenile authorities, looking for love in all the wrong places. She came home from the Juvy one time, only to discover an empty home — Clyde, my mother, and the boys had set out for Michigan. (Linda survived and today is a very happy mother of three and grandmother of three; I see her about once a year.)

*Linda died in 2012.*

I joined the Army in 1961, and visited my mother on leave in Michigan in 1963. Her drinking had affected her health for some time; I felt embarrassed when she drank while we visited friends of hers so she could showcase her Army son.



**Mom with Sue in 1949**

### **Mom Dies of Cirrhosis at 43**

In 1964, a week after I had gotten out of the Army, she died of cirrhosis in St. Paul, Minnesota. I was able to visit her in the hospital days before her death. Her skin had turned yellow, her stomach had become grossly enlarged. She was heavily sedated. I felt little emotion.

I have often wished she could have been around to meet Mary (whom I met only three months later), and know her grandkids. But it wasn't to be.

## Kay – My First Steady

At the beginning of my sophomore year in high school I went to live with my grandmother. I had never dated a girl. I could never imagine taking a girl home to meet my parents. “Jane, this is my alcoholic mother,” or “Jill, this is my abusive and alcoholic stepfather.”

I had high school friends but I never invited them to my house. I envied guys who had girl friends. My hormones were as active as any high school boy’s but I didn’t know how to act on them.

Once I moved to my grandmother’s my social life quickly improved. I began going to parties, meeting girls, and dating. I became socially active in high school, exhibiting a smile on the outside while still suffering inside from the abuse I had endured from living with my mother and Clyde.

### I’m a Senior and Kay’s a Freshman

I graduated near the top of my class of 1957. Kay St. John, class of 1960, and I had met toward the end of high school. She was trim, brown-haired, popular, outgoing but not effusive, and intelligent. I felt calmed when I was around her. She lived only a block away, and for some time I was reluctant to ask her out because she was so young. I feared “the guys” might laugh at me for dating a 14-year old. But finally I overcame my fears, asked her out, and we started dating regularly. I found her comforting to be around; soon I asked her to go steady.

Having a steady meant having a confidante. She was an excellent listener and easy to talk to. She learned that her boyfriend, older and wiser, though often laughing on the outside was unhappy on the inside. She provided me free psychotherapy.

### Kay’s Mother Welcomes Me

I became a regular fixture at her house. Kay was an only child. Her mom, Freddie, loved me like a son. Her dad, Bob, ignored me, but he ignored everyone, including Freddie, who was the antithesis of Kay. Freddie was a beer-drinking, cursing, loud, fun-loving woman. She was a terrific story-teller, and I was always a willing listener.

Freddie did commercials, live, on late night television, for a nursery. She would drive to LA, entertain the viewer with her outrageous behavior during movie breaks, and then return home.

Kay and I double-dated, went to beach parties, went water-skiing, and just hung out. After inviting me to the Sadie Hawkins dance, Kay made me a light blue shirt and a matching dress for herself. I wore that shirt for many years afterward.

Our relationship lasted for months, but over time I felt something was missing. I would meet other girls and wish that I could date them. I had this great emptiness within me, a sadness caused by wounds that only time would heal. I must have hoped that Kay would be able to wave a magic wand and heal them instantly.

### The Breakup

After we had gone together for almost a year, I decided it was time to break free, try another therapy. When I returned the ring, Kay was stunned and very hurt. She had not expected it.



Kay at 15



Kay and I at the Sadie Hawkins Dance in 1958



After the breakup, I rarely saw her. I felt guilt-ridden and hadn't the maturity to know how to make the transition from boyfriend to just friend.

### **Kay Marries and Has Two Kids**

A few years later, Kay's fiancé was killed in a car crash. In 1966, she married Howard Pease, and they had a boy and a girl. About the same time Kay returned to our high school and taught Home Economics for several years.

I have spoken to Kay twice in the last decade, but we have not seen one another for over forty years. This is as it should be, as I prefer to remember her as the kind, quiet, teenager who played an important role in helping me transition from adolescent to adult.

*I saw Kay at an Excelsior all-classes reunion on June 21, 2003. She had just moved to near Corona. We talked about her kids. The younger, a girl, is 24, and is about to transfer to UCR.*

*Kay died in 2022.*

## Betty – The Mother of My First Child

This is as much the story of Volker as of Betty.

In November 1961, I joined the Army and after Basic Training I spent a year in Monterey taking intensive Russian classes at the Army Language School, now the Defense Language Institute.

In March 1963, as a full-fledged Russian linguist I was posted to a small site near Helmstedt, Germany, 2 km from the East German border. My duties were to intercept military communications heard during Russian exercises over the border, tape them, translate them to English, and then feed them to the National Security Agency in Fort Meade, MD. There they were integrated with information obtained from other intelligence sources worldwide.

### Betty Hangs Out at the Bären Eck

Much of my spare time was spent at the Bären Eck, a bar that was the local hangout for young Germans and American soldiers. Local girls loved the GIs; some of the girls would have been happy to accompany a GI back to the U.S. Soon after arriving, I met Betty Rosenwald, one of the girls who frequented the bar. She lived nearby, had dated American GIs in the past, and she and I enjoyed each other's company. She was a year older than I and spoke English fluently. She was open, a good conversationalist, and fun to be around.

Europeans don't have the hang-ups about sex that Americans do — sex is a normal part of growing up. It was not uncommon for a fellow soldier to be invited to spend the night at a Fräulein's house and share a bed with her! Betty shared these attitudes and when we started dating introduced me right away to a world I had up to that point only fantasized about.

### Betty Gets Pregnant

I rented a room in Helmstedt and lived there for months at a time. When I was with her we always strived to be careful, but I failed once and Betty became pregnant.

My world was shattered. But I felt I had to do the right thing so I told her I'd marry her and take her back to the States. Deep inside, though, I had grave doubts about my ability to live out my life with her. We were an intellectual mismatch and when I looked deep into my soul I realized I didn't love her. She had wanted a husband and a father for her unborn child, but I knew that we could not make a successful life together. As my time overseas was running out, I finally told her I didn't love her and I would return home alone.

### Betty Threatens Suicide

She was devastated and threatened suicide; I had never been terrified in my life over such a long period of time. She went into a woods to think and I imagined she would have to be carried out by the coroner. I sought guidance from my Executive Officer, Lt. Chuck Whitechurch. He didn't share my fear that she would take her life, and felt I was overreacting. At that point I felt very alone. But Betty returned home, unharmed, later telling me that her faith kept her from killing herself and she had a responsibility to the child she was carrying.

We still saw each other afterwards, although in only a couple months I would be returning to the U.S. I told her I wanted to draw up a legal contract that would spell out my responsibilities for child support under German law. We did that and I had it translated into English.

### Volker Is Born

Leaving was not easy but I never doubted that I did the right thing. Volker was born just after Christmas 1964, almost four months after I returned Stateside. Over the next couple decades Betty regularly sent me photos of Volker and let me know how he was doing. Within a couple years after Volker's birth, Betty met and married Manfred Kay and they had two sons, Torsten and Ingo. Manfred, whom I met in 1996, is a person you like immediately — he has an infectious enthusiasm for life and an easygoing manner.



Betty and Volker in 1966

Volker breezed through school. He told me, “When I was growing up, I felt I was different from the other kids.” Other kids struggled with their schoolwork, whereas it was easy for him. His nickname, both at home and at school, was “Profi”, because he would assume a professorial mien when explaining some subject to others. He told me he kept to himself and had only a few friends, yet he was content; he did not feel his life was lacking anything.

### **My First Meeting with Volker**

Volker and I met for the first time when he was 13, near Warwick in England, where he was visiting Betty’s sister, who had married an Englishman. The meeting was brief, and somewhat awkward. I recall that neither Volker nor I had much to say to each other. Years later I asked him what he recalls of the meeting.

“You gave me a Frisbee,” he said.

Jokingly, I asked, “And do you still have it?”

“Yes, I do,” he replied.

After high school, Volker continued his education, and earned the equivalent of a Ph.D. in biotechnology. During his adult years, he and I infrequently corresponded by mail at first and later e-mail.



**Volker at 14 with Betty and Manfred**

*His Ph.D. is actually in Biochemistry. He earned it the University of Braunschweig. Today, we communicate via the Telegram app with texts.*

### **Betty Explains His Heritage to Volker**

His mother told him at an early age that he had both a German and an American heritage, and as he grew up he wanted to know more about his American side. He learned that he had American siblings and he wanted to meet them. Later he asked me why I had not made a greater effort to bring him and his four brothers and sisters together. I’m not much good at analyzing motivations, but I’m sure guilt and embarrassment played a role. Volker told me that because of Germany’s dark past, he sometimes found it pleasant to reflect on his American roots.

### **My Second Meeting with Volker**

After our one meeting, in 1978, I had no further personal contact with Volker until 1996, when Mary, my 16-year old son David, and I made our first trip back to Europe since we had left England in 1980, where we had lived for four years and where David was born. Before the trip I contacted Volker, and we agreed to meet in Berlin. Our hotel room encounter there was a bit awkward at first, like a couple prizefighters feeling each other out, but soon we both were relaxed and at ease. Volker was no longer the quiet youth. He was a confident adult, with a quick laugh and great facility with English.

I was grateful that David had come along, not just so brother could meet brother, but because he was so good at lightening and deflecting the conversation.

“Dad, he walks just like you!” David would exclaim. Or, “OK, Volker, I’m going to teach you some English slang,” and then proceeded to explain the word “loogie” to an amused and very interested Volker.

### **I Meet Betty after 32 Years**

At our Berlin meeting, Volker introduced us to his girlfriend Marion, and then traveled with us during the next few days. We “did” Berlin, and then traveled west, stopping at Potsdam on the way to Helmstedt. There, Betty and Manfred invited us over for afternoon tea and cake. The meeting appeared to go well, but there was tension beneath the surface, even hostility, I discovered later.

### **Volker Meets Cathy, Talks with Jenny by Phone**

After our return from Germany I showed the family the videos I had taken of Volker and us. Our meeting with Volker made a particularly strong impression on Cathy, and in November 1997, she made a week-long trip by herself to Germany, staying with Volker and Marion. Later Volker would remark while we were sightseeing together, “Oh if Cathy were here, she would refer to that building as ‘cute’”.

In 1998, I had the fortune of spending the entire summer in Freiburg, Germany, working for Litton during the week, but traveling extensively on weekends to Germany, Switzerland, and France. Volker and Marion visited me one weekend. Meeting at my hotel, the three of us talked into the night, discussing our relationship, families, goals, vacations, politics (Volker’s favorite, I think). We also managed to get in a full day of sightseeing within the surrounding Black Forest. In the evening from my hotel, we called Jenny and Volker was able to talk to his other sister for the first time.

### **Volker Travels to America for the First Time**

In May 1999, I invited Volker and Marion to come to the U.S. for Jenny’s graduation from law school in Chicago. They flew to Los Angeles and were thrust into our world of fast-moving and far-reaching freeways, wider and more crowded than the Autobahns they had left behind. They spent a hectic week, traveling from Huntington Beach to Santa Barbara and many points in between. Then they flew to Chicago, where Volker finally got to meet his two remaining siblings, Brian and Jenny. When we took our Christmas photo, we included Volker, confirming his inclusion in our family.

It was a long time coming.

### **Betty, after Our 1996 Meeting**

Since Betty and I last met, she and I have corresponded periodically by mail. I am grateful to AltaVista’s translation site because my German skills leave a lot to be desired. Initially her letters were full of venom, chastising me for choosing “freedom over responsibility” and ignoring Volker for so many years. Religious references abounded:

*“Wenn es einen gerechten Gott gibt, wirst Du Dich eines Tages dafür verantworten müssen.”* If there is a just God, some day you will have to answer for it.

*“Gottes Mühlen mahlen langsam aber sicher.”* God’s mills grind slow but sure.

Over time her hostility has diminished. Her attitude change was dramatic when I rewrote my will for the first time since 1980 and included Volker in it, giving him an equal share as the other children. I had been planning to do this for years. After Volker returned to the U.S., she sent me a letter that was downright civil.

*I now have a Trust, which is more complex than simply a will. The Trust dictates how my estate will be distributed after I die. Volker will receive part of my estate, but far less than one-fifth.*

*Betty died in 2024.*



**“Men in Black”: Volker, David, and I in Chicago in 1999**



## Mary – My Wife

On a hot day in early September 1964, a Boeing 707 touched down at Fort Dix, NJ. The plane had left Frankfurt, Germany, some eight hours earlier, filled with military personnel and their dependents. The constant din of crying Army brats bothered me not a bit — many of my friends had returned to the States on a troop ship, a week-long journey over rough North Atlantic seas. I disembarked, in uniform, picked up my duffel bag, and within a few hours had completed the final steps in processing out of the Army. Later, as I rode a bus into New York City, I felt the urge to scream, “I’m free! I’m free!” I was free of the Army, free to determine my own future. I knew I had the responsibility to provide for Volker, but I knew I could manage it. I really felt unencumbered for the first time in three years.

### A Civilian Again

I had visited New York City once before, eighteen months earlier, just prior to my departure for Germany, and had fallen in love with the city. Its frenetic pace, its irreverent attitude, its immensity, all excited me. I navigated my way to Pennsylvania Station and boarded the train to Port Washington, the last stop on the Long Island Railroad Line. My sister Sue was living there with her real Dad Reginald and his wife. She and I spent a day visiting the 1964 World’s Fair, in Flushing, where I saw IBM’s Selectric (golf ball) typewriter for the first time. It’ll never work, I thought.

When we parted company, neither one of us knew we’d be seeing each other again in less than two weeks. I flew to Minneapolis, where I visited my mother in the hospital. I stayed in St. Paul with my stepfather Clyde, and my brothers Tim and Marshall. The hospital visit was the last time I saw my mom alive. When I left for California a few days later, I knew that she was close to death. We were told that she had only days to live. I would return for her funeral about a week later. (See the story of Pat.)

### Back to School at UCR

While in the Army I had applied for and been accepted at the University of California, Riverside, which had a Russian program. I got an 83-day “early out” to attend the school; the limit was 90 days, provided you could prove that you were accepted and the term start date fell within that 90-day period.

I had been a junior when I enlisted three years earlier; my grades had been poor and I had changed my major at least three times. But now I was focused. I had one goal, to get a degree — in anything. UCR had accepted my Army Language School credits as satisfaction for all lower division work. And since I could complete all upper division work and my General Education requirements in two semesters, I calculated that I could graduate in nine months.

During the first semester I maintained an intense attitude toward my schoolwork; I studied during almost all my free time. I lived in the dorms, a 24-year-old among 18-year olds, an old man among children. Sensing I didn’t fit in, I moved into off campus housing at the beginning of the second semester, sharing an apartment with George Guzzardo, an ex-Army buddy. He too had been a Russian translator in Helmstedt, and like me had come to UCR to complete his education.

### Mary and I Meet

Susan Stockbridge, another Russian major (*actually, she was a Spanish major*), lived a couple buildings away, in the same student housing complex. We had often visited Susan during the first semester, and I had dated Lucy, Susan’s roommate. At the semester break, Lucy moved out and 19-year-old sophomore Mary Burke, an English major, moved in. Mary took little interest in me or George when we came around; she had a busy life and besides George and I must have seemed like old men to her. I was taken by her pleasantness, intellect, lack of pretension, and sensibility.



Mary at 20, a Junior at UCR

Mary told me that in March of her senior year of high school, she had traveled to Argentina as an American Field Service exchange student, returning home in September. She missed graduating with her class but said the experience had turned out to be a defining moment in her life. She had taken Spanish in preparation for the trip, but once she arrived there her real lessons began. The family she stayed with in Rosario spoke no English and all classes at the local high school were in Spanish. In spite of these difficulties, or perhaps because of them, Mary came home speaking Spanish fluently, even thinking and dreaming in the language. This skill would serve her well in a career that would blossom some twenty years later.

Mary had grown up in Riverside, a member of a high-achieving family. Later her older brother would obtain a Ph.D. in Philosophy, her sister would get an M.A. and an M.B.A., and a younger brother would get an M.A. A third brother, born with cerebral palsy, would eventually have to be institutionalized.

But I'm jumping ahead. At this point I knew little about Mary, other than that she was Susan's intriguing new roommate.

### **The Reader's Digest Vocabulary Test**

One evening I stopped by to chat. As I sat on the couch, I picked up a copy of Reader's Digest and thumbed through it. I stopped at the "It Pays to Enrich Your Word Power" section: 20 multiple-choice vocabulary questions. Ah, I thought, I will impress this woman with my extensive vocabulary. I took the test and got 16 right. I challenged her to take it. She quickly went through the questions, and I toted up her score. Perfect! I was flabbergasted! I considered it a stunning achievement! It was a turning point in our relationship. I had to get to know this woman better. Years later when I told her that I loved her for her mind, she knew there was an element of truth to it, considering that when she aced this test it caused me to view her in a totally different light.

Our first date, which was to the movies, did not get off to a good start. When we arrived at the theater in downtown Riverside, I discovered I had brought no money. She had to pay, and she reminds me of it at least once a year, when we reminisce about the past. She loves telling this story to our kids, referring to me as "your father". She has a penchant for embellishment and because the story has been told and retold so many times, I'm not certain where the truth ends, and fantasy begins.

### **Meeting the Family and ... The Proposal**

Soon after we met, she told me it was time to meet her family. She invited me over for dinner. I have never been a scintillating conversationalist. I felt awkward, fearful of being judged, and I was especially conscious of our five-year age difference. But I was welcomed into her family of seven. I enjoyed the evening. Her dad was very easy to talk to and like Mary was unpretentious. He was a World War II veteran, and we sat around and compared notes regarding the wartime and peacetime Army. Her mother was very gracious, and managed the household expertly. Her siblings found me a curiosity, I am sure. I went home very impressed by this family that worked. There was no drinking, there was lively conversation at the dinner table, and everyone showed respect for one another.

We continued to date. Soon after I graduated, I invited Mary on a picnic to Oak Glen Park, located in the San Bernardino Mountains. Nervously, I proposed, at the same time telling her all about Volker. She accepted, saying that none of what I told her diminished her love for me. I had been fully prepared for rejection, and afterwards felt like I had received absolution.

### **Newlyweds**

On September 3, 1966, we tied the knot at St. Catherine's Catholic Church in Riverside. When the ceremony and reception were over, we sped off in my 1966 Pontiac Tempest hardtop, and headed north. We spent our honeymoon night in Malibu, and then meandered up the coast, into Napa Valley, over to Reno and Virginia City, and back home through Las Vegas.



**Newlyweds in 1966**

Our honeymoon over, we settled into a new routine that for both of us was exciting but a bit surreal. Unlike couples today, we hadn't lived with each other, and we had to get

accustomed to each other's idiosyncrasies. Should drinking glasses be placed in the cupboard bottoms up or bottoms down?

A few months earlier Mary had graduated from UCR and had decided on a teaching career. We rented a one-bedroom apartment on Crenshaw in L.A., a block south of Wilshire, midway between downtown L.A., where I worked as a computer programmer, and UCLA, where she took fifth year classes to obtain her teaching credential. A year later, a credentialed 22-year-old Mary began her first assignment, teaching English at Bret Harte High School in south Los Angeles.

### **“That’s No Honkie”**

She taught there for about a year and a half, from the start establishing herself as a well-liked and effective teacher. The student body was almost all black. Mary bonded with her students, who wrote in the 1968 Bret Harte Prospector, the school's yearbook, “The souleest teacher in the World,” and “To a soul sister of a teacher.”

Walking across the campus one day, Mary heard a taunt from behind her, “Hey honkie!” which she ignored. When the student repeated it, she heard another voice nearby saying, “Hey, man, that’s no honkie! That’s my teacher!”

### **Her Child-Rearing Period**

In late 1968, Mary quit teaching, not to return full-time to her profession until the mid-80's. Cathy was born in February 1969, and Mary had decided to devote her full time and energy to raising a family. Three months after Cathy's birth, we moved to Sacramento, and bought our first home. Not long afterwards, in August 1970, Jenny was born.



**The Young Teacher**

Over the next ten years, Mary had to endure frequent moves, and took it all in stride.

In 1972, my work took us to New Jersey. A year later we returned to Southern California and a few months later Brian was born in Glendale. At 28, Mary was now a fully occupied mother of three. The girls attended pre-school and then began kindergarten. In 1976, I accepted a job in England and the five of us made a permanent move to Windsor, shipping all our household goods abroad. We had no plans to return and six months after our arrival bought a comfortable four-bedroom home in an upper-class neighborhood in Camberley, about thirty miles SW of London.



**Now a Young Mother at 27  
with Two Daughters**

Mary took painting, French, and Greek classes, and joined a local French Club, which met weekly. Members spoke only French at the meetings. When we took a two-week trip to Greece, Mary read the menus, and when a Greek asked her, “Ti ora ine?,” she instinctively looked at her watch, as she had done in classroom drills, and replied, “Ine deka para deka.”

Although we were extremely grateful for the opportunity to live abroad, we were always aware of our roots and ultimately decided to return to the U.S., concluding that we would return to Southern California, where we felt most comfortable. While we were going through this decision-making process, Mary became pregnant, and David was born a month before our return. His birth, on the British National Health Service, occurred in a hospital “delivery” room, in which for a while I was the sole attendant. When the birth was imminent, I had to scramble for assistance, and when David made his first appearance in the world, the doctor was still in the process of putting on her gloves. For anesthesia, Mary was able to inhale only a few breaths of gas beforehand, so little that the birth might actually be considered a natural one.



During the month prior to our departure, Mary tried to stay calm and tend to David. She held up well, considering that we had to deal with the sale of our home and cars, the shipping of our goods back to the States, and close out all our England-based personal affairs. Fortunately, upon arrival in the U.S. we stayed with Mary's parents in Riverside for a couple weeks, enabling her to relax and recover in surroundings where she was able to get continuous care.

### **We Return to the States**

In September 1980, we settled in Newbury Park. The children began to reacquaint themselves with their homeland, and soon lost all vestiges of their British accents. But realizing that she had a calling beyond being a soccer Mom for the rest of her life, Mary began to commute to UC Santa Barbara, taking courses that culminated in the spring of 1983, when she became a certificated ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher.

Mary began teaching adults during the evenings. Her students came from far afield — Pago Pago and Romania, Iran and Viet Nam, Mexico and Germany. When David started pre-school, she changed to teaching mornings. But to move beyond part-time teaching, she needed more education, so in 1986 she began pursuit of a Masters in Linguistics at Cal State Northridge. It was a proud moment for her and the rest of the family when she received the degree in 1990. It was especially rewarding, considering that she had been teaching high school full time for the previous two years. And during this time, she maintained a 4.0 average in her studies!

Since 1990, Mary has continued teaching full time, but has expanded her horizons considerably. She now teaches classes occasionally at CSUN and Pepperdine.



**Mary, Thanksgiving 1998, Just after Completing Radiation Therapy**

I've always thought of Mary as a champion of the underdog, as an advocate of the underprivileged. She is a natural confidante of her high school ESL students, most of whom are Hispanic. She moves effortlessly between English and Spanish. Many of these students are recent immigrants, determined to make their lives better. Mary has assisted students with the complex process of applying for college, getting a job, or simply ferreting out the truth in order to resolve a dispute among students. Time and again she has gone to bat for her students to combat prejudice or ignorance in cases where discrimination prevented a student from obtaining something they deserved — a job, or just an opportunity to compete.



**At 31, with 2½ Year Old Brian, Watching the Disneyland Parade**



**Mary with Family after Receiving M.A. Degree in Linguistics at CSUN**

She has been a mentor teacher within the Simi Valley School District for as long as I can remember. She has continued her education by taking college classes and obtaining additional certification well above the needs of her profession.

In October 1997, a routine mammogram disclosed that Mary had breast cancer and she underwent a mastectomy. Over the next year, she underwent nine months of chemotherapy and six weeks of daily radiation treatments. This experience has reminded us to keep focused on the things that are most important in our lives and to take some time to watch the raindrops sparkle on the trees. The good news is she remains cancer free today, although the treatments were very debilitating, and she will probably never have the stamina she used to have.



She has been a great inspiration to me, and knowing her has made me a better person. I love her and am looking forward to sharing the challenges of the future with her.

*Mary died in 2018.*

## Cathy – My First Daughter

It was February 1969, and we were living in Torrance. Mary was pregnant with our first child and was bulging at the seams. The baby, our first, would be born any day, but exactly when? We had a pool at work and I had some money riding on the time of birth.

Late in the evening, Mary was sitting at home in her rocker, crocheting. She couldn't sleep. The contractions were infrequent, but they were starting to increase. She called the doctor for advice, and he said to come to the hospital.

### **Catherine Kerry Riggs, Born February 11 (or Maybe February 12)**

She was there a long night, a long day, and then another night — a total of 27 hours in labor. But that was forgotten when the doctor wheeled Mary on a gurney and the new girl baby in a bassinet, into the waiting room where I had recently spent so much time.

Mary's long trial was over. I took one look at the baby, still covered with the blood and residue of birth, and thought, "Well, the baby's a goner!" and turned to Mary, "Are you OK?"

I knew nothing about childbirth or what the mother had to endure. In the late 60s and early 70s, fathers rarely were present at a birth. Within a decade this would change, and fathers would be welcomed into the delivery room, and trained in advance so they could provide support to the mother during the birth.

But in spite of her appearance, the newly born Catherine Kerry was fine, a beautiful baby whose life Mary and I were now responsible for. And after a bit of tidying up she looked even better. Mary was exhausted but happy and settled down for a well-deserved rest.

Catherine was almost named Caroline, after Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline," but Catherine, which had made the short list, was selected at the last moment. Mary Kerry was the name of Bobby and Ethyl Kennedy's 9-year-old daughter. I had seen her name in a recent LIFE magazine article on the Kennedys and was taken by it. (She went on to marry Andrew Cuomo, New York Governor Mario Cuomo's son, in 1990.)

*Actually, Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" was released three months after Cathy was born. However, it's still a good story.*

I had informed the doctor at one point that if the baby were born before midnight, I would win the office pool. After the birth, he told me, "She was born at 11:59 p.m." He may even have winked when he said this. So, her birthday is February 11.

### **An Independent, Self-Assured, Active Child**

On the short trip home from the Little Company of Mary Hospital, rain pelted the windshield. Mary sat on my right, cradling our new family member in her arms. I stopped for gas and Cathy started crying. It was a sweet but strange and unfamiliar sound to my ears, but over the coming months I would become quite familiar with it.

Cathy was a restless and independent child, always active. Put her down for a nap and leave the room, and within minutes she'd be out of the crib. We would sometimes find her sleeping in the closet as we had forbidden her to leave the room. Why sleep when there are so many more interesting things to do and places to explore?

When she was three, we made a cross country trek by car, visiting Disney World en route. We spent the day visiting the attractions. At midnight we



**Cathy at 19 days**



**Cathy Turns Four  
(Always a Valentine Theme)**

were aboard the monorail, a bit fatigued, heading back to the parking lot. Other passengers were yawning, tired from the long day, whereas Cathy was singing and dancing and chattering away. They commented on her energy, which has been the hallmark of her life. She loves action and when none exists, seeks it out.

### **British at School, American at Home**

When Cathy was seven, we moved to England. For the next four years she wore a uniform to school, and immersed herself in British culture. Most children in these circumstances experience an Anglicization of their speech. But Cathy retained her American accent at home while speaking British English at school. When speaking to her friends, Cathy referred to Mary as “Mummy,” but at home she called her “Mom.”

When I asked her to speak British to me, she replied, “I can’t. When Carla [her best friend] talks to me, I automatically speak with a British accent. But I can’t talk that way with you.”

When we returned to the U.S., she entered sixth grade a few weeks after the start of the school year. On one of her first days there the teacher gave her a test on the state capitals. Unfamiliar with U.S. geography, she failed the test. But the teacher offered her a retest and the next day she got them all right!

Cathy had a very close-knit group of friends in England. Our move back to the States was the sixth move she had had to endure in her young life. Some time later she told me that although she had tried very hard to adjust to these moves it took several years back in the U.S. before she felt she had achieved a comfortable social life.



**In School Uniform**

### **Soon, a High School Graduate**



**Dressed for a Formal**

As she entered her teenage years, Cathy showed a normal interest in boys, and they in her. Mary helped me restrain my protective instinct so that Cathy could go through this transition from girl to adolescent to adult without undue parental interference. (She wasn’t always successful. Once I remember yelling, “I will never allow my children to watch R-rated videos in this house!” Eventually, I realized that I had to let go, and did, but it took a long time.) In high school she went out for track, cross-country, and swimming. When she started driving, we added a third car to our household. Once 16, the need for some extra cash pushed her into the work force, and she tried the odd job at the Mall, at a donut shop, as a clerk. Soon it was time for the senior Prom, and graduation from Newbury Park High School.

### **A UCLA grad**

Cathy chose to go to UCLA and majored in sociology. She lived in Co-op housing, a very cheap but grungy alternative form of off-campus housing. In 1992, she graduated, one of thousands receiving their degree at Pauley Pavilion.

She took a job as an office manager in a law firm, but even before graduation had applied for a job with the LAPD. Her athleticism was good preparation for the physical demands of the job. While at UCLA, she was a member of the women’s crew team, and she worked out regularly at the on-campus gym facilities.

### **Officer Cathy**

Finally, in June 1994, she was accepted at the L.A. Police Academy and graduated the following January. The graduation ceremony was a proud moment for her and for all of us!

Soon after, she brought her police issue 9 mm Beretta home, and Mary feigned interest while Cathy field-stripped it. Then in the flash of an eye, she handcuffed David to the refrigerator door. (He was happy as long as the milk supply held out.)

Since graduation, Cathy has worked the Southwest Division around USC, Central Division in downtown L.A., and the Harbor Division in San Pedro. Working on patrol, she says that no day is the same, which suits her nature. I know she has faced danger, since she's recounted a number of stories of confrontations, but of course that's the nature of her job. She has distinguished herself by becoming a Traffic Investigator, later a Drug Recognition Expert and, last year, a sergeant. As a DRE she occasionally is called on to teach her skills to other police officers.

She is now working Rampart Division, which coupled with a commute from Huntington Beach, means her days are very long.

Cathy and Jenny have been dubbed "Law and Order", although it's doubtful that Cathy's enforcement role and Jenny's potential prosecutorial role will ever intersect in real life.

Unlike most people, Cathy has chosen a career that makes extraordinary demands on her time — while we sleep, she works. While we have weekends free, she works. Last year included marriage among her plans but things did not work out and she called it off, explaining why in a letter. Afterwards, she refocused and bought a condo in Huntington Beach in order to bring some stability into her life.



**Cathy, in December 1995**

### **Cathy's "Soft" Side**

As a police officer, she takes her responsibilities as a law enforcer seriously. She has no sympathy for the offenders whom she arrests — she's simply doing her job and it's up to the courts to determine the merits of each case and mete out justice. It breaks her heart when an innocent person is victimized. When a child was run over by a fleeing suspect, Cathy visited the child and his mother in the hospital many times, consoling the mother and cheering up the child during this recovery period.

During her work at Harbor her work brought her in contact with a Cambodian girl, fatherless, with a doper mother. Cathy "adopted" the girl, taking her home for the day on many occasions, baking cookies or doing crafts with the child.

When she and her partner were sent to break up a loud party with a live band, she was so taken by the sound of the band, she allowed them to finish their number and then asked them if they had any CDs she could buy. She loves to dance. Fit her with a cowboy hat and a pair of boots, play a country song, and she'll dance the night away.

### **Meeting Volker in 1997**

After Mary, David, and I returned from Europe and a meeting with Volker in 1996, Cathy was determined to visit and meet her older brother. In 1997, she took a one-week trip to Germany and stayed with him. Since then, they correspond regularly by email and occasionally by phone.

### **Cathy at 30**

She, Brian, and I are planning a trip to Europe in August this year (2000), revisiting England, seeing Volker, and taking in Italy and Greece. She and her English friend Carla, whom she last saw in 1980, are planning a get-together in London with several other school friends.

Cathy has chosen a career that is very difficult. Every day is different, but I believe this is why it appeals so much to a soul as restless as hers. She has said, "I can't believe they pay me to do this."

Although her life is full, she always makes time for family get-togethers. Birthdays and holidays are always brighter when she's there.



As she celebrates her 31st birthday, I think about how she has made life a bit better for me and for so many others whom she has touched since that first day I saw her in her hospital bassinet.

## Jenny – My Second Daughter

It was a hot summer evening in Sacramento. At the top of the charts on this August day in 1970, was “Close to You” by the Carpenters. Although Karen Carpenter was far from Mary’s thoughts, the song title had great meaning to her. She was at Mercy San Juan Hospital awaiting the onset of labor. She had been constantly reminded over the previous several months that someone was very close to her. Her previous experience with childbirth had been a grueling 27-hour labor preceding Cathy’s arrival a year and a half earlier. This time, however, she knew it would be different.

### Doctor Decides to Induce Labor Due to Vacation Plans

Doctor Bugbee had told her that his vacation started the next day, a Friday, and he wanted to clear his slate before he left. He had ordered Mary to the hospital, and upon her arrival had started her on an intravenous labor-inducing drug. The birth will come in a few hours, he assured her. When the nurse abruptly stopped the IV, she explained that the doctor had some errands to run, and he wanted to delay the birth till he was done. I wondered, “What if the baby comes and there’s no doctor around?” The nurse reminded us that as Mary was in a hospital, there was no shortage of doctors. I restrained myself and didn’t ask the question that was running through my mind, “But can an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist deliver a baby.”

The hospital had long corridors, covered with tiled vinyl flooring. For several hours I walked these corridors until I knew exactly how many tiles covered each one. I had mentally computed square footage and could tell you how many paces it took me to walk from one end to the other, and began looking for other amusements. I wanted the clock to speed up — I hated waiting. Periodically, I would go and check on Mary.

The doctor returned from his outing and the drugs were restarted. The hours passed. Finally, around midnight, heavy contractions began and Mary knew the birth was imminent. A couple hours later the nurses wheeled Mary into the delivery room, and not long afterwards I was informed that I had another daughter, born at 3:03 a.m. on August 21. I thought to myself, “I don’t know the answers. I’m still a kid myself. But once again I’m being asked to direct a human life. Can I do it?”



Jenny at Two Days

### Jennifer “Juniper” Lauren

We named our daughter Jennifer Lauren. Jennifer came from Donovan’s top 10 hit, “Jennifer Juniper,” from 1968, and Lauren was a feminine form of Lawrence. Next week, the song “Signed, Sealed, Delivered, I’m Yours” by Stevie Wonder moved to the top of the charts. Was this a secret message from Jenny? (This same song would be featured 28 years later in the soundtrack for the movie “You’ve Got Mail”.)

At the time, Mary wrote in Jenny’s baby book, “Lots of dark brown hair, big dark blue eyes, long fingers and toes. She has her Daddy’s chin too! Wide awake and alert very soon after delivery — looks around trying to focus — then goes cross-eyed!”

Jenny was a cute baby, very quick to laugh; the sound of her laughter would cause others to join in. She was not restless like her sister, and was able to easily amuse herself for hours.

We discovered early that the two girls were as different from one another as chalk from cheese. Cathy was the neatnik; Jenny’s mind focused on bigger issues — and keeping a room tidy was simply not one of them. From the time Jenny was two until she was six, she shared a room with Cathy. But it was clear that a better arrangement was needed and when we moved to England in 1976, we separated the girls, giving each her own room.

### A Very Quick Mind and an Avid Reader

Jenny learned to read at four, and by six had become a voracious reader, with an astounding retentive capability.

She quickly moved past the “Golden Readers” stage into full-length novels. The weather in England featured the full range of seasons, and Brits spent proportionately more time indoors than Californians. Jenny was happiest, curled up on her bed, with a book in hand. Once, after observing her carefully, I noted that she had skipped a number of pages. When I criticized her for that, she noted that there was nothing important on those pages, and to get to the meat of the story she simply bypassed them. For some time afterwards, I dwelled on that logic. To this day I have never forgotten it but I have never been able to do the same thing myself.

I knew Jenny was bright, but a defining moment occurred that brought that fact decidedly home to me. In 1980, the five of us were traveling on a tour bus with about 20 others in Greece. It was a week-long trip, during which we visited sights such as Delphi, Olympia, and Corinth. After checking into our hotel one evening, we had gone with the group to dinner at a distant restaurant. We were returning to the hotel after dark on the bus when, to pass the time, the tour guide invited passengers to come forward and tell a story or an anecdote. Nine-year-old Jenny, to our surprise, raised her hand. Moments later she faced the passengers, microphone in hand, and began, “Once upon a time ...”. She proceeded to tell the story of “Hansel and Gretel.” Mary and I, and the rest of the passengers, were spellbound. She told the entire story, in her clipped British accent, with absolutely perfect continuity, wasting not a word. She animated the narrative, in a way like I felt I was hearing the story for the first time. When she began, I had been nervous, wondering what she would say. When she finished, everyone clapped, and I was in tears.



**Jenny at 8, Wearing her British School Uniform**

### **Back to the U.S. after Four Years in England**



**Jenny, the High School Graduate**

Later that year when we returned to the U.S., Jenny appeared more British than American. She had totally embraced British culture. She had been popular at school. When there were birthday parties at our house, we had observed how well liked she was by her classmates. She had adopted British mannerisms in both her speech and her demeanor. But her desire to conform and her innate ability to mimic served her well. Within months she had transformed herself into an American. (Even today the gift of mimicry can bring me to tears of laughter. She does an absolute spot on imitation of Aussie Steve Irwin, the Crocodile Hunter on the Animal Planet TV Channel. In the next breath, she can be a Valley Girl, an Irish maiden, or a British judge.)

Over the next several years, Jenny breezed through school. She received almost all A's and when she took standardized tests that students are given almost every year, she always received scores in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile in both math and English. Upon entering high school, she found the perfect release for her verbal skills, joining the speech and debate team. She took second place in her first competition, great fodder for the ego. In fact, Jenny got Cathy

interested as well, and at one point both were competing, and while Jenny was president of the Speech Club, Cathy was secretary.

## **Jenny Decides to Go to College in Texas**

I didn't realize it at the time (any sensitivity genes our children have all came from Mary), but Jenny found the transition from living at home to moving out and going to college to be very traumatic. She had been accepted at a number of UC campuses but had also been offered an \$18,000 scholarship to attend the University of Dallas, a small Catholic liberal arts school within a stone's throw of the Dallas Cowboys stadium in Irving. The school also boasted its own campus in Rome. When she flew off to spend "sleeping bag" weekend at the school to check it out, she was a nervous wreck. She had narrowed down her choices between UCLA and UD. I didn't hide my bias toward UD, because of its size, the religious influence it would provide, and the opportunity it gave every student to spend one semester in Rome. Jenny accepted UD's offer. When we asked her what she wanted for high school graduation, she replied, "A ticket home at Thanksgiving."

In August, Jenny left for UD, and she came home both at Thanksgiving and Christmas. She started out, carless, living in the dorms. Over the next four years, she gained a car, lots of confidence in her abilities to deal with change, and a great education. During her semester-long stay in Rome, she was able to take a side-trip to Greece, revisiting some of the same sites she had seen nine years earlier. During another break, in November 1989, she headed north from Rome, and ended up in Berlin at that unforgettable time in history when the Wall came down. I had been in Berlin as a youth on August 17, 1961, when the city was first being divided and construction of the Wall began. And I had visited Berlin again in 1987. Watching the Wall come down filled me with emotion and Jenny and I exchanged mail, comparing experiences. Today we proudly display a piece of the Wall on our mantelpiece, a piece that added substantially to the weight of Jenny's baggage during its long journey from Berlin to Newbury Park.

## **Post Graduation Employment as an Admissions Counselor**

After Jenny graduated with a B.A. in history in May 1992, she planned to work a couple years before starting graduate work. She took a job as admissions counselor for UD, and traveled extensively for the school, promoting it during travels to places such as Colorado, Chicago, Maryland, Washington, and fortunately California. We got to see her several times a year, but Mary, who has always had a special bond with Jenny, wanted her here permanently. The two years Jenny had planned just to work came and went.

For many years, she had contemplated a career as a lawyer. Mary and I both thought it would be a perfect fit for her highly developed mental and verbal skills. Then in 1995, she took the LSAT, the standardized test required for admission to any law school she might consider, and scored in the 94th percentile. She drew upon the significant admissions experience she had and applied to a half dozen law schools ranked in the national top 20. Graduates from these schools have a cachet, she knew, that would enable them to garner the best jobs. Although she was rejected by Yale (whose average student has a 96 LSAT score) she was accepted by George Washington University in Washington D.C. and wait-listed by Northwestern in Chicago. After accepting GWU's offer and preparing to move to the national Capital, Northwestern informed her that they had room for her. She withdrew her GWU acceptance, and switched to NWU.

## **A Law Student at Northwestern University in the Windy City**

Within weeks she and her drugged cats, Honey and Pete, were heading north to Chicago. She found a small apartment downtown, a short walk from the campus and over the next several years, would walk that route through rain, sleet, snow, wind, and sunshine.



**Jenny Heads to Rome**



The law is a very demanding field. It requires committing case after case to memory and learning principles from them. As Jenny related her experiences to me, I realized that it was indeed a good match for her. At the same time, I knew that I could never succeed in the same field. She excelled at her studies. She was an editor for the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology. She competed in a Moot Court competition in New Orleans and she and her partner won, advancing NWU to the national finals for the first time in history. During the summer preceding graduation, she sought an internship, limiting her search to Los Angeles law firms. When she accepted an intern position at Jones Day Reavis and Pogue in Los Angeles, we knew she was one step closer to returning to California. She said she loved Chicago but had seen one winter too many.

After her summer internship, Jones Day offered her a position at graduation, and we all celebrated. For the first time in over a decade, all our kids would be in Southern California.

### **The Proud Graduate, May 1999**

It was a proud moment when in May 1999, the entire family, including Volker, watched Jenny receive her Juris Doctor degree during a ceremony at the end of the Navy Pier in Chicago. Within a few days, Jenny and her cats once again hit the road, and a few days later they settled into their new digs in South Pasadena. Almost immediately Jenny began studying for the Bar Exam, which she took in late July. A day later she, Mary, and I celebrated by taking a week-long trip to Tahiti. In November Jenny got the results (Yea! Pass!) and in early December she was officially sworn in with fourteen of her colleagues.



**Jenny Riggs, J.D.**

### **Now, a Career in Law**

Since shortly after her return from Tahiti, Jenny has been working for Jones Day. Her hours are long, and she frequently works weekends. She has not yet selected a field of expertise and is not encouraged to, since they would like her to become familiar with more than just the field of litigation, which she is leaning toward.

She has come a long way from being a little girl who loved to curl up with books. I believe that her chosen field is a perfect fit for her. Is marriage in the future for her? That is for her to decide. Right now she is married to her job, but I suspect that over time she will settle into a comfortable routine — I don't believe she can sustain her current work pace indefinitely.

I am grateful that she is nearby, and we see her often. I love her and care about her a lot. And I have let her know that if she ever needs help, I am always available. I see her strengths and weaknesses, her competence and insecurities. No matter how old she gets, she will always be a child who can call on her daddy for help. This is as important for me as for her. It's comforting to know that I can help her. I know I'm compensating for never knowing my father and having my mother die when I was 24, but I don't care.