

Remembering Mom

Jean

Ruth Ann Appley was born in Buffalo, New York, on August 14, 1932, to Ruth Wilson and Lawrence Asa Appley. They lived in Hamilton and had been on a day trip to Buffalo - the car trip must have sent her mom into labor.

Mom grew up on Lake Moraine in Hamilton – swimming, sunning and boating – a main factor in her joining the synchronized swim team at her high school. She would put flowers in her hair and practice diving like Esther Williams with a smile on her face. She couldn't figure out why the flowers wouldn't stay in her hair.

Anne

In Hamilton her parents belonged to the Baptist church which practiced believers' baptism (adult baptism). When the family moved to Glen Ridge, New Jersey, they joined a Congregational church which practiced infant baptism – so mom missed out on the rite. It was a source of pride for her that she could be a deeply involved church woman having never had to jump through the hoops of ritual. It was a matter of theological justice: Jesus never hazed anyone – all are welcome. When she was turning 80 she wondered if she ought to get baptized – “before it's too late.” She hedged her bets and was baptized on her 80th birthday. 90-year-old Irene Phillips at Pasadena UCC – who baked all the wedding and baptismal cakes – provided mom's.

Mom traveled to Europe by ship with her parents as a young girl. She loved baseball; her cousin Win took her to Dodger games in Brooklyn. When our son joined Little League and decided he wanted to pitch for the Dodgers someday, she paid for his week at Dodger Camp each summer at the stadium. They shared a passion for both game and team.

Jean

When she was ten, her sister, Judith (Judi), was born – a miracle baby after years of miscarriages. But when she was 15, mom was sent away to a boarding school - Northfield School for Girls in Massachusetts. So, unlike us, the sisters had very little time in the same home. Mom told us she learned most of her social skills at Northfield – which may explain a few things.

She attended Connecticut College for Women – but left after 2 years to marry a naval officer, Albert Gleaves Cohen. He met her at a party in New London and watched her beat every other boy in ping pong. He refused to play – but asked the hostess for her number the next day. They were married by Charles Copenhaver in the Congregational Church in Glen Ridge – and drove off to Coronado, California where dad's submarine was stationed. When he joined the Catfish she was in Japan, so they picked up housekeeping in June. They got a dog and Anne was conceived, two auspicious outcomes of that move. Mom also dropped the name "Ruth" so she never again had to hear her mother's voice saying, "Ruth Ann – make your bed!"

Anne

In September, having realized that submarines might not be the answer to the world's problems – but G-d might be – they moved to Oberlin, Ohio, where Dad attended seminary and mom gave birth to Anne, Todd and Jean. They lived most of that time out in Brighton, a farm town where Dad served the church and mom hung out with the babies and the animals – not her favorite time.

In 1958, Charles Copenhaver, now at Oneonta Congregational Church in South Pasadena, CA, offered Dad the position of Youth Minister. We crossed the country in a station wagon – and rejoined the urban scene. Our youngest brother, Pete, was born at Huntington Hospital in Pasadena when Anne was five. Four children in five years – raising a litter – was one of the instigating factors behind mom's growing feminism.

Jean

We lived in England for a year, Fullerton in Orange County for the hardest four years of our family life – and then, in 1969, moved to Pasadena, CA – to the house where our dad still lives. Dad was a Campus Minister and mom attended Cal State Los Angeles - got her B.A. in Art (ceramics, weaving) and built a kiln in the backyard to fire her pots. Our family spent summers camping (often at Red Rock Crossing, Sedona, AZ) and visiting every national monument and Indian ruin imaginable. We visited relatives on the east coast – and spent weeks – even a month at a time on Catalina Island – back when houses rented out for \$100 a month.

There was a group of young ministers in the Southern California Conference of the UCC – The Young Turks – who gathered regularly to discuss social justice issues and plot various protests against the status quo. Our childhoods were intertwined with those nine families – we had nine sets of parents and fifty siblings – with whom we picnicked, camped in Ensenada, partied on New Year's Eve, and attended protests. Our moms supported each other when our dads were registering Black voters in Mississippi or were in jail for protecting farm workers from the Teamsters.

One of our bonus moms from that time was Elaine Ludlow (now Jordan) who offered these memories of that time in Mom's life – which she sent to us on the occasion of Mom's 80th birthday:

Reader (Marlene)

Ann and Me in the Sixties

We were Fat, (me) Skinny (you) and Just Right (Tae) on the beach at Catalina Island. You made up those names for us; you were the greatest conversationalist in the whole world. We talked of kids, religion, our friends, civil rights, and Avalon gossip...

Your kids were adorable—beautiful, blond babies with great attitudes, and able to help with homemaking. I especially remember Peter, a toddler, walking with grace and ease on a narrow ledge, and us marveling at his feats. I learned from you about teaching children to listen and to wait while adults were talking. I thought you were the best mother I'd ever known. You never lost your personhood to those kids, but kept your humor and artistic dreams no matter what they demanded.

We were there in Avalon when we learned of the Watts riots in Los Angeles, and you and Al were galvanized into plans to help. We ate Mocha Chip ice cream, your favorite, and let the Sixties wash over us while we monitored it all. You and Al politicized me, made me into a liberal, and gave me a place to stand.

Back in Pasadena, I admired your cooking and gardening and pottery making. I collected the pots, ate the food and watched you garden. We read the same books, laughed at the same jokes, and admired the same towering intellects around us. I must add something about your wonderful taste: I slavishly copied your décor, your style of dress and your hippie ways. I loved the plain pottery, the naked floors, the subdued colors—all the while pretending I was that original.

With love, Elaine

Anne

Mom and friends were not to be marginalized, as you can see. And, whenever they could, they joined the fray. Mom was adamant that her children would not end up casualties of the Vietnam War – worked with the Peace Operations Center at All Saints' Pasadena, the American Friends' Service Committee, Clergy and Laity Concerned and the UCC on that project. She chained herself inside a sample tiger cage on the steps of Pasadena City Hall – and in 1974 went to Vietnam with a group led by Tom Hayden to protest outside the American Embassy in Saigon. She learned how to shout, "Peace in Vietnam!" in Vietnamese – but got the tones wrong – and shouted, "The Flowers of Vietnam!" loud and clear. The delegation was expelled from the country for "disturbing the peace" – but the war ended in 1975 – for which we gave credit to mom.

Mom attended Claremont School of Theology for two years but did not complete the M.Div. She was mostly interested in Feminist Theology and spent many hours with Nelle Morton and Anne Bennett, Grace Moore and Lib Register, and a group called "Sister Circle" – hearing each other into speech – and making the world more inclusive for our gender. After she moved to Pilgrim Place she took classes with Rosemary Radford Reuther, also a resident here. Rosemary gave her a bathing suit that no longer fit her – which mom gave to me – which I proudly wore when swimming with my son and mom in the Pilgrim Place pool.

Jean

Our parents divorced in 1982. Mom eventually married again. Bob Nofer, an architect and member of Woodland Hills UCC, brought Lake, Reid - and their mother, Zazel, into our lives. Bob eventually worked for JPL, joined Pasadena UCC, and sang in the choir - as well as the Foothill Master Chorale. Reid married

Dina - and their son, Gabriel, was a bonus grandchild for mom. When Bob died, mom moved to Pilgrim Place.

In her 60's and 70's mom worked at "Women at Work" Career Center in Pasadena until she retired. She spent those years helping women enter and re-enter the workforce – a necessity for survival as society and the economy were and are not kind to single mothers and older women. Her home church was here at First Congregational UCC Pasadena, where our family joined in 1969. This church continues to sustain our family and welcomes us whenever our lives lead us home to Pasadena.

Meanwhile, mom's children grew up, married and had families. Todd married Gail and they have Alexi and Bria, all on the east coast. Pete married Kellye and they have Carolynne and Natalye, in San Diego. Anne married John and they have Peter and live in Pasadena. I am married to Kim, we have a dog named Fenris and we live in Portland, Oregon.

Anne

Mom moved to Pilgrim Place about 11 years ago. She loved gardening and had a plot on the campus there. Maggie Hover, one of the Pilgrims, sent this message to us after hearing of mom's death:

I inherited [Ann's] garden plots over at the Berkeley garden, and had quite a funny and endearing ongoing relationship for several years over those plots. I always found her to be sweet and kind, and she was known for her dedication to that garden. I had it for four or five years, and every time I worked in the garden, I felt as though I was taking care of her project and connecting with her spirit that loved that little space so much.

Mom loved folk music, played guitar a little and taught me to play. She loved knitting and quilting, reading/ writing (wrote poetry and journals), camping, swimming and sunning – and had many cats – and a few Labrador Retrievers.

She went to Pilgrim Place as an independent apartment dweller, moved to Assisted Living about six years ago, and then into the Health Care Center after her stroke. Those three levels of care were a godsend to her and our family – Pitzer staff were amazing. Right at Home provided extra help and companionship – for which we are deeply grateful. These last years she was accompanied by

Alzheimer's and was lovingly cared for by the wonderful people at Robin's Nest in the Health Services Center. Mom's feistiness and sense of humor stuck with her to the very end – when this year's flu and pneumonia took their toll.

She died gracefully and peacefully on Wednesday 1/17/2018 at 1:48 a.m. at Pilgrim Place HSC. All of her children were with her.

Jean

When designing the stone marker for her burial place at San Gabriel Cemetery, we decided on a peace sign and a rose.

[Words about the Peace Rose – see insert.]

I especially like that this rose is a common variety. It isn't rare or expensive, nor is it delicate or picky about its growing conditions. 'Peace' can grow in almost any garden. It is a rose for anyone, anywhere and it encapsulates everything that we hold dear in roses – drama, love and greatness of spirit. That's the miracle of 'Peace'!

These qualities are why we felt it would be the perfect rose for our mother's eternal garden. These (pointing to the bouquet on the altar) are all peace roses and these (pointing to our two rose plants at the altar) will be planted in our families' gardens.

For me personally, this choice is also symbolic of the quest for my own peace with mom.

Anne

Ann Appley made her mark – the world is a better place – and we miss her.

Love you mom.