

Patsy Almeida

Becomer's Mystery Person of the week - August 17, 2008

Born in San Pedro, California, lived in the same one bedroom home til I got married.

Was raised by single mom, and had one brother, 7 years my senior, whom adored. He left home to join the air force when I was 13 yrs old and I was devastated. He played the trumpet and had a band that practiced at our house. The other members of the band were very sweet to me , and told me I was there favorite girlfriend.

One time when I was about 6yr.old, my brother and his friends had built fort up on a hill near our house. They would take BB guns up there and shoot at tin cans. They had let me come up with them one afternoon. I picked up a BB gun and shot it, hitting one of the boys in his rear end. He wasn't hurt, but wow! Was I scared. They just laughed and brought me home.

Since my mom had to leave early each morning for work, it was my brother that got me ready for school. I can remember him brushing my hair and tying the bows on the back of my dress. One time, when he was in 6th grade and I was in kindergarten, he snuck me up to his classroom and had me hide under his desk. Of course when the teacher arrived, she found me there, and had my brother take me back to kindergarten.

When I was in the 7th grade he let me wear his letterman sweater to school. What a great day, everyone was asking me if I had a boyfriend in high school, and was that his letterman sweater. When I told my brother the story that evening, he fell over on the floor laughing at me.

School was never much of a challenge for me. I loved learning, but often got in trouble for talking. I spent a lot of time sitting in the hall. In the fifth grade, I told my teacher I wanted to run for President of the United States when I grew up, and she told me, she would be my campaign manager. My sixth grade teacher signed my autograph book with the following comment. "I hope that some day you put all your impulsiveness to good use."

In Jr. High I was the editor of the school paper, and spent most afternoons volunteering at a settlement house in San Pedro, run by missionaries from our church. They had classes for new immigrants to the USA, and they needed some one to entertain the children while the adults were learning how to navigate in a new country. I would take the bus downtown after school for a quarter. My mom would pick me up on her way home from work. I also helped out at classes at a Los Angeles recreation and parks facility, where eventually I got a job when I was in college. My future husband was working there also, his hours were 6-10 pm. My were 3-6 pm. I used to hang around to talk to him, as I was developing a big crush.

I started dating young, and always liked the attention from boys. I also thought they were much more interesting to talk to than girls, who only wanted to talk about other girls, make-up, and boys. The boys liked talking about current events, sports, cars, which I found I liked to talk about also.

I first remember seeing my husband when I was just 13yrs old. He was graduating from high school, and our church was having a dinner honoring the graduates. I was part of the Girls Friendship Group, which served at special dinners. I remember him giving a speech, (he was the president of the MYF). I thought he was so cute and so funny. Everybody loved listening to him. Of course he didn't even notice me. Hi graduated in summer of 1950. The marine corps had made a presentation at the high school and signed up many of the senior boys to go to boot camp at Camp Pendleton during the summer. Of course, when he was there the Korean war broke out and he immediately became a real marine. He went off to the Marine Corps, and I went to high school.

In high school, I again worked on the school paper, and was the editor of our senior yearbook. I was also involved in public speaking and drama. I had the lead in the senior play "Stagedoor". My drama

and English teachers loved me, but not my geometry teacher. She gave me a "D", and told me I was too stupid to be a math major, I should change my major to typing. I took the class over the next semester from a man math teacher, and got an A, and took it in to show her!

I have been crowned a queen three times. The first time I was eleven and was May Queen. The second was a senior in high school, my boyfriend and I were King and Queen of the prom, and the third time was on TV when I was Queen For A Day. My brother had recently died unexpectedly from massive heart attack at age 35. He left a wife and six children. They were moving back to Spokane where her family lived in a two bedroom house. I was watching Queen For A Day and the thought came to me to go on the show and be a "queen by proxy" for Loretta. Within a week of seeing the show, my mother-in-law called to tell me her church group was going to Queen For A Day. I asked her to get me 2 tickets. I asked for bunk beds. I was confident that I would win and I did. I didn't tell my mom or Loretta, but was so excited to call her with the good news. On the way home from the show, I stopped at my mom's office and presented her with the bouquet of roses. She was in shock!

Most embarrassing moment....in fifth grade, the teacher had a rule, that if you didn't use the restroom at recess, don't ask to go during class. One day, when I returned from recess, I really needed to go, and she said, "No!". I had to give a report in front of the class, and about half way through, I couldn't hold it any longer. Before I knew it a puddle had formed around my feet, and a girl in the class called out, "Look, there is a puddle around Patsy's feet." I ran out of the class and went home.

I learned to drive at sixteen, my boyfriend taught me. I bought my first car at age 18 from a neighbor. The car was the same age as me. I paid \$5 for her, and my friends and I named her "The Blue Dahlia". We took turns driving to long beach state.

I was seventeen when I graduated from high school in Jan 1954. I went to Harbor Community College for one semester. Ken had been student body president of the college and when I was a senior in high school, we went on a field trip to the college. There he was again giving a speech to the visiting seniors, and I was impressed with his leadership abilities. He went off to Whittier College that spring semester when I attended the community college.

We attended the same Methodist church in San Pedro, so I would see him occasionally and make an effort to talk to him. It wasn't long until we were both working at the same city playground. I worked from 3-6pm, and he came on from 6-10pm. I would hand around til he came to work, and chat a few minutes with him. Late in December, a friend of his told me he was going to ask me out for New Year's Eve. I already had a date, but canceled it immediately. He finally asked me out on December 30th. I was thrilled.

During the next 4 months we had 4 dates, and on April 30th, we went to a movie with James Dean, had pizza in Belmont Shore, then parked in front of my house, he pulled me over close to him and gave me a very romantic kiss (the first one). Then, he said, "I love you, will you marry me?" I was ecstatic! And answered, immediately, "yes". When I went in the house to tell my mother, her response was, "You'll never finish college, you'll just get married and have babies"!

He wanted to get married that summer, but I said we had to get to know each other, and he needed to graduate and get a job first. So we got married 14months later in June of 1956.

I finished all my classes except student teaching, had a baby fifteen months after our wedding. My mother-in-law offered to take care of our 4 month old baby girl and I did my student teaching. I taught for one year and was pregnant again. So I stayed home with our daughters. We bought our first home in Garden Grove in 1959 when I was pregnant with our second daughter. We lived here til 1964, then with 4 children moved to Gustine on the west side of Merced county.

When we moved to Gustine, they needed someone to set up a reading program for the district. So there I was with one year of teaching experience setting up a remedial reading program for a K-8 school district. I only worked part time, but eventually worked into full time

We had second son, in October 1968. That December a teacher walked out at Christmas at the country

school about 15 miles from Gustine. Ken was in charge of that school, too, and he begged me to take the class. I found a baby sitter who would come to my house before I left for school, clean my house, do my laundry and love my kids, especially the baby. My children fell in love with her. I was lucky to be teaching a 1-2 combo with only 18 children, so I could correct all their work while they were doing it.

I left school as soon as the kids did, and when I got home, I could be a mom! I taught there for seven years. During these years in Gustine, Ken and I sponsored a high school youth group that included kids from all the churches in that small town. They wrote their own musical and went on tour throughout northern California during Easter week. During our 47 years of marriage, we sponsored youth groups for about ! Of those years. All of our own children participated in several of those youth choirs, but by then, other people were the leaders.

I taught school for 33 years, 4th grade, 1st and 2nd grade, Jr. High remedial reading, kindergarten. My last 12 years were in Huntington Beach, in kindergarten and 1st, and 2nd grade.

I was married to a wonderful man whom I believe with all of my heart that God chose for me for 47 years. Together we loved and raised 5 amazing children, all of whom are making a positive difference in this world.

When we first came to Garzden Grove in 1959, we attended the Methodist church. We sponsored the high school youth group there. In 1962, we were part of a large group of people who left that church and came to the Garden Grove Community Church. Many of the families that came had kids who were in our youth group. At that time the Garden Grove Church didn't have a youth group, so we talked to Rev Schuller about starting one here, and had the first high school youth group at this church. Soon we were traveling again during Easter week, performing an Easter drama in many small towns up and down the central valley. We would perform our play here on Easter Sunday night. What fun we had.

Travel

Ken and I had two major trips....one was what I call the appetizer trip

Through Europe. We went to England, Germany, Switzerland, France, Venice, Rome, etc.....the second was called, Islands in the Sun, and included Tahiti, the Cook Islands, and New Zealand.

In 2002, I took a trip to Africa with a girlfriend. We went to Kenya, and Zimbabwe. It was magnificent, especially Victoria Falls.

While we were raising children, our vacations were minimal, we made a few trips to the Sierras with the kids, and one trip to Oregon, where we rode down the Rogue River for a few days. We also had a few days at Lake Tahoe with all of the kids too.

Ken and I made two trips across the US. One taking the southern route and the second a more northerly route, visiting as many national parks as we could.