



Paula:
a Girl from Brooklyn

a brief autobiography with photographs
by Paula Giangreco Cullison

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my parents, Angelo Giangreco and Constance Pace, who taught me that education was the key to success, that hard work paid off, and to always tell the truth.

Dad inspired me with his interest in the Arts, international travel, photography and current events. Mom will be remembered for saying (no matter the problem): It could have been worse. They both had a passion for cooking and eating healthfully. For them, wholesome food was the best medicine, especially garlic and zucchini. The Italians are famous for their cheers to good health: Salute! and for toasting on birthdays with Cent'Anni - May you live to be 100. So, here's hoping! I am 'dancing as fast as I can'.

Forward

The main goal in writing about my life and my life's experiences is to inspire and encourage others, especially those from immigrant and refugee families. Although our experiences are varied, we learn to deal with a number of unexpected challenges.

We draw from our inner strength with an understanding that education will help unlock many doors, as we work hard and persevere.

Let us strive forward with an optimistic view and a 'can do' attitude. Our paths may vary, but we continue on our journey with an open heart and a readiness to embrace the opportunities that present themselves, undeterred by obstacles and disappointments.

When you surround yourself with positive thinking people, great things will happen. An expression of gratitude goes a long way. Family and friends are the flowers in the garden of your life.

I am truly grateful for my family and friends who continue to encourage me on my life's journey. My treasure chest is overflowing with friends who inspire, encourage and support me. I wish I could have listed everyone who has come into my life over the years. Know that a part of you is in me.

A Very Special Thank You to our daughter Pamela Gill (my right-hand woman and traveling buddy) for editing and formatting, and to my husband Tim for always being so supportive and encouraging. No matter what ideas I present, he says: Go for it! Maybe deep down he knows that I will do it anyhow. Tim did a fabulous editing job too. We are looking forward to more international travel.

I am always available to share what I know. For more information: website: www.paulacullison.com
e-mail: paulacullison@aol.com OR paulagcullison@gmail.com --- instagram / twitter @paulacullison
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/paulacullison/> ----- Arizona Women's Partnership: www.azwp.org

Your feedback will be greatly appreciated.

Paula: a GIRL from Brooklyn

by Paula Giangreco Cullison

Born in Brooklyn, NYC on September 21, 1942, I came to appreciate the significance of the novel entitled A Tree Grows in Brooklyn. Interspersed among its many buildings, a large variety of trees and flowers do find a home in this unique borough. They provide the lungs in a city which yearns to breathe free.

The first child of parents from Italy who both married at what was then considered 'late', Mom was 34 and Dad was 39, I was named for my paternal grandmother, Paola Cino. I would later learn of Paola's incredible courage in crossing the Atlantic Ocean in steerage class to arrive at **Ellis Island in 1910** - alone with her two children to settle on the Lower Eastside of NYC in a tenement apartment. Leaving the bucolic town of Racalmuto, Sicily must have been heart-breaking.

My maternal grandmother Nicolina Anello Pace died (in 1911) when my mother was 4 years of age. She and her three siblings (Maria, Angela, Mariano) were raised by my maternal great-grandmother in Calatafimi, Sicily (a lovely hillside town). The ocean voyage from Sicily to Brooklyn in 1919 must have been so traumatic for them. Like many other immigrants **Paolo Pace** (01-20-1869), my maternal grandfather, mistakenly thought the streets in America were paved with gold.

My parents met at a small resort - like a B&B in Upstate NY - when on vacation. Neither were formally educated. Dad, **Angelo Giangreco** (03-06-1902), was an auto-didact, who worked nights as a pressman at the New York Times from the age of 16 until his retirement 40 years later in 1962. A member of the International Pressman's Union, Dad always worked double shift on the Sunday edition. We were not allowed to read the other daily newspapers which Dad considered to be inferior journalism. Mom, **Constance** (aka Crocifissa) **Pace** (10-20-1907) was a self-taught seamstress who worked in the NYC garment district. Heart break would occur again when her brother died a few years after completing medical school at the University of Alabama. A member of the ILGWU, my mother sewed the model dresses for some of the major designers. They would appear in the windows at Saks Fifth Avenue, Bonwit Teller, and Henri Bendel. One of her dresses was designed for then VP Walter Mondale's wife Joan. Needless to say, Mom was thrilled when she saw it on TV. Mom, who took a 20-year break from working to raise three children, sewed all of our clothes. We spent many Saturdays in the fabric section of Macy's at Herald Square. Our treat for good behavior was lunch in their Cafe on the 8th floor. To a young child, Macy's with its uniformed elevator operators, was a magical place.

We lived in a **one-bedroom apartment which was a 3rd floor walk-up** (top floor apt **3B**) in an 18-family unit. My maternal grandfather lived with us. Both of my father's parents and my maternal grandmother died before I was born (another story). Not unlike the other working-class families at **1393 Willoughby Avenue** (between Cypress Ave and St Nicholas Ave), we made do. Our apartment, with a fire escape, looked out past the long narrow alleyway to the rear of another similar apartment complex which faced Starr Street. Sleeping arrangements were tight: my sister and I on day beds in the living room, my parents and brother in the bedroom and grandpa in the hallway - which also housed the sewing machine and our telephone. Although we had a washing machine with wringer in the kitchen, laundry had to be hung out to dry on the roof. Dad converted a closet into his darkroom

where he performed 'magic' in his developing trays. I have his 1939 Leica camera. A chef at heart, Dad's 'bible' was the **New York Times Cookbook**. He and Mom loved to cook; be it lasagna or sauerbraten; we always ate well. They considered good food nature's medicine (and rightly so). The **RCA Victrola** played his 78 RPM classical and opera records. At about 1950 the center of attention became the newly purchased **black and white TV**. We enjoyed the Monday night **Voice of Firestone Hour** (dad's day off) and the **Ed Sullivan Show**, as well as Howdy Doody, and Kula Fran and Ollie; grandpa loved the prize fights and wrestling matches - much to our collective dismay.

The oak tree in front of the apartment building attracted many lady bugs and butterflies which gave us endless delights. The yard of the **Junior High School PS 162** across the street was our playground (handball, stick ball, basketball, and of course tag). During the summer, the school also offered an indoor play area. Our roller skating (with clamp-ons and key) was relegated to the sidewalks. The 'Ridgewood' neighborhood was populated by families of immigrants from Italy, Germany, Poland, Ireland, and Eastern European Jews.

For my schooling **K-4, I attended PS 123** a few blocks away. My grandfather walked me to and from school in the early grades. There was always a detour on the way home for a stop at **Knickerbocker Park** (now Maria Hernandez Park) so we could play while he visited with his friends (paesani). I enjoyed PS 123 and still recall the first day of Kindergarten. One of the children was having a major separation anxiety attack. He cried uncontrollably when his mom told him she was leaving. I turned to my new classmate and said, "Didn't she tell him that Kindergarten was going to be fun?" This new friend taught me how to tie a bow which was a big accomplishment. As we progressed to the next grades, those of us who were able would then help those who were struggling. It was a loving and supportive environment. I also recall that my mother always bought jasmine scented soaps for us to give to our respective teachers as gifts.

Our neighborhood was filled with school age children (of immigrant families), so there were always **plenty of playmates**. And YES, mothers called from the windows when dinner was ready. No one stayed out after sunset when the streetlights came on. On rainy days, we played in the hallway and on the stairs inside the apartment building. The **Public Library BOOK-mobile** stopped in front of our apartment building. It was a treasure chest for all of us, as we searched for the most appealing books. Our library cards were tickets into other worlds.

Education was very important to our parents, neither of whom completed elementary school. Moreover, both had been subjected to the abuse of child labor. As devout Roman Catholics, their faith helped them through the most difficult of times. AND so, we three were transferred and enrolled at St Aloysius Catholic School about a 15-minute walk from our apartment. Now, I had to wear a uniform: navy blue skirt, white blouse, navy tie and cotton stockings! **Fifth grade at St Aloysius** was a rude awakening. The Dominican nuns were very strict. I certainly didn't want to cross them. Fortunately, we were good students; always finished our homework and studied. Not sure how we three did all that in such a small apartment (my sister Nancy was in 4th grade and my brother Vincent was in 1st grade). By the time I entered 8th grade, I was at the top of the class. Although no nun hit me, I witnessed the 'insensitivity' and occasional whacking with the ruler inflicted on my classmates.

I was elected or selected as **Co-President of the Class of 1956**. The other Co-President was a boy – Kenneth G. Surprisingly, the nun was egalitarian. Our 'job' was to quiz students on the previous

night's homework. I always gave the easiest questions to those whom I knew had not studied. At one point, Sister Mary X got wise to my methodology and required me to ask harder questions of said students. My compassion gained me the respect of my peers. At that time, NY State had Regents exams for 8th graders. This test included the writing of an essay on three types of books: fiction, non-fiction and biography. I set out to memorize: Little Women, Kon-Tiki, and Susan B. Anthony. At graduation, I received the school's Math award: a 14K gold pendant. The graduation dance was held in the school gymnasium with our parents as chaperones. I do recall a school trip to see the Brooklyn Dodgers win at Ebbets Field (Duke Snider, Jackie Robinson, Pee Wee Reese); I think it was a Pennant game.

During these years, our family summer vacations were: to a resort in the **Catskill Mountains** (with visit to West Point), long car trips to **Hollywood, Florida** (motel owned by a family friend 'Antonio' Passalacqua) or **Rogersville, Tennessee** (resort was owned by the NYTimes). Other times, we would have **Sunday picnics** at Cunningham Park, head for Jones Beach or Riis Park. During the school year, Dad, who had Monday and Tuesdays off, would take us ice skating or to play tennis at **Flushing Meadows Park**; he gave us lessons. Although I enjoyed ice skating, my brother really took to the ice and also became an excellent swimmer and lifeguard.

By the end of my 8th grade year, my parents had saved enough money and decided to move from the one-bedroom apartment into a **house**. They originally wanted to move to the suburbs in New Jersey, but we protested since we did not want to move away from our friends. Finally, my parents found a new home development, an in-fill which was a few blocks from our apartment. Our new address was **218 Seneca Avenue (Ridgewood section)** which was actually one block into Queens. The corner lot house had three bedrooms and a soon to be finished basement (for grandpa and for parties). Dad could continue to take the BMT subway to work from **Jefferson Street stop on the 14th Street Canarsie Line** which is now the 'L' train. Dad brought home the NYTimes every morning. We were not allowed to read any other newspaper. He was a loyal employee. Therefore, I could never discuss the comic strip characters with my friends at school. Dad created a very **productive and organic backyard garden and** supplied neighbors and friends with tomatoes, string beans, zucchini, peppers, peaches, and lovely roses. He planted marigold flowers and garlic to ward off the insects and treated his seedlings with doses of Miracle-Gro. And grow, they did.

Being a good student qualified me to take the high school entrance exam for the selective and totally funded all girls **Bishop McDonnell Memorial High School at 260 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn**. Tuition was paid by the local Catholic Diocese and I did not have to wear a uniform. The teaching staff consisted of five orders of nuns: Dominicans, Josephites, Sisters of Charity, Sisters of Mercy, and Daughters of Wisdom, who taught different subject matter. In their own way, they set out to recruit us. I recall one field trip to a nunnery in Amityville, Long Island. Suffice it to say that the lifestyle was not in the cards for me.

At that time, I was a huge Rock n' Roll fan. I attended numerous **Allan Freed Rock n' Roll** shows at the **Brooklyn Paramount**. For the price of a ticket, we were entitled to see both shows. You arrived at 8am (with lunch in a brown paper bag) and selected your seat. I always managed to be in the first, second, or third row. There was a movie on the screen, as we waited. The first show was at 10am until about Noon. After having screamed our lungs out, we could leave, go to the backstage door for autographs, and return to our seat while the movie played (again) until the second show started at about 2pm. On occasion 'someone' would take 'my' seat. A call to the matron and with testimony from those who were

seated around me, I would reclaim 'my' seat. I have some personal treasures: autographs of **Buddy Holly** and **Chuck Berry**, as well as signed programs.

As for the neighborhood, there were about 15 of us who would 'hang out' at **Onderdonk Park** now (Starr Street Playground). It was a great group of teen-age friends. We spent the summers at Rockaway Beach via the NYC subway. The subway was so noisy that you couldn't carry on a conversation, so I read Gone with the Wind one of those summers as we headed to and from **Rockaway Beach**. We had parties in each other's homes. It was a fun time during the **mid-50s** with dances, movies, bowling, roller skating. A few of us were even on a local TV show similar to the popular American Bandstand. I recall some of the names of our friends: Denis K, Eddie N, Paul R, Richard M, Russ T, Kenny T, Jerry K, Johnnie S, Tony F, Mary H, Angela A, Lorraine, Annie S, Marie P, Dolores A, Barbara M, Mary Jean L, Jimmy R, Pete J, Joseph S. As with many first-generation children, most of the boys played soccer. So, we girls would go to the games and cheer them on. These unofficial games were played in empty lots.

With my **Bishop McDonnell Memorial High School** girl friends, I would attend weekly dances at the boys' high (Catholic) schools which were monitored by the religious Brothers and the Priests. We had many good times. On most days after school, we would gather at Karp's soda shop near BMDHS, listen to music, drink Cokes, laugh and talk. Although I never smoked, many of my friends did, so the smoke in the soda shop was thick. Marilyn N, Noreen Z, Kathy B, Betty H. Paula C, Mary Ellen B, Lorraine B, Sheila S, and Roz are a few whom I recall. We had fun - for sure. During that period, I was Co-Captain **of the girls' basketball team cheerleaders** (with Estelle D.). Many of us were also on the **Garity Knights Football Team Cheerleaders**. The Pop Warner football team was not that great, but we won several of the cheerleading competitions. Even though we had bare legs (no tights) and it was freezing cold, it was a fun time. In spite of their losses, the team held parties after every game. We were good friends, all Bishop's Girls. Marilyn N and Kathy B were the Co-Captains of the Garity Knights Cheerleaders. My cheer partner was Noreen Z. We enjoyed creating our 'cheers'.

Bishop McDonnell Memorial HS was academically challenging, and the discipline was strict. As a member of the Student Council, my jobs were: library assistant and hall / front door monitor. The front door was *locked* as soon as the bell rang. Tardy students were escorted to the principal's office for a detention slip. Talking was not allowed in the hallways during class breaks (imagine that!). I loved working in the library, a treasure trove of creative thoughts penned by an untold number of great minds. Students on the Academic track were required to take three years of Latin and two years of a foreign language. I selected Spanish and ultimately opted out of fourth year of Latin. In my Sophomore year, the school had a Baby Photo Contest (anonymous). Students voted by secret ballot. My father's hobby paid off. I won. The school newspaper printed a short article. Thinking I might study nursing, one of the Sisters of Charity urged me to volunteer at the **New York Foundling Hospital** in Manhattan. My charges were 6 babies under the age of one. The position required me to feed and change their real cotton diapers. Holding and hugging them was the fun part. It was quite the juggling act, as the babies tended to cry at the same time. I continued to volunteer while attending college; however, nursing was definitely not going to be my career path.

Although there were no rulers used to chastise for incorrect answers or incomplete homework assignments, the nuns scolded us with their stares and harsh words. In spite of all this, I persisted.

My forte was Mathematics: Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry. Getting to BMDMHS took about an hour; I had two choices: three subways OR two buses. As with most major cities, bus travel during

rush hour can be unpredictable. So more often than not, I traveled by subway. We, Bishop's Girls, as we were known, formed a tight bond. I recall a fun all girls pajama party we had at our house. Cyndi Lauper knows that 'Girls just Want To have fun'.

When I was a Junior, Denis K, my then boyfriend, asked me to his Senior Prom at **Grover Cleveland High School**. Needless to say, I was so excited. He was a very nice guy and a great dancer too. My mother made me a beautiful silk organza dress. I still have that vintage dress. If I recall correctly, after the Prom a number of us went to the Latin Quarter in Manhattan. This was a huge deal and I had 'phony' proof of age which was the custom back in the day. The NYC night club waiters always turned a blind eye during Prom time.

During my high school years, many parties were held in various homes in our Ridgewood neighborhood. We had a finished basement, so we hosted a few. My collection of 45s was rather extensive, as was that of our friends. So that the 45s could be easily identified, we used a different shade of nail polish across the rims. This was the era of Rock n Roll, a great time for fun. We truly believed that 'Rock n' Roll was here to stay.

Our **High School Senior trip** (1960) was to **Washington D.C.** where we (about 75 girls) stayed at the historic Mayflower Hotel. We were delighted to see the sights, visit the monuments, Smithsonian museums, and to stay up all night, running from room to room. The hotel obviously recovered from our mini-invasion.

My **Senior Prom** was held at the **St George Hotel in Brooklyn Heights** June 1960. A number of us headed to The **Copacabana Nightclub** to continue our celebration. My date was Duke F. I remember that he was slated for Annapolis (to follow in his father's footsteps) but failed the entrance exam. Not sure what happened to him. As you may recall, the Copacabana was key in the film, *Green Book*. The bouncer (who became the driver) was probably the same person who let us in with our phony IDs. It was common knowledge back 'in the day' that HS Seniors were not of legal drinking age. Let's face it, our dates certainly couldn't afford to pay for more than two drinks. YES, those were the days, my friend.

Upon graduating from high school, I secure my first job: full-time as a file clerk for **US Steel** in the Wall Street area. It was so incredibly boring, and I had to conceal the fact that I was college bound. Concurrently, I continued to volunteer at the New York Foundling Hospital.

As previously noted, education was very important to our parents and we took to being serious students. Therefore, when it was time for college, we were all admitted to one of the colleges of the **City University of New York (CUNY)**. At that time, **tuition was FREE**. However, admission was difficult- requiring both a high HS average and high SAT score. Staying in was as difficult. We all met the challenge and graduated. At that time, our only college expenses were for books and a \$25 student fee (not sure what that was for). At one point, the politicians threatened to charge tuition. We demonstrated with a chant: **Our Position is No Tuition**. Collectively, we were predominately the first in our immigrant families to attend college and we aimed to graduate - tuition free - thanks to the taxpayers of NY. Juggling 15 credits and a 20-30 hour a week job was no easy task. My part-time jobs ran the gamut of: sales clerk (Macy's, Gimbels, Arnold Constable), file clerk (Deluxe Girdle Craft), magazine subscription phone sales, and finally a fun job during the Summer of '64 at the World's Fair at the Belgian Village and the Hawaiian Pavilion, where I met people from all over the world and famous comedian Lucille Ball.

It was during the 60s that Tony F, Gino B, Laura, and I would go to the blues clubs in **Harlem**. The dance bands and singers were amazing; it was a happening time and we were part of it. A few years later, Gino created a famous anti-war poster.

My **favorite college classes** were Psychology (Social, Abnormal, Personality, Experimental) and Speech (3 semesters) because the professors were awesome. I continued with Spanish for another two years. What I enjoyed most was questioning the professors. This was a welcome change of pace from the restrictive environment of my all-girls' Catholic high school. Here 'the boys' were the majority and I could match wits with them.

Although I originally registered for Queens College, I ultimately decided on **Baruch** for practical reasons. The NY winters are brutal. Getting to Queens College necessitated taking two city buses and waiting for long periods of time, as there were no real schedules. On the other hand, getting to City College - Baruch required two subway lines all underground - no waiting in the snow. Hunter College (my sister's choice), also two subway lines, was out, as it was all an girls' college at that time. Many of our professors were from Ivy League colleges, as the City University system paid well. They were tough, no easy grades, for sure. My brother selected Uptown CCNY and took an apartment close by. He attended The New School (now NSU) for his graduate degree. Prior to Baruch, I went to NYC Community College, as I was concerned that I might not be able to handle a four-year commitment. However, I graduated with recognition, was president of a sorority, and transferred all credits to CUNY-Baruch. At Baruch I was a reporter for the school newspaper, The Ticker.

During this period, I enjoyed dancing at the Latin Clubs. My friend Barbara B and I were short. We loved to dance and found that the guys at the **Latin Dance Clubs** were also short, as they were from Puerto Rico or Cuba. It was a winning combination for us, as we never sat out a dance. We also attended Broadway and Off-Broadway plays. **College students were allowed discount tickets** (mostly under \$2) which could be traded for Orchestra seats at the box office. One memorable musical was Barbara Streisand in *Funny Girl*. My friend Andrea M. and I would museum and art gallery hop and attend the NYC Ballet or some of the smaller dance companies - like Merce Cunningham and Martha Graham. We enjoyed modern dance and Avant Garde plays. On weekends, we might also visit the coffee houses on MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village where the likes of Bob Dylan would pass the hat for tips. We were able to attend productions at the old **MET** on Broadway at 39th Street. My first live opera was 'The Barber of Seville'- ticket price was \$1.75 (April 1963). It was AWESOME! In this way, NYC encouraged students to attend performing arts events.

In 1963 I noticed an advertisement in the **Travel Section of the Sunday New York Times** for a student trip to Europe: **3 months** all-inclusive 12 countries \$999. I was sold. I had saved enough from my various p/t jobs and my parents gave me some 'spending money'. The trip was transformative. We sailed across the Atlantic on the **Aurelia**, an Italian Line training ship which took 10 days from **NYC to Southampton, England**. There were 6 of us in one cabin which consisted of three bunk beds. I took the lower bunk. The food was awesome, the waiters were young, the activities consisted of games, lectures, films, and dancing every night. It was paradise for us college students. The return trip from **Rotterdam** was on the Holland American line. It must have been the last voyage of the **Grote Bier**. The captain partied with us every night. Our trip took us by boat, bus and train, as we traversed most of Europe: **England, France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy and the smaller countries of Monaco, Andorra, San Marino, and Lichtenstein**. Students were either focused on the cultural aspects of the trip (museums/ architecture)

while others were more interested in the nightlife. I was interested in both. Therefore, there was little time for sleep; I managed to get about 5 hours a night (enough for a 20-year-old). We soon found that the European boys were eager to meet American girls. Needless to say, we had a fun time, as we immersed ourselves in the various cultures. How can one miss with the awesome mountains of Switzerland and Austria, the fantastic museums in every country, the excitement of the changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, the canals of Venice and Amsterdam, the Rhine Valley, the magnificent Eiffel Tower, the Paris Metro, the Colosseum, Trevi Fountain and Roman Forum, the Vatican, beaches and flamenco of Spain, eating Belgian chocolate, drinking German beer, etc. **Thus, began my wanderlust.** Returning home, I was determined to find a way to continue my international travels.

I don't recall how this happened. Perhaps one of my professors mentioned **AIESEC** (Association for the International Exchange of Students in Economics and Commerce) or one of my college friends knew someone who had been on the exchange program. It was an opportunity to work in a foreign country for a 3-month (or longer) period with pay. Since my college did not (at that time) sponsor AIESEC, I was able to convince **Columbia University** to sponsor me. To qualify for the exchange, a student had to volunteer a required number of hours during the college year. And so, I took the Uptown subway to Columbia University on a weekly basis to complete this requirement. In doing so, I got to know many of the students and was invited to parties hosted by Columbia and Barnard students. It was such a fun time. Along the way, I acquired a boyfriend who was a graduate student. Charles and I both listed Sweden as our first choice for the AIESEC traineeship. He was selected for Malmö, Sweden and I was assigned Zurich, Switzerland. My assignment would begin in June. (Allow me to note that in the 1990s, I served on the ASU - AIESEC Advisory Board. Helping the students was most rewarding.)

Upon **graduation from college in January '65**, I took a two-week trip to **Puerto Rico**. It was a great way to practice my Spanish and to better understand this culture. At the same time, I was hired at the **New York Foundling Hospital** to work with foster children and the families. Having been a volunteer certainly paid off. Children were placed with middle class families who had hoped to adopt. This was a difficult situation, as many mothers had hoped to be reunited with their children when they were able to do so. The children were caught in the middle; many had never known their birth mothers. The bonds with the foster parents were strong. There was always the uncertainty of it all.

Before too long it was June and I had to resign from my position at NYFH in order to take the AIESEC traineeship in Zurich. Living and working in another country is such a fantastic experience, I had to do it.

This necessitated that I enroll in an intensive German language program at **Berlitz**, as soon as I arrived in Zurich. At that time, the cheapest fare to Switzerland was on **Iceland Air: NYC to Luxembourg via Reykjavik and then a train to Zurich**. Needless to say, I arrived exhausted. AIESEC arranged for a place for me to stay. It was a room in a house on **Turner Strasse** near the University. The elderly gentleman had two other renters. We were not allowed to use the kitchen or scrub the tub with an abrasive cleanser. Fortunately, the AIESEC office found me another apartment which was rented only to students. It was on **Conrad Strasse** near the Kuntz Geweber Museum. There were 6 rooms on the fifth floor (no elevator) of 3 connecting buildings each shared a kitchen and two bathrooms. Fortunately, the student whose room I rented had a fantastic collection of classical music LPs. The other residents were from a variety of countries: England, Thailand, Norway, Kenya, Germany. Switzerland offered free tuition at that time. Since the course work was in German, many

students were taking language immersion classes to gain entry. **My AIESEC job was with HOTEL PLAN a subsidiary of the Migros Corporation**, the supermarket chain. I was to handle travel arrangements for Japanese businessmen. All secured hotel accommodations had to have a bathtub. The correspondence with the Japanese was all done in English. That's how I was chosen. I took tram #4 to the office at **Pfingstweidstrasse 101**. The work environment was very relaxed, a nice change of pace from the hustle of NYC. AIESEC arranged for weekly get-togethers and for short trips. One of which was a drive on the ever-winding Gotthard Pass through the Swiss Alps (breathtaking).

Another time, a number of us got together and headed for Lake Constance, Stein am Rhine, Schaffhausen and the Rhine Falls (spectacular).

Shortly after my arrival, while walking around Zurich after work, I asked for directions to the Kunst Haus Museum. My new friend **Sepp W.** showed me the way and accompanied me through the galleries. His English was excellent, and I was happy to give him an opportunity to practice. We became an item, as they say. An archeologist pursuing his graduate degree, Sepp worked p/t at the Landes Stadt Museum. His love for Switzerland was deep. Our parting in November was a sad one.

When my 3-month position ended, the manager asked me to stay on, but I declined. Instead, **I headed for Greece**. With a maiden name of Giangreco - John the Greek - I was in search of my roots. At that time, **Migros Corp also owned an airline - Globus Air**. For **\$50 R/T**, I was able to hop on their charter flight to **Corfu** (Kerkira) with the proviso that **one month later I be in Athens** for the return flight. With a **Baedeker guide book** in hand and a very few words of Greek under my belt, I set out on an incredible adventure with a borrowed small suitcase (no wheels in those days) from my Indonesian friend **Tien**, one of the students from the apartment complex. On my travels, I met a quite a number of other young adventurous souls. Remember, this is a time before credit cards; so, I had to watch my daily spending very carefully. In Corfu, after a night in a cheap hotel above a noisy restaurant, I decided to find a room with a family and stopped by a travel agency.

As luck would have it, there was a young American woman my age who was also looking for the same type of accommodations. **Claudia C** and I rented a room from Maria, a recently widowed woman with two children. Maria knew some Italian and that's how we communicated. Claudia knew how to drive and so we rented a car and visited the entire island in one day- even stopping to drink some wine with the French tourists at Club MET in Dassia and then enjoy the sunset at Pelekas. Claudia left for Italy via ferry and I returned the car keys to the agency. Needless to say, they were not pleased that we put so many miles on the car and threatened to make me pay an additional amount. Since I had not signed the contract, I was in luck. Claudia was working as a flight attendant for TWA and lived in NY. We reconnected when I returned to the US and became fast friends. (She attended our wedding)

I stayed in **Corfu** for another few days before taking the ferry across the Ionian Sea and then the bus along the west coast of Greece to **Patras**. When we finally arrived, I was so exhausted that while looking for a hotel, I didn't notice the unevenness of the stone sidewalk and fell flat on my face - right in front of an outdoor cafe. A woman ran out to help me up and brushed me off. She found someone who spoke English; and then insisted that I stay with her family - above the cafe which they owned. It all seemed so unreal. She had their three children sleep on the floor, so I could have the bed. I felt awful. While walking around Patras the next day, I saw a young woman. I asked her if she spoke English which she did. I asked her to come with me and explain to the woman that I could not stay since she had

the children sleep on the floor. It turned out that this gal's father was at the cafe when I fell. She already knew about me. That night she invited me to see Antigone in an ancient Amphitheater - complete with chorus. This was to be the beginning of incredible experiences. Each stop greeted me with what are now memorable experiences. I visited **Delphi, Crete** (where in Tylissos the village residents came out to see what an American looked like), **Rhodes, Mikonos, Delos and Athens** with a side trip to fly to **Istanbul** (story below) before flying back to Zurich. Maybe the mid-60s was really the best time for international travel: no internet, no cell phones, being totally open to new experiences; relying on a keen sense of resourcefulness. I think about all the wonderful people I met along the way. The week in Istanbul was an unexpected surprise.

During my travels in Greece, I learned that **Turkish Airlines** would allow students fly to Istanbul for \$15 R/T with the proviso that they spend 5 or more nights there. I was up for it. The Turkish Airlines plane was small. When we encountered turbulence and the plane had difficulties, I thought it was all over. The few passengers on the flight included a young Peace Corp volunteer, returning from Africa, and three German gals. I went with the German girls who found what must have been a Class D hotel. One night was enough for me. So, I headed to the **University of Istanbul** in search of a Turkish student whom I met in Zurich. **Zeynep B** was also an AIESEC participant. Long story short, the University professor found her address and gave me the number of the bus to take (no telephone number). I showed the address to the bus driver with a hand signal to inform when we arrived at my designated stop. It was apparent to the other passengers that I was not Turkish. I gentleman approached me and offered his help (in English). A stranger in a strange land - who was I to refuse! Fortunately, he was willing to exit the bus with me and help me locate the address through a maze of apartment buildings. Moreover, it was already dark. We rang the bell. The man from the bus explained to Zeynep's mother who I was. We learned that Zeynep was in London on another AIESEC traineeship. Fortunately, Mrs. B invited me to stay with the family and invited the man from the bus to return later for dessert (which he did). Unbelievable! At that very time, her brother was visiting. He was on leave from the Turkish Air Force and spoke English. They treated me royally. Zeynep will show up again in my story.

When I finally returned to Zurich, it was the towards the end of October and I was getting 'low on dough', as they say. **The good-byes were difficult.** I contacted Iceland Air to book a return flight. I still had to get back to Luxembourg via train. When I boarded the plane, **I had \$10 in my pocket.** Fortunately, that was just enough for a taxi ride home from JFK. **Two days later on November 9, 1965 @5pm, NYC** had a horrific **black-out** which lasted 12 hours. I was walking Confucius, my parents' dog, when it happened. People were stuck in elevators or trapped on the subway which is always packed during rush hour. Talk about timing!

With jet lag over, it was time to look for a job. The **NYTimes** Help Wanted section listed **Case Worker positions for the Bureau of Child Welfare.** I applied and was offered a position which was to begin January 3rd.

However, on January 1st there was a **massive transit strike in NYC.** No buses or subway trains were running. Mayor John Lindsay appeared on TV and asked City of NY employees to look in the mirror and ask, "Am I necessary". Since I had not started my job, my answer was 'No'. A few days later, I received a call asking me why I had not shown up for work. I explained. They answered that if I didn't get to work the next day, I was out of a job. Without a car, my only hope was to hitchhike over the bridge into Manhattan. And so, **for the next 10 days I hitchhiked** to and from work. Drivers were very accommodating. New Yorkers know how to rally in time of need.

My caseload was overwhelming. As a new employee, I was to help 95 families (mostly single moms) in the poorest sections: **Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville and Harlem**. I did the best I could. Although talking about birth control was not sanctioned, I did it anyway. It was their only hope. These were textbook cases for the socialization of poverty. Additionally, I certainly saw plenty of drug deals 'going down'. It was actually a very dangerous job.

During this time, I was searching for an affordable **apartment in Greenwich Village**. The best for-rent ads were listed in the **Village Voice**. If you wanted to be successful, you had to arrive at the newsstand as the papers were being delivered. Then you made a mad dash to a pay phone booth to call the renter and then arrive at the address as fast as possible. With luck and know how, I found a studio apartment at **6 Jones Street** (near the Greenwich House Pottery where I took classes). The rent was about \$110/mo. Since the apartment faced a very lively street, it was noisy and dark. I would subsequently move to another studio **apartment at 228 West 13th Street** (rent was \$125/mo.). My friend Andrea took the Jones Street apartment before moving to the East Village. She and I attended numerous concerts together. The usual pattern in NYC apartment hunting is basically whom do you know who might be moving. At that time, the building at 228 W13th Street was owned by a couple who lived in the penthouse apartment - walk up to the fourth floor. They had a huge boxer named Samson who generally hung out in the entry way. The wife looked like the woman in the Helena Rubenstein cosmetic ads; and she confessed to giving autographs, as such. People are funny. My studio was on the first floor in the back, so it was quiet. However, I was not allowed access to the garden. On the weekends, my neighbor liked to serenade his 'girlfriends' by playing his bass and singing the 'Summer Wind' until wee hours in the morning (a Frank Sinatra wannabe).

I really enjoyed living in the West Village. It was a happening place. My two friends from work Gloria P. and Vivian S. and I enjoyed attending the openings at art galleries. At one event, I met an artist and poet **Sanford F** whom I dated for a while. One evening he invited me to the Off-Off Broadway **Caffe Cino** at 31 Cornelia Street (now an historic landmark) to see his friend's musical starring (then unknown) **Bernadette Peters**. It was called **Golddiggers Afloat - aka - Dames at Sea** which became a huge hit on Broadway. So, I was in 'the room when it happened'. The Village, populated with talented and creative people, was a high energy area in the City. I never feared being out late at night, as there were always people out walking.

Dealing with the bureaucracy of the **Bureau of Child Welfare** which I found relatively frustrating, gave me pause to consider an alternative field; namely, education. In the mid-60s, the **NYC Public Schools** were in dire need of teachers. For 12 credits in Education, one could obtain a temporary teaching license. I set out to accomplish this **via evening and summer classes at Hunter College and at NYU**. The summer was an intense juggling act of classes and work. **Claudia C** (whom I met in Greece) and her friends had rented a house in **South Hampton**. My only other trip to the Hamptons had been with Sanford to visit his friends in East Hampton (definitely Uptown). Her invitation was a nice chance to get out of the city, relax, and celebrate my accomplishment: teaching certificate with school placement at **PS 126 at 80 Catherine Street near Chinatown in the Two Bridges** neighborhood (between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges). I found that I really enjoyed teaching. The children at PS 126 were primarily from Puerto Rican, Chinese and Black families. Among the students were those of the talented family of jazz musician **Charles Moffett**. Needless to say, school assemblies were awesome when they performed. (I digress.)

The summer get away to South Hampton was a great deal of fun. At one of the parties, I met **Tim**. He had graduated from Fordham University ('63) with a BS in Management. Within a fairly short time of our meeting, he said he was going to marry me. I replied that he must be joking. We started to date. Now I was in a dilemma - do I date two at the same time or what? I did that for a while, as I assessed my situation. Breaking up is never easy. San (a 'starving artist' at that time) took it hard. Tim enjoyed going to Broadway and Off-Broadway plays, operas, dance concerts, etc. I made a collage from many of the ticket stubs. It was fun. I liked his interest in the Arts and his sense of adventure - a willingness to see something new, especially the Off-Off Broadway events and foreign films. Everything was new to him, since his primary focus had been on school and work. He had to pay for his college tuition, as his family was of modest means. I could tell that he was hard working, sincere, respectful, honest, serious and goal oriented. He took to my parents; enjoyed their cooking, was an obliging dinner guest. We entertained friends in my small Greenwich Village apartment. It is amazing how little space one really needs. Just ask any New Yorker.

To be honest, I don't remember when/if he asked me (again) to marry him. I didn't want a diamond ring, as I knew about conflict 'blood' diamonds; plus, Tim had a college student debt. Since he was a practicing Catholic and wanted to marry in a church, I decided to approach **St Patrick's Cathedral** and inquire. The priest, Father Vincent Fox, asked a few questions which I answered. Voila!

October 7, 1967 was the date. I paid the \$75 donation fee. I then took the 5th Ave bus to 10th Street and went to see the catering manager of the **One Fifth Ave Hotel** in Greenwich Village (now luxury condos). The date was available; we decided on the menu and arranged for the band. My parents paid for the lovely wedding. I had my sister's designer wedding dress altered, bought her a maid of honor dress and ordered the invitations. My colleague at BCW, who freelanced as a photographer, was hired. **DONE!!!** Our family friend Frances P, hand sewed pearls and sequence on a Belgian lace mantilla which I bought. Tim and I went to Tiffany on 5th Avenue and bought plain gold bands; then celebrated in Bemelmans Bar at the Carlyle Hotel. Our marriage ceremony was in the Our Lady Chapel on the left side of the main altar. We took photographs in the courtyard of **St Patrick's Cathedral** and across 5th Ave at Rockefeller Center. People thought we were posing for some advertisement. Everyone enjoyed the wedding and reception. Although we didn't have a honeymoon, we would do plenty of traveling in the following years.

We headed to Indianapolis for Tim's work training program. I took a substitute teaching job in a poor area of the city. It was a very stressful start. When we **returned to NYC**, we found a one-bedroom apartment at **62 Livingston Street in Brooklyn Heights**. Greenwich Village was unfortunately too expensive. (March '68) Soon after, I found a job teaching 4th grade at **PS 86 at 220 Irving Ave @ Himrod Street** in Brooklyn, and I loved it. The children (also from immigrant families) were delightful. They enjoyed the classical (Baroque) music I played on my portable record player. As an incentive to improved (not necessarily the best) grades, two students were allowed to paint in the back of the room each afternoon. Their art works were placed on the ever peeling classroom walls. Visits were made to the homes of misbehaving children, so the respective parents could deal with the issues. As a result, I had well-behaved students.

I had to **resign in Feb 1969** when I was close to my delivery date. My physician **Anne Kalosh, MD** was the only female OB-GYN in NYC at that time. Her office was in Greenwich Village; so, Gregory was born at **St Vincent's Hospital in Greenwich Village on March 14, 1969** (now luxury condos). Tim and I had taken the **La Maize** natural birthing classes which was a new concept. Greg at 8lbs 13 oz

had an Apgar score of 10. My hard work paid off and he was an easy baby. This would be the beginning of my 10 year 'sabbatical', as Pamela would arrive about 4 years later. I brought baby Gregory to PS 86 for visits. The **children wrote him the cutest letters**. When Gregory was about 8 months, Tim was offered an opportunity to lecture on a **Caribbean Cruise on the Holland American line**. My parents took care of Greg while we enjoyed a long awaited 'honeymoon' to **Bermuda, Barbados, Martinique, St Maarten, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas and St. Croix**.

On **July 20, 1969 Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon**. Tim, baby Greg and I watched this incredible event at our next-door neighbor's apartment. Bert (Humberto) was originally from Havana via Florida. What a momentous occasion! Although we rigged a separation to divide our bedroom, it was becoming apparent that we needed to move into a two-bedroom apartment. The **Pierpont Street Park** in Brooklyn Heights was an oasis for young mothers. There I learned about the Saturday recycling center - where I volunteered; the cooperative babysitting group - which we joined; political activities - for which I became active; etc. In time, the sandbox would be where our young children learned cooperation, fair play, and sharing. As this park was in need of upkeep and repair, one of the mothers, Therese B, (almost single handedly) took on this fundraising challenge and succeeded. One day, someone mentioned that **Citizens for a Better New York** was organizing an event for the **first Earth Day on April 22, 1970**. I joined the group and we worked on hosting an event in our local park, as the now famous event was being planned for NYC Union Square Park. We made eco-friendly games for the children to play, as we urged attendees to sign a petition requesting that the shampoo and toiletry companies NOT switch to plastic. We set out to divide and conquer; my focus was Breck Shampoo. Needless to say, we lost Big Time. Concurrent to this was the emergence of the No War Toys Movement; I jumped aboard and sewed patches on Greg's clothes stating that *War Is Not Healthy for Children and other Living Things. Stop Pollution and Save the Earth*. My main concerns focused on toy guns, plastic soldiers, and the racist **Playskool** Cowboy and Indian pre-school puzzles. Then, there was the demonstration against the NY furriers. I took Greg on the subway - umbrella stroller in hand - to his first major political rally. Unbeknownst to him, he wore an **SOS - Save Our Seals** - button. We protested the clubbing to death of baby seals for the fur industry. A NYPD officer asked me to leave, as the demonstration was certain to turn violent. Heeding his advice, we left. Ten years later, PETA- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals- would be formed to carry the banner. My political activism took to demonstrating against the **Vietnam War**. I attended a rally in NYC with our neighbor Eugene L. We gathered peacefully and chanted outside the NYC hotel where LBJ was staying. I think it was the Waldorf Astoria, but I am not sure. During this time and while at the Pierpont Street Park, I learned about a **cooperative babysitting group**. We joined and **took turns** babysitting for the other members. Points were allotted for each 15 minutes of sitting until Midnight; then it was double points. Each member 'donated' one hour per month to the secretary who kept records. One could not use the pool of 20 or more couples, if you had not clocked hours. It was awesome. Most were young couples with only one child, so it was relaxing after bedtime. This was the period when I read all of Ernest Hemingway's works. On occasion there was a difficult child in the mix. We were able to continue our attendance at the vast array of cultural events in NYC without the cost of babysitting fees. Knowing that capable parents were taking care of our respective children was very assuring. It was at the park that I learned of a couple who were moving to Norway and that their apartment was going to be available. And so, we moved into a two-bedroom apartment in an historic brownstone at **295 Henry Street** (albeit on the 3rd floor walk-up).

It was also at the **Pierpont Street Park**, as we observed each other's children at play, that a **small cooperative play group** was formed. Gregory, Joanna, Elizabeth and Beth spent two hours twice a week at each other's apartment. At about this time, I thought that Greg needed playmates who were boys his age. Charlie and Greg played well together. Josh and Gregory played well together. At age 3 Gregory attended **Brooklyn Heights Community Pre-school** (now St Anne's) which was OK, but there were a few children with behavior problems (bullying). The laissez faire atmosphere and attitude of the administration did nothing to ameliorate this. After a year, we enrolled in another **preschool in Cadman Plaza Park**. This is where Gregory befriended two Danish brothers who were learning English. The children played well together in this program, as the teacher focused on cooperation.

Time marches on - **Pamela was born on Dec 27, 1972**, also delivered by **Ann Kalosh, MD at St Vincent's Hospital** with Tim in the room 'where / when it happened'. Weighing in at 81bs, 13 ½ oz, she received an Apgar score of 10 (another successful natural childbirth). Allow me to note that both were 3 weeks overdue. Gregory, who had originally been concerned that 'the baby' would be 'born without clothes', was so excited that he created numerous structures with his colorful wooden building blocks to 'entertain' Pamela. They were good together.

By 1974 climbing the three flights and lugging groceries, etc. began to take its toll. After thoughtful consideration and much to my parents' dismay, **we decided to leave NYC**. They loved their two grandchildren and enjoyed playing with them / babysitting them. It was a difficult decision. Since we had taken a trip to the Southwest to scope out the area (process of elimination: no winters, no South, no fault lines), we narrowed it down to Phoenix or Tucson AZ or Albuquerque NM. **Tim put in for a transfer**. It took a while; but during his 8-week assignment to facilitate the **Reynolds** merger in Phoenix and Tucson (We were along for the ride.), the offer came. I jumped into action and saw about 50 houses in two weeks. Gregory was in Kindergarten at the Monterey Park School where he was thriving. We were staying nearby at the Circle Palms apartment (now bulldozed to become St Mary's HS) where the owner, Eke C, was also a realtor. He was most patient, as he knew I was determined. **I had interviewed a few school principals via phone before selecting several neighborhoods**. In first place was the Moon Valley area. Although Eke was somewhat familiar with Moon Valley proper he was unfamiliar with the area on the south side of Thunderbird Road which is known as Moonridge. At that time, homes were listed in a thick book with small photos and details (no online computer programs). Realtors all used this Multiple Listing book. It was there that we found our 'forever' custom home at **13058 N. Surrey Circle** with views of the mountains from front yard and back porch. The school of choice was **Lookout Mountain** which offered a Gifted Program; both Gregory and Pamela would benefit from this experience. And so, we moved into the house on June 6, 1974. The layout of the house proved to be very suited to our needs. Three bedrooms were on the right side and the family room and bedroom (which became a huge play area) on the left side. In this way, the living and dining room remained fairly free of clutter. The back porch with its drop was somewhat worrisome. Pamela at 18 months figured out how to open the door. Fortunately, no injuries to either children or their friends ever happened. I loved the area. Tim and I took to hiking - mostly on Shaw Butte near our home. **Hiking the Grand Canyon** in '76 made us aware of the nature beauty in Arizona. We joined the **Sierra Club** for more strenuous hikes in the Superstition Mountains - including the Flatiron and Weaver's Needle. Together we hiked Mt Humphreys in Flagstaff, Picacho Peak, the Four Peaks, Camelback Mountain and Piestewa Peak in Phoenix. In 1990 we hiked Rim to Rim in a day (North to South) in about 13 hours. Pamela and I hiked the Grand Canyon twice. All in all, I hiked the Canyon 5 times. Tim and I also hiked Havasupai, as part of Greg's Boy Scout badge project. We took

trips to Death Valley and to Monument Valley, as we explored the state. **Tim** continued to run and would ultimately participate in and complete **11 marathons** here in Arizona, including two with **Gregory** who at 14 took first place in his age group in the **Tucson Marathon**.

Our involvement with the Sierra Club led me to **testify at a US Dept of Interior** hearing (held in Phoenix) to prevent the mining of uranium and the use of motorized boats in the Grand Canyon (1976). As nervous as I was, I felt compelled to testify. The hearing was held in the auditorium of a bank building on 3033 N. Central Ave Phoenix. It was about 108* outside, so I wore a sun dress. Suited men testified. The building was air-conditioned, and it must have been 70* inside. I was so cold. Why anyone would wear a jacket in the desert? After my statement, an elderly gentleman came over to me and congratulated me. I was elated. His comment empowered me to continue to speak up and out on many environmental, social justice, women's rights, education and political issues over the years.

Although **Lookout Mountain Elementary School** (WESD) offered half day kindergarten, many other districts in Arizona did not. Also, with many mothers working, it seemed that the need for all day kindergarten and supplemental after school programs should be addressed. My first stop was at the AZ State Legislature where I met **AZ State Senator John Pritzlaff** who had been appointed to fill the vacated seat of then Senator Sandra Day O'Connor, who was appointed to the US Supreme Court. As Chair of the Appropriations Committee, he could propose funding for Kindergartens throughout the state. As part of the **LOM Parents' Association**, and together with another mother, we proposed that the school offer extended care for kindergarteners of working parents (at a nominal fee). In time, both became a reality, as other parents stepped up to press these important issues. At this time, I started to **volunteer** in Greg's First grade class with Pamela in tow (seat on my 20' bike). I helped the children who had difficulty reading, as Pamela played close by. Greg's teacher Mrs. Lyle B. was so grateful that she sent Greg home with her copies of the Christian Science Monitor (fuel for many discussions). Although the Principal Dr Ella F. made it clear in her open letter to the parents that she would not honor requests for specific teachers, **she never denied me**. My volunteering 1st through 4th grades at LOM **paid off**.

Pamela showed a keen ability in **art** and sold one of her works at the **LOM Community Arts and Craft** fairs that I helped organize with Barbara F. She and I were a good team and we raised much needed funds for the school. Pamela would go on to win other awards at a local gallery. Both Greg and Pamela always participated in the **Phoenix Public Library Summer Reading** program where they maxed out on the awarded ribbons. With its varied and interesting programs, the public library was our 'home away from home'. Couple that with the concerts in the park, Lilliput Pops, Puppet Opera, Jazz for Kids, Cookie Company plays, etc. we always found plenty of **wonderful activities** - including pre-school ballet for Pam and 4-H rocketry for Greg. Scouting was a big part of our family life. Growing up in Brooklyn, I never went camping or fishing, nor joined the Scouts. So, the children's involvement in scouting was fun for me too. When Greg was in the Cub Scouts, I volunteered as assisting Den Mother with leader and friend Sharon A. **Greg would become an Eagle Scout with three palms and the Order of the Arrow**. His Eagle Scout project was focused on writing a history and organizing a major clean- up of the **Pioneer Cemetery** in Phoenix. This generated some local press. At **4H Camp** I volunteered to facilitate the Arts and Crafts program with the understanding that I could bring Pamela along. Grateful for the help, they obliged. The camp was located in the wooded area near Mormon Lake in Flagstaff. On our walks through the

woods, I had the campers pick up rusted pieces for later use in my free form art weavings which I sold at the **Main Street Gallery in Jerome**. Needing to escape the heat, in 1976 we **rented a house** on the hill with a view of the Mogollon Rim (from the Selna family) one summer (before VRBO or Air BnB). Tim came up on the weekends. Jerome was coming into its own as an artist haven and retirement hub. The following summer (1977) we rented a house **near Thumb Butte in Prescott**. The A frame house, built by a HS shop teacher, was situated on a hill surrounded by trees.

I continued to look for a variety of (affordable) experiences for the children. One camp experience which comes to mind is Future Farmers of America. I saw a posting in the newspaper and suggested that Greg apply. Although he was the only 'city boy' in the group, he learned a great deal and had fun.

And then there was the Maricopa County Fair in the late 70s. We three entered something and all won ribbons: Greg's rocket, Pam's cookies, and my hand puppet. What a nice surprise! We also enjoyed the Phoenix Zoo, Phoenix Art Museum. Pops concerts, and Parks Dept programs. We had a good time.

When Greg entered 5th grade I unfortunately **had to return to work**. Pamela was in 1st grade and I arranged for her to stay with neighbors until I returned home at 4pm. That was the deal I made as Job Placement Director at the **Bryman School for Medical and Dental Assisting**. The salary was low; I was overqualified, but needed a job with flexibility. Fortunately, Jim C. the Director was understanding and obliging. I left for work in the mornings after the children boarded the school bus. I really enjoyed the position and interacting with the students. Finding them internships and jobs was both challenging and rewarding. Meeting many doctors and dentists enabled me to better understand those professions. Later I gave presentations at the high schools throughout the Phoenix Metro area (and beyond) about career choices. This was most enjoyable for me. Gregory and Pamela were willing 'patients' when the Bryman students needed to practice giving an EKG or other procedures.

In 1980, after two years at Bryman and 6 months at Medox, it was apparent that I needed to earn a better salary. So, by process of elimination (no war related/ environmentally destructive businesses). I decided on the **Bell System aka Mountain Bell Telephone Company**. When I inquired, I was informed that there was a pre-qualifying exam similar to the SAT. I went to the library and checked out an SAT Prep book and studied for a month before the scheduled exam. Refreshing my memory about algebra and geometry paid off. My high score qualified me for an interview. I had my heart set on a position in Human Resources. The interview went well until I was shown a video with three job narratives. The interviewer asked me which position I could envision for myself. Not seeing the HR position as an option, I replied: **Account Executive**. He asked why. Fortunately, I am a quick thinker. The answer was satisfactory, and I was offered the position with provided training. I knew absolutely nothing about **telecommunications and data** processing, other than making and receiving phone calls. But the salary was almost twice what I was earning at Bryman; and I was up for the challenge. The training was intense and comprehensive. The appropriate **corporate attire** required a new wardrobe of dark suits and solid color blouses with 'bow ties'. Fortunately, my mother was an excellent seamstress, and she was willing. I bought the fabric and patterns, sent my measurements, and voila - suits made to order. **Juggling family and a demanding job** was a difficult challenge. I did not want to forgo the fun stuff with Greg and Pam. However, I had to keep my sales up. I must plead guilty to speeding in order to get to Pam and Greg's track and cross-country meets.

While at the Bell System (Mountain Bell - US West - Century Link) from 1980 - 1987, I became involved with **Women in Management**; eventually becoming President of the organization. In

1984 while on a business trip to Denver, I learned about the 1984 Year for All Denver Women project which was financed by Mountain Bell. One of my colleagues suggested that I create a similar project in Phoenix. Tim concurred. Giving it some serious thought and knowing that the company would not fund the idea for Phoenix, I set out to gain support for what would be **1985 – The Year for ALL Arizona Women**. I first contacted women who held management positions at Mountain Bell in Tucson, Flagstaff, Yuma and Prescott. With their assurance that they would form coalitions in their respective areas of the state to support this idea, I proceeded to contact numerous women's organization requesting support (but not financial). The idea was gaining momentum. I knew full well that I would have to balance this with my position and continue to maintain or exceed my sales quota.

To validate my idea, I approached **Mayor Terry Goddard of Phoenix** who appointed me to the Phoenix Women's Commission and **Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt** who named two of his special assistants to help me. As luck would have it, Mountain Bell was hosting the Chamber of Commerce mixer. At that event, I approached Mike R, the manager of the **Arizona Republic** Special Sections, about producing a supplement to honor the women of Arizona. We had lunch; he agreed; I met with his sales team; he assigned the project to a female editor who selected an all-female team to write the articles; it was a reality. In the meantime, I used Governor Babbitt's proclamation to request City Mayors, Town Managers, Tribal Leaders to issue proclamations. During this period, we set up our committees, key-note speakers, event venues, and established a 501(c)3 non-profit named the Arizona Women's Partnership.

The goal was to hold events throughout the state with most being in the Phoenix Metro area. The main events were keynoted by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Mary Kay Ash, Candy Lightner (founder of MADD), Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Judy Chicago. We also held an art exhibit featuring over 100 female artists at the Coconino Center for the Arts in Flagstaff, invited Catherine Comet and JoAnn Falletta to conduct the Phoenix Symphony, and co-hosted a major health event at Phoenix Convention Center. We had over 100 events state-wide which were facilitated by over 300 volunteers. The goal was for each event to 'break even'. In doing so. we had an excess of funds. **We subsequently awarded 36 mini-grants through the Arizona Community Foundation** to small charities that assisted women and children, and then closed the non-profit in 1988. With Tim's constant support and help, most of these files, programs, photographs, posters, news clippings, etc. are archived at the **Arizona Historical Society Museum** 1300 N. College Ave in Tempe, AZ.

In 1985, I was invited to speak at the **NGO Forum '85 of the UN Decade Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya**. A few of us also went on safari to the Maasai Mara Reserve and visited a Masai Tribe. Also took the train to Mombasa to put our feet in the Indian Ocean. We stayed at the **Stanley Hotel** in Nairobi (Hemingway slept there too). The late **U.S. Congresswoman Bella Abzug** (D-NY) took charge when the Stanley Hotel Manager wanted us to leave in order to make room for a number of unexpected dignitaries. We met in the lobby to demand our rights; I was in the 'room when it happened'. Needless to say, when Bella 'went in' to meet with the manager, he backed off. No surprise!!! We stayed. That week, my presentation attracted women from over a dozen countries who were eager to create an event to celebrate and honor women in their respective countries. I was elated!

The following year, when **Mountain Bell** decided to close its building at **16 W McDowell Road** in Phoenix, I, as President of Women in Management, proposed that we (WIM) **create a**

questionnaire regarding the need for on-site childcare. All employees at 16 West were being relocated to the new building at Central and Thomas in Phoenix. The questionnaire (addressing need / number of children needing childcare / amount willing to pay, etc.) was distributed to hundreds of employees (with over 80% being female) who were affected by the relocation. The **response was overwhelming**; Yes, the company should rent on site space to a day care provider. Although Mountain Bell did not follow through at this location, they did contract for 'nearby' day care at the Mountain Bell facility in Tempe.

Over those years 70s / 80s, our **family vacations** took us to such places as: Puerto Penasco, Mexico (beach), New Mexico (sand dunes), Colorado (Estes Park where Greg helped save a life and Pam was photographed for the National Wildlife Newsletter), Grand Canyon, California (San Diego/ San Francisco), Bryce Canyon, Zion, Arches, Joshua Tree, Salt Lake City; and NYC. When Tim and I took vacations together, my parents cared for Greg and Pam. First up was a **Caribbean Cruise** (previously noted) where Tim lectured on the Rotterdam. We visited: Barbados, Bermuda, St Marteen, Martinique, St Croix, St Thomas, and Puerto Rico. Then there were trips to: **Britain** (England, Scotland, and Wales); **Mexico** (Yucatan, Guadalajara, Mexico City); **Dutch Antilles** (Aruba and Curacao); **Spain** (Madrid, Toledo, Malaga); and **Hawaii**.

As previously noted, Tim was transferred to Phoenix to be **VP/ Manager** of the **Reynolds Securities** office. During the early 80s, Tim became the **Executive Director** of **St Mary's Food Bank** where he created innovative programs like Food Share, provided a night shelter for homeless men; served breakfast; and raised over \$2M in much needed funds. After five years, he moved into college teaching and ultimately became the **Business Department Chairman at Western International University** where he taught for 20 years. Since there was no retirement program, Tim took the **CPA exam** and then worked for the Federal Government as an auditor for the **IRS** for the next 13 years. The IRS offered a modest retirement package. At that time, we were saving like crazy for Greg and Pam's college tuition. It worked and neither had student loans.

Gregory was an outstanding student at **Lookout Mountain School** 1-8 grades. I remember his 4th grade teacher telling me that he was one of the 'cool kids' because he knew so much. August of 1982, Greg headed to **Thunderbird High School** where he focused on the AP classes, played clarinet in the marching band (even participated in the Fiesta Bowl Parade), ran track and cross-country and joined the newspaper staff and the theater arts group. His participation in the Academic Decathlon and Model UN programs resulted in awards and recognition. He lettered in Cross-Country and Track; attended his Junior and Senior proms, took a p/t job at the movie theater. During this time, Greg was also involved with the youth theater group at Shadow Rock Church, directed by David W. He had some fun roles (*The Sun City Chronicles, DOGS, News, Best Christmas Ever, etc.*) The summer of his Junior year, he was eligible to enroll in a few college courses at the UofA in Tucson. Greg was a busy guy! He selected and enrolled at **Claremont McKenna College (CMC)** in CA where he majored in Political Science. Before starting college, he spent the summer in New Zealand with the family of Lance J., an exchange student whom he met at THS. They treated him like family. Later Greg was accepted for summer internships: one with U.S. Representative Morris Udall and another with U.S. Senator John McCain. His Junior year abroad took him to study at the **Sorbonne in Paris** and the **Goethe Institute** in Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany. **Greg graduated from Claremont McKenna College in 1990 Cum Laude/ Phi Beta Kappa.** He was always a serious student and deserved our support. Greg took the **US Foreign Service** exam, passed and was assigned to the American Embassy in Rabat, **Morocco** for two years.

Greg married Christina Ogden on Sept 3, 1994. She was a graduate of Tulane and University of Kentucky. They met in the Foreign Service training program and he proposed on a visit to Phoenix while hiking Shaw Butte. How romantic! They received an assignment (mid 90s) to **Belgrade, Serbia**. Prior to leaving, they took intensive language classes. After this assignment, Greg resigned and enrolled in the graduate program at **Princeton University**. They bought a lovely house in Lawrenceville, NJ. Greg graduated with an **MPA Class of 1999**. It was an impressive Commencement ceremony. Christina stayed with the Foreign Service and was assigned to **Tunisia**. They both took an intensive French language course at IS in Aix-in-Provence. While Christina was working in Tunisia, Greg had an assignment in **Cote d'Ivoire**. In 2008, **Tim** went to visit them and took a side trip to **Libya**. At that time, I had three scholarships to study Italian in Sicily and an assignment to cover the film festival in Taormina.

After Greg took a brief detour via the **Navy Reserve** to Iraq, he and Christina settled down (for a while). **Isadora was born on December 24, 2008 in Vienna, VA.** A few years later, Christina would accept a 2-year assignment at the American Embassy in **Vienna, Austria**. This enabled them to develop their German language skills We visited them in 2014 (on our trip: Dublin, Cork, Donegal, Ennis, Galway Ireland, Paris France, Vienna Austria, Bratislava Slovakia, Berlin Germany) During this time, Greg did some contract work. When they returned to VA, they all continued to study German. Greg's career path now focuses on cyber security, while Christina remains with the Dept of State.

We visited once or twice a year and they came to Phoenix on occasion until COVID in 2020. We celebrated Greg's **50th Birthday** on 3-14-2019 with them and their friends at a Middle Eastern restaurant in Vienna, VA (FUN)

As noted, **Pamela** started Kindergarten at **Lookout Mountain**, was selected for the Project Potential Gifted Student Program (like Greg) and thrived in school. Being in the same neighborhood for so many years enabled the children to develop strong friendships. When a new school opened in our area, Pam spent her 8th grade at **Mountain Sky Middle School** from which she **graduated with High Honors**. During the middle school years and into high school, Pam did a great deal of **baby sitting** and saved most of what she earned. As a teenager, she had her own bank account. Perhaps this was the foreshadowing of a career in finance.

When Pamela's **Girl Scout** troop needed a Cookie Chairwoman, I volunteered. Pamela loved the Girl Scouts and has a jacket covered with over 30 patches to prove it (horseback riding camp, arts and crafts camp, cookie sales, Night Owl, etc.). I taught the girls about telemarketing to boost cookie sales. They were eager learners and sales went through the roof. Unfortunately, that March, Pam fell from her bicycle and broke her leg. It was a horrific accident that necessitated surgery and being placed in traction and ultimately in a body cast for several months. I stopped by the hospital to and from work. Some mornings she was still asleep. When Pam was released from John C Lincoln Hospital (where we brought Miss Kitty for a visit), the WESD district assigned a home schoolteacher, so she could keep up with her 5th grade work. As soon as the cast was removed, Pam attended school on crutches. Shortly thereafter, she went to **Disneyland** in CA via bus with the **YMCA** group. The leader Mary W. said that Pam did a nice job of keeping the pace. Pamela was always eager to make new friends. I remember the Girl Scout Camp days when she would get on the bus - not knowing anyone - and then on the return she would be hugging all of them good-bye. Pam stayed with the Girl Scouts (later as an independent) through her freshman year of HS. Pam also participated in a number of plays at

Shadow Rock Church. When Pam was about 9, she and her friend Mike H. found an abandoned kitten in the lot near SRC: Long story, short - **Kitty Cullison** lived with us for 19 years.

Pam was accepted into the **ANYTOWN** Camp program, which was a multi-cultural experience, two science camps: and one at **NAU** for middle school girls and then one at **ASU** for HS students. In 1988, Pam was accepted into an international program for teens - **Camp ARTEK** in the USSR. In her Junior year at Thunderbird High School, Pam applied for and was accepted for the **Phoenix Sister City Commission** student exchange to **Himeji, Japan** where she stayed with a family.

Upon graduation from HS, Pam decided to remain in Arizona for college and enrolled at the **University of Arizona (UofA)** in Tucson. She joined the **Alpha Chi Omega Sorority** and after her first year in the Manzanita Dorm where her dorm mates were Randi and Stacy, she moved into the Sorority House where she had many new sisters. The transition to such a large university was made easier because of the sorority and their any activities and parties. **Spring Break** was usually a trip to Puerto Penasco, Mexico. This was a popular escape for the U of A students. **Pamela graduated 1995 with a BS in Finance.** Her first job was for **Sears Credit in Louisville, KY** and then 10 years with **Wells Fargo Bank** (Asst. VP - Branch Mgr./ Call Ctr Mgr.) in Phoenix (as well as short stints with American Express and Camelot Homes) before taking a contract position as Financial Manager with **Arizona High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area HIDTA** (since 2007). **At 29 Pamela bought her first home** in a new infill development by Horton Homes near Greenway and 20th Street. We spent many weekends 'Good Will Hunting' and Yard Sale hopping to furnish and decorate her new nest. Pam did such a fine job that she was **featured in the Arizona Republic**, as one of three 'under 30year-old women' who were first time homebuyers. **Pamela met Hector Gill** at a work conference. He proposed at his parents' home in San Antonio, Texas. They married on **March 18, 2011 at the Moon Valley Country Club with Rev Bill Smith** officiating. Hector is a graduate of the University of Texas. They have spent quite a bit of time in Hawaii where and when Hector completes his US Army Reserve duty assignments. Recently, they spent a vacation in Dubai during his deployment in the Middle East.

My international travels with Pamela were fun. We used our frequent flyer miles accumulated though opening airline affiliated credit cards which offered a bonus of 50,000 + miles. Our trips were: Taste of Europe 2003 (Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels, Cologne, Rhine); Switzerland 2004 (Zurich, Lucerne, Zermatt, Bernese Oberland); Scandinavia 2005 (Denmark, Sweden, Norway); Italy 2006 (Florence, Rome, Venice); Spain and Portugal 2009; Germany, Austria, Hungary, & Czech Republic 2010.

During this period of time, I also took a few solo trips: 2007 France, 2007 Turkey, 2008 Sicily, 2011 Peru, 2014 Cuba, and 2019 UAE and Oman.

Tim and I took some great trips together: **Alaska Cruise** 2007; (Ireland, France, Austria, Slovakia, Germany) 2014; **Australia and New Zealand** 2016; **South America** 2018 (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile). **Tim and I** also went to **NYC** several times focusing on Lincoln Center for Opera/ Ballet/ Jazz; Broadway theaters Museums - MMA/MOMA/Frick/Guggenheim/ Whitney and stayed in the Carnegie Hall area hotel close to Central Park. One time, we took a most enjoyable and relaxing 'Manhattan by Sail' boat trip from the Battery Park basin. We have walked across the Brooklyn Bridge several times to visit the 'old neighborhood' of historic Brooklyn Heights. The

brownstone at **295 Henry Street** where we lived recently sold for \$7Million. Rates for real estate and apartment rentals in the NYC area are sky high!

As for my writing - during the 1990s, I wrote several articles for **The Current**, a social justice newspaper, which was published by Ferd H, director of CAMBIO, a non-profit for Central American Refugees. These articles focused on the societal issues and violence. I have also written articles for **Today's Arizona Woman** which was published by Eleanor K. My articles dealt with education, parenting and first-hand reports from the **1987 World Conference on Women** in Moscow USSR (which was also published in a Russian Magazine) and the **1992 UN Environmental Conference** in Rio de Janeiro.

In 1988, I created the first local event to celebrate **International Women's Day** March 8th; it was held at Heritage Square. With no budget for the event but a determination to make it happen, I contacted a number of cultural groups for entertainment and political dignitaries to make comments. Representatives from a broad base of women's organizations and the public attended. It was a joyous celebration held outside. The first event, which was then taken over by the Phoenix Women's Commission, attracted about 200. US Senator John McCain (AZ), and AZ Secretary of State Rose Mofford, soon to be AZ Governor, spoke.

In 1989 as President of TAP - **Thunderbird HS** (THS - Phoenix) Parents' Association, I asked the principal to survey the teachers about an issue which they found to be critical, so that I could present an educational event open to the community. The issue was **Teen Suicide**. The program generated great support from the faculty and students. The Theater Arts Department wrote and acted in their own skit, a panel of community leaders (including former US Congressman Ed Pastor, then a member of Maricopa County Board of Supervisors) addressed the issue and answered question from the audience, a local female TV anchor was the MC, and the City of Phoenix taped the event which attracted 500 (the maximum). It was broadcast several times on Phoenix Channel 11 with commentary from their spokeswoman, Laurie Fagen.

The next year (1990), I created and coordinated a **Career Day Symposium** at Thunderbird High School and invited **alums and parents** to address the students. My goal of 50/50 M/F speakers was met. One of the most notable presenters was: THS alum / LPGA golf pro Danielle Ammaccapani.

In 1989 when diagnosed and treated for **breast cancer**, I decided to focus my energies on advocacy and fundraising. I created and organized an event on **Mother's Day 1990** at the **AZ State Capitol**. With permission secured, I invited a Native American woman to offer a blessing, the Trinidad Calypso Band to perform, a candlelight vigil. I bought a twin-size pink bed sheet for people to sign (as a memorial) which my daughter Pamela and I presented to then **US Senator Dennis DeConcini** at his Phoenix office. About 80 attended this event. This was my part of a national grassroots movement which formed the **National Breast Cancer Coalition**.

The following year, as part of the **National Breast Cancer Coalition**, I went to DC and met with members of the US Congress to request funding for breast cancer research; most notable the appropriation of over \$100 million dollars from the US Dept of Defense budget. Which they did. Our guest speaker was **Dr Susan Love**. Because of my advocacy efforts, I was appointed to the National Breast Cancer Review Committee to review applications for federal grants for breast cancer research. The identification of the BRCA1 gene was a direct result of this. BTW: **Bosom Buddies**, a local breast cancer support group, was the first beneficiary of the first *Getting Our Just Desserts* event in 2000. For

my advocacy efforts, I was awarded the **Ribbon of Hope** (platinum and pink sapphires) designed by Coffin & Trout Jewelers and presented to me at the **Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure 2000**. Along with our daughter Pamela, I have participated in 10 of these events.

In 1991 I invited then US Congresswoman **Bella Abzug** from NY to speak at event which I created: **Politics of the Environment / Eco-Feminism**. To this end, I collaborated again with UN Association of Phoenix (of which I was President), the Phoenix City Club (of which I was a member) and Mary Lou B managing editor of the Arizona Business Gazette

I then secured a free R/T on then America West Airlines and a free room at the AZ Biltmore (thanks to the AZ Hotel Assn). **Western Savings** (in the now National Bank of AZ location) agreed to host the event in their conference room (free). Media coverage was excellent. The SRO crowd was thrilled, and Bella was impressed. We opened the event with a Native Blessing and a musical performance about saving the environment.

The event was a precursor to the **UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED)** in Rio de Janeiro Brazil (1992) which I attended with our daughter, Pamela. My article on this event was published in **Today's Arizona Woman** and a **Russian feminist magazine** (in Russian and English).

Also prior to the event (in 1990), I created and organized a (free) **Public Forum on the Environment** which was held at the **Maricopa County Council Chambers**. It featured over 40 local environmental groups (representative had 2 min each) with then **Phoenix Mayor Terry Goddard** and **Dino DeConcini** as presenters. The issues ranged from environmental sustainability to planned parenthood. **SRP** video-taped the event (gratis).

In 1991, for the celebration of the **115th anniversary of McCall's Magazine**, a request was made for squares which would be sewn together and made into a large quilt, honoring women and entitled Symbols of Women in the Twentieth Century. My entry, dedicated to former NY **Congresswoman Bella Abzug**, was accepted and became part of the quilt which hung in Gloria Steinem's office at **MS. Magazine**.

In 2000 I published my first book, **Daughters of the American Dream** (in English and Italian) which included essays and brief bios of daughters of Italian immigrants (like me). After breaking even on the sale of the book, I decided that all remaining sales would directly benefit the scholarship fund for ASU students. The book, which is now out of print, can be downloaded for free on my website www.paulacullison.com There you will also find my published travel articles and photographs.

As an entrepreneur, I created and owned the **Scottsdale Education Center** 1989 – 1996 where I tutored over 350 students from **1st through 12th grades in Reading, Math, Study Skills, and SAT Prep**. During the tutoring sessions I played Baroque music (Bach, Mozart, Vivaldi) along with offering oatmeal cookies and herbal iced tea. At the end of the hour, the students could select a prize for their good work. I wrote numerous press releases and short articles on education and made the rounds at the 18 schools from which the students came (always leaving candy with my business card). In 1996, I decided to close the Scottsdale Education Center. Unknowingly, I let the Trade Name expire. Someone took the Scottsdale Education Center name without even a professional courtesy phone call. Yes, it was my fault, but a phone call would have been nice. That's life in the big city!

In 1996, I decided to **reclaim my Italian heritage** and to study in Italy. I contacted the **Italian Consul** in California to see if any language schools in Florence would grant me free tuition in exchange for my

writing an evaluation. **Studio Fiorentino** (now closed) located near the famous Cathedral and Baptistry made the offer which I accepted. I asked that the school find me a room to rent located nearby. Luckily, it was located in the same building as the school. I was a very serious student: 4 hours of class M-F and 4 hours of homework.

In one month, I was ready for the next phase of my trip and headed north to **Genoa** (stayed with a **SERVAS** host in the small mountain town of San Giuseppe di Cairo), **Verona** (stayed with the family of a friend), day trip to Venezia, with final stop in **Liguria** (stayed with a **SERVAS** host) where I had a 2-week **Volunteers for Peace project**. This was definitely a life changing experience. Having the ability to speak and understand a foreign language (especially the language of my ancestors) made this trip so memorable. Then and there I decided that I would return to Italy. Two years later I studied in **Venice** at the **Istituto Venezia** and then again in **2008** at three different language schools in **Sicily** (Taormina, Agrigento. Trapani) where I also found my father's birth home in Racalmuto.

For a while I did **consulting with non-profits** through the **Technical Assistance Program** (TAP) program hosted by St Luke's Charitable Trust (now **Vitalyst**). My focus was in helping small non-profits develop mission statements, press releases, fundraising letters, creating events, and board development. During this period, I also accepted **Public Relations contracts** with Desert Foothills Theater, AZ MusicFest, and the Sonoran Desert Chorale.

In **1998** I was offered a position as **executive director** of the **Arizona Chapter** of a medical foundation. My job was to gain media coverage and to raise funds. I stayed for four years. Our main fundraising event was Flavor of Phoenix, a fabulous gourmet dinner which featured 24 of the best chefs in Arizona – generally representing the finest resort properties and restaurants. Some were James Beard award winners. For the event, each chef was assigned a table of 12 which they personally and professionally decorated. Each chef's menu (with accompanying wines) was different. This event made me realize how hard they work. I gained a tremendous amount of respect for chefs.

I noticed that of the 24 chefs who participated in our event only 1 was female. At a meeting, I brought this to their attention. The male chefs all concurred that they all had female chefs in their respective kitchens. I announced that I would create an event for these female chefs and that they would have them participate in the event. In this way, the public could see them; heretofore they had been 'invisible'. As they were **all pastry chefs**, I needed to create a catchy title for an event. And so, in the Fall of 2000, **Getting Our Just Desserts** (Trade Named) was born. In no time, word was out and I had a list of female chefs wanting to participate. I learned from **Gourmet Magazine** (which featured the event) that it was the **largest female chef event of its kind in the US** (maybe the world) WOW!!! **The Orange Tree Resort** hosted the event, and their pastry chef was the featured chef. We had room for **24 female chefs** and 2 wine distributors along the perimeter of the **ballroom**. Our **silent auction** was set up in the foyer. Getting Our Just Desserts was an awesome event – video is on the azwp.org website.

It was obvious that the need for recognition of women in the culinary field was great; and so, I created another event which focused on female restaurateurs, sous chefs and caterers. I called it **Wine, Women and Jazz** (Trade Named). It too generated a huge amount of interest and support. The jazz community was most supportive, and we featured several female jazz vocalists and accompanying musicians. That is not to say that the work involved wasn't also huge. Events are very labor intensive. With each event, my goal was to get as many chefs on TV, radio and in the press, as possible. I wanted each one to

receive recognition. **The Media loved them!** At first, a different charity received all of the event proceeds.

In 2002 I formed the **Arizona Women's Partnership** as the all-volunteer non-profit and **beneficiary** of these events. After five years of juggling both, I transferred the **Getting Our Just Desserts** event to C-CAP Careers through Culinary Arts Program for their scholarships. **Wine, Women and Jazz** which was hosted at the **Ritz Carlton** moved to the **AZ Culinary Institute**. (one year it was hosted at the Bashas Art Gallery in Chandler and once at the former Rio Restaurant in Scottsdale) It was a great opportunity for all involved. With the **Arizona Women's Partnership**, we awarded grants to small non-profits that assist underserved women and children at risk in Arizona. To date 2020, we have awarded over \$500,000 in grants to 75 charities that assist over 130,000 annually. Many of these charities are multi-year grant recipients. They address critical issues: *domestic violence, child abuse, ESL, Adult Ed, programs for youth at risk; youth leadership on the Navajo nation, foster children, refugee women, homelessness and hunger*. The majority of the funds we have generated are from private donations. Over the years, AZWP has benefitted from numerous **volunteers** who have helped in a variety of ways. Our motto: 'It all adds up'.

Writing press releases led to feature articles for the aforementioned. This enabled me to position my international travel articles which were subsequently **published** in several **local magazines and newspapers**, and online. These publications always requested **travel photographs**. As a direct result, I decided to create and offer **international travel photography exhibits** to the local community colleges, Arizona State University campuses, public libraries and local galleries. I became a member of the **Sonoran Arts League** in 2013. My main themed photography exhibits are: **Have Passport – Will Travel** (30 photographs of 20 countries); **Journey through the Emerald Isle** (12 photographs of Ireland); **To Cuba with Love** (14 photographs on canvas); **A South American Adventure** (15 photographs on canvas of 4 countries). All photographs are 16 X 20. I continue to submit my work for juried art shows. From 2013 to 2020, I have been in **over 65 exhibitions** and my international travel photography has been seen by over 100,000. I am grateful to both Hasan Y. and Levi E. for creating a website for my travel articles, photography, video, and book. www.paulacullison.com

In 2019, I was juried into an international art festival in **Ras Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates** which I attended. The festive and elaborate opening was hosted by Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al-Qasimi who personally greeted all of the participating artists. I was surprised to learn that he had visited Arizona. I am grateful to Taher D. for encouraging me to enter my photography and to Patrick O. who helped me with the submission requirements. Taher was a gracious and generous host. It was an awesome trip. I met so many wonderful people.

In **2007**, I searched for an e-card to send as a reminder to celebrate **Women's Equality Day**. When I didn't find one, I pursued American Greetings (and had my friends do so, as well) until they finally agreed to include W.E.D. It took about 2 years. I am mentioned in Gloria Feldt's Book No Excuses: 9 Ways Women Can Change How We Think About Power, as an example of how one woman can make a difference.

In **2008**, I co-chaired a dinner event for the **60th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights** which was held at the University Club in Phoenix. The program was entitled: **Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a Local & Global Perspective**. Our key-note speakers included ASU Law Prof Emeritus Paul Bender and (now) Senator Krysten Sinema. When a local college professor showed up

(unexpectedly) to the sold-out event with 10 of her students, the chef agreed to cut the chicken portions in half. We sat the students in the adjacent room with an audio feed. When organizing events, always be prepared for the unexpected.

As past **president of the United Nations Association of Phoenix**, I created a program for **UN World Health Day on Refugee Women's Health**. Knowing that Phoenix had one of the only two refugee women's clinics in the US, I approached the director, **Dr Crista Johnson, MD**. With agreement that she would speak, a program was created and held at **Phoenix College on April 12, 2011**. **Betsy Bayless**, then CEO of the Maricopa County Health System, welcomed the attendees. The event was co-sponsored by Phoenix College Model UN program - **Dr Albert Celozza**, coordinator. It was very well received by an SRO crowd. **The Phoenix Metro area is home to over 30,000 refugees.**

In 2015, I surveyed 12 women's organization to determine which was hosting an event **to celebrate the 95th anniversary of the 19th amendment**. When I learned that not one was doing so, I sprang into action (again). Having recently received an **AmAZing Woman award** from National Bank of AZ (2014-2015), I approached a female NB-AZ VP with my idea for organizing an event and the possibility of the bank allowing me to use their conference center at no cost. Once an agreement was made, I then invited the highest-ranking female judge, **Ninth Circuit Court Judge Mary Schroeder**, to be the guest speaker. The wheels were in motion and the event sold out within 10 days. I presented a brief history of the Suffrage Movement, the need for the Equal Right Amendment and for the US to ratify the **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**. I noted how the late Bella Abzug former Congresswoman from NY was instrumental in having the US Congress name, by resolution, August 26th as Women's Equality Day. My speech can be found on several blogs including **Gloria Feldt's Take the Lead**.

That year (2015), I was invited to participate in the first event for **EmpoweredPhXX** - a project to assist and encourage entrepreneurial businesswomen. It was presented by ASU at SkySong. As a result, I wrote and published a short practical article entitled **Biz Wisdom**. Enabling the success of others is central to my belief system. This project has evolved into Money Month AZ for businesswomen. Since I see philanthropy as an integral part of one's business plan, I presented a session on **Cause Marketing**, using the Arizona Women's Partnership as a model for the impact of grass roots support.

While volunteering for the **OBAMA** campaigns here in Phoenix, I met **Dolores Huerta** Co-Founder of **United Farm Workers**. What a nice surprise! Knowing that women and young children were working the agricultural field in unimaginable conditions, she was drawn to help. I told her about my experiences with UFW. Back in the Day (1972) – before moving to AZ – I volunteered to help Caesar Chavez as he worked to form the United Farm Workers. My task was to monitor the grape and lettuce crates at the local supermarkets to see if they were union picked. Additionally (then - with preschooler in tow), I stood on the street corners of Brooklyn and handed out UFW literature, as well. Dolores was just charming, as she listened to my story. She is so passionate about her **Huerta Foundation**.

My **political activism continues** with calls, emails to and meetings with our local and Congressional representatives; demonstrations which are mostly focused on women's right, education, health care, social justice, and most recently on the 2020 Presidential campaign of Joe Biden, as well as Ossoff and Warnock in GA.

In 2019, I decided to approach **Laurene Austin Marketing Director of the Herberger Theater Center** with a proposal for an all-female art exhibition to celebrate the Centennial of the 19th

Amendment. The idea was accepted and approved. I called the exhibition **In Celebration of Women** with the theme being women. For this event, I was named Guest Curator and I selected a culturally diverse jury of women involved in the ARTS (Black, Hispanic, Native, Asian and Anglo). Since space was limited, **we selected 30 works:** one work from each of 30 female artists. The entertainment outside on the Herberger Plaza for the opening was culturally diverse and festive. **The opening On Friday, March 6, 2020 at 5pm** attracted over 500 (the largest number of attendees ever for the Herberger's art openings). We secured a proclamation from Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego (which I read) and a special poem from ASU Professor, Dr. Rosemarie Dombrowski, Poet Laureate of Phoenix. Laurene Austin, Billie Jo Herberger and I gave welcoming remarks. The event was attended by the Phoenix Fire Chief Kara Kalkbrunner and Phoenix Chief of Police Jeri Williams. A number of works were sold. **The Arizona Women's Partnership was the featured non-profit.** Tim handled our information table and display outside on the Plaza where he answered questions.

The **In Celebration of Women** exhibit was to have remained at the Herberger for two months and then move to the Arizona Capitol Museum with another opening on May 14th. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis hit, and the buildings were closed. The Herberger graciously placed the entire In Celebration of Women exhibit online and it remained virtual until October 10th. We are still hopeful that the exhibit will be featured at the **Arizona Capitol Museum in 2021.**

In the meantime, I had posted several requests for **Social Media volunteers**; one of whom created a video of these art works and the opening event. It can be found on the Arizona Women's Partnership website azwp.org; another volunteer created Faces of Hope II which features our grant recipient charities, also on the AZWP website. www.azwp.org two volunteers continue to help with postings on our social media sites. I wrote **profile articles on each of our five new AZWP volunteers** and they have been published in our local newspaper, **Moon Valley Tattler** and online via our social media sites: facebook, instagram, LinkedIn and twitter.

Our support and **love for the visual and performing arts** continues. About five years ago Tim and I became members of **SeatJunky, House Seats, and Vettix.** They all offer free tickets for a variety of performing arts events; e.g., Phoenix Symphony, Ballet Arizona, AZ MusicFest, Phoenix Theater, AZ Opera, etc. Since the number of tickets is limited, one has to respond quickly. We are fast, so we have attended many performances. When my photography is selected for art exhibits at the **Herberger Theater Gallery**, I am also offered complimentary tickets to theater, dance and musical productions. Tim and I attend performances weekly, most times twice a week, during the season September to May.

Over the years, I have been acknowledged for my work with awards and recognition which I hope will inspire others; most notably: YWCA Leadership award for Advocacy 2019 / BMO Harris Bank - Women of Service Award 2019 / Martha K. Rothman Lifetime Achievement Award – Child and Family Resources 2017 / Phoenix Women's Commission 2015 / AmAZing Woman Honoree 2014 -2015 by National Bank of AZ and the Phoenix Suns / Junior League of Phoenix 2015 / Woman of Scottsdale - Woman of the Year 2009 / Macy's Heart and Sole Award 2000 / Susan G. Komen Ribbon of Hope 2000 / Susan B. Anthony Award 1999 / IMPACT for Enterprising Women 1997 /Finalist (top 10) for Athena Award 1997 / AIESEC 1996 / Finalist for Valley Leadership Award 1986 / ZONTA 1985 / Phoenix Indian Center Award 1985 / International Women in Leadership League 1985.

On a Final Note: I believe that with a clear vision, direction, perseverance, determination and support, great things can happen. A long-time (50 years) advocate of women, peace and social justice issues, I continue to dedicate my time and talents in these areas. It is my life's passion.

I am deeply grateful to those who nominated me and to those who sought fit to recognize my efforts on behalf of women and social justice. Therefore, I believe what the philosopher Gibran said: *when you give of yourself, you truly give.*

Paula: a Girl from Brooklyn

The Early Years

Italian Passport 1919: Paolo Pace with 3 of his 4 children Crocifissa (my mother), Mariano, and Angela. Maria had her own passport because of her age.



Constance Pace (10-20-1907) and Angelo Giangreco (03-06-1902)

were married on September 7, 1941 at St Aloysius Church 382 Onderdonk Av Ridgewood, NY





Paula Giangreco (born 09-21-1942) Mom sewed all of our clothes.



My father's hobby of photography is noted. He converted a closet into a darkroom. We smiled a great deal.



At Knickerbocker Park (now Maria Hernandez Park) PS 123 is in the background.

Birthday party with my siblings: Vincent and Nancy (cake: Circo's bakery / extra candle for good luck)



I attended P.S. 123 from K through 4th Grade - Mrs. Coleman was my 1st Grade teacher - 100 Irving Ave Brooklyn
(top Row second from the left)



I attended St. Aloysius School from 5th through 8th Grade; was Co-Pres of 8th Grade Class - received the Math Award.



Bishop McDonnell Memorial HS Class of 1960 260 Eastern Parkway Brooklyn, NY Senior Trip to D.C.
Intense academic program: 3 yrs Latin, 2yrs foreign language, advanced Math, etc.
Taught by five orders of nuns: Charity, Mercy, Dominican, Josephites, Daughters of Wisdom



Garity Knights Football Team Cheerleaders – 2nd from right.
The Pop Warner team was So-So, but we won the Cheerleading competitions 1957, 1958, 1959.
<http://garity-knights.org/page4/page4.html>



High School



College

PROM



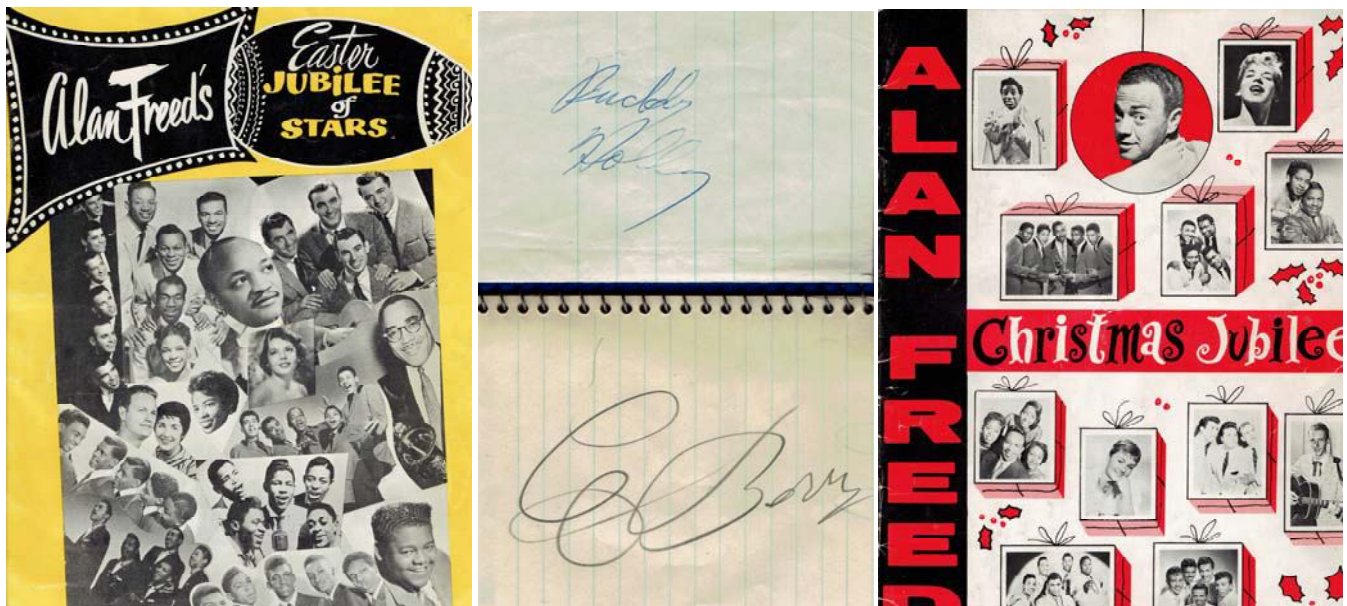
Grover Cleveland H.S. Prom 1959 with Denis K at Biltmore Hotel NYC

PROM



**Bishop McDonnell Memorial H.S. Prom 1960 - held at the St George Hotel in Brooklyn Heights.
After Prom at the Copacabana in NYC with Duke F.**

My mother made my lovely prom dresses from silk organza. I still have both dresses.



Alan Freed's Rock and Roll Shows @ Brooklyn Paramount

Autographs: Buddy Holly and Chuck Berry

FAMILY SECTION

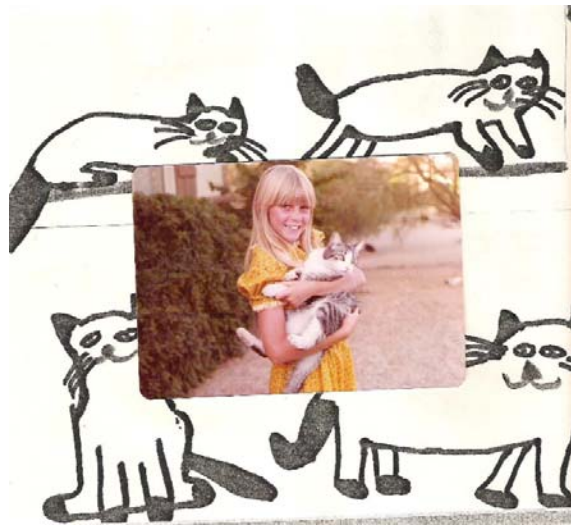


Wedding on Oct 7, 1967 at St Patrick's Cathedral NYC - Reception Fifth Ave Hotel (now co-ops)



Gregory - March 14, 1969 + Pamela Jane - Dec 27, 1972 at St Vincent's Hospital NYC (Dr Anne Kalosh)





Kitty Cullison 1981 – 1999 - Art by Pamela



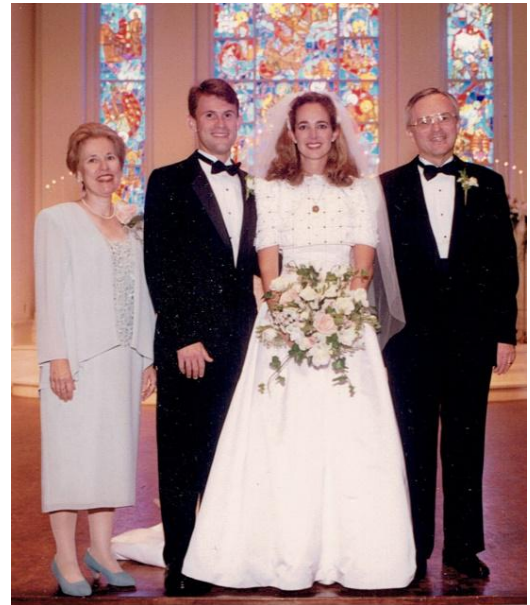
**Greg: Eagle Scout plus 3 Palms and Order of the Arrow + Boys State +
Pam: Over 36 GS Badges and Patches + Anytown USA +**



Lettering for Cross Country / Track Thunderbird High School - Phoenix



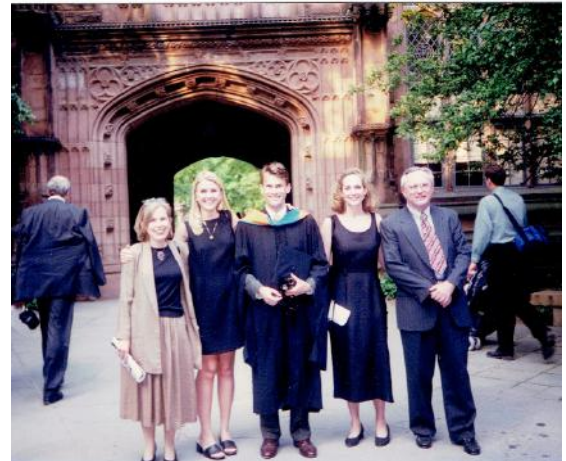
13058 N Surrey Circle Phoenix, AZ Greg Claremont McKenna Class of 1990 + Phi Beta Kappa



Greg and Christina Ogden Wedding - September 3, 1994 in Louisville, KY



Pamela – U of A Class of 1995



Greg: Princeton University Graduate degree Class of 1999



Greg & Christina - new parents of Isadora 12-24-08

Pamela, Isadora, and I all wore that dress (pictured) made by my mother.



Pam and Hector Gill wedding March 18, 2011 - Moon Valley Country Club Phoenix, AZ



Family Portrait - October 2016

Work - Major Projects - Events - Oh, the People You'll Meet



Mayor Goddard Phoenix Women's Commission – US Congresswomen: Shirley Chisholm and Bella Abzug



Getting Our Just Desserts with 24 female chefs - AZ Women's Partnership FUNdraiser



Wine Women & Jazz FUNdraiser for AZWP



Susan G. Koman Race for the Cure

Featuring **JAZZ** vocalists: Margo Reed, Delphine Cortez, Blaise Lantana
with Joel Robin on Piano and Dwight Kilian on Bass



**Women of Scottsdale - Women of the Year with Honorable SCOTUS Sandra Day O'Connor;
Linda Herold, founder of WoS, nominated me for several awards (Thank You!)**



Gloria Steinem



Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi



Pamela(daughter)Claire Sargent



**Prof Albert Celozza, PhD and Crista Johnson-Agbakwu, MD - World Health Day event at Phoenix College
Judge Mary Schroder and Dr Gladys McGarey, MD - 95th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment event**





Author Amy Tan



Author Lisa See



writing article on Home-Office Reorganizing



Rally for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) AZ State Capitol



Gabby Giffords & Senator Mark Kelly



Leon Sullivan - anti-Apartheid advocate

Travels - *Travel Photography Exhibits – Travel Writing



***Have Passport – Will Travel *Journey through the Emerald Isle *South American Adventure *To Cuba with Love**



La Dolce Vita – Dolomites - Italian Alps

Ice Bar - Stockholm, Sweden

Rotorua, New Zealand



Frogner Park Oslo, Norway

Machu Picchu, Peru

Check Point Charlie - Berlin, Germany



Champagne - France Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi RAK UAE

Brooklyn Bridge NYC

GUEST CURATOR
PAULA CULLISON

IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN

HERBERGER ART GALLERY
HERBERGERTHEATER.ORG

CELEBRATING THE
100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE
19TH AMENDMENT WHICH GAVE
WOMEN THE RIGHT TO VOTE

AN EXHIBIT FEATURING
THE WORK OF
30 ARIZONA
FEMALE ARTISTS

ON DISPLAY AT HERBERGER ART GALLERY
MARCH 6 - APRIL 26
ON DISPLAY AT ARIZONA CAPITOL MUSEUM
MAY 14 - SEPTEMBER 30

