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From: Glenn Gruber & Sharon Clark <sca17@pacbell.net>
Sent: Friday, December 11, 2020 8:16 AM
To: Glenn Gruber Sharon Clark
Subject: Fwd: The Life of Sharon Clark

Sharon Leigh

Clark, PhD

July 17, 1932 - September 24, 2020



On September 24, Glenn lost the love of his life!

Sharon and Glenn had an adventure together for forty six years. It was a match that few would have predicted would have lasted this long...or at all. But it did last, with a burning passion, gentle and complete caring, and a deep, deep love.

When her mother died when Sharon was 10 months old, she went to live with her grandparents in Northern Maine. When she was eight, in 1940, her grandmother died and four years later, in 1944, her grandfather died. Not the best start for a little girl.

But at age 12 she went to live with her Aunt Hope, her mother's older sister, where she instantly had a new brother and sister, Eldwin (Windy) a year older and Faith, two years younger.

Sharon graduated from HS in 1949 and one month later unbeknownst to her of course, her future husband was born in New Jersey. She went on to study at the University of Maine, starting as a Home Economics major but switching to Physical Education because that's where the boys were!

In addition to her studies, Sharon played the trombone in the marching band and was a cheerleader too.

In 1953 she was a runner-up in the Miss Maine beauty pageant. Her lovely dress is still displayed on a mannequin in their spare bedroom.

Short of cash to complete her degree, Sharon was offered a teaching position in Livermore Falls, Maine. She boarded that year and saved enough to return to the University and graduate in 1955. She went on to teach physical education and coach the basketball team and ski team in Belfast, Maine and Skowhegan, Maine where she has kept in touch with many of her students.

Always the adventurer, Sharon applied to teach for the Department of Defense Overseas Schools and in the Fall of 1959 found herself on a ship bound for Germany where she taught physical education and one semester of auto mechanics at Wurzburg American HS. She had her auto mechanic students take her VW bug apart and put back together...but there was one part left over she always said (she is certain that one of the students brought an extra part).

After Wurzburg, Sharon took assignments in Orleans, France and a year at Paris American HS. This was followed in 1963 with an assignment in Fukuoka, Japan.

As those who know her would imagine, Sharon took full advantage of her time in Europe. Her first weekend in Germany she and two other teachers drove to Vienna for the weekend. She did trips like that again and again during her four years in Europe.

In 1960 she attended the Olympic Games in Rome staying at the Vatican in a very sparse room as there were few affordable accommodations.

One summer she and two friends took her VW bug and camped all over Europe including as far north as the Arctic Circle in Norway, putting up a heavy canvas tent each night. More than once over the years they have looked at the slides of that fabulous trip.

During her time in Asia, she climbed Mt. Fuji in Japan, traveled to India, Nepal and Vietnam.

Upon her return to the States in 1964, Sharon lived with her brother and sister-in-law and their four children in Ann Arbor, Michigan while her brother completed his PhD in mathematics. Sharon taught physical education at McDuffy School and since there were always three adults in the home, there was always one adult to stay home with the kids.

The next year she enrolled at Springfield College in Massachusetts and earned a Masters Degree in Psychology. During that year, 1965, Sharon met Lilyan Wright at the National Physical Education Convention. Lilyan was teaching at Trenton State College. They struck up a fast friendship which led to her applying for and accepting a teaching position at Trenton State College, now The College of New Jersey.

At Trenton State, Sharon taught in the Health and Physical Education Department, teaching the dance classes required of all physical education majors. Among the classes she taught were, Movement and Music, Folk Dance and Social Dance. Then in 1968, unbeknownst to her or him, Sharon met her future husband (the one born in 1949) at the Saturday class that Linda, a Physical Education major, attended. Glenn was visiting Linda, his girlfriend, that weekend and accompanied her to the class. Glenn transferred to Trenton State into the Health and Physical Education Department the next year to be close to Linda.

When Linda dumped Glenn during his junior year at Trenton State, he sought out Miss Clark to talk about it. She counseled him and he survived the breakup.

All H & PE majors, men and women, were required to take at least one dance course that Sharon taught each year. As a result, every major knew Sharon very well and with her outgoing personality, was very popular.

During the TSC years, Sharon enrolled at NYU and began studies for her doctorate in Dance Anthropology. She completed her dissertation, **Rock Dances of the 60's** in 1973 and was awarded a PhD. That research spawned a one hour PBS New Jersey TV episode on the show **Caught in the Act**, a program called **Dance 1960 - 1970**. She also co-authored the book **Modern Dance Fundamentals** which was used as a text in dance programs around the country.

At the close of the school year in 1972, Sharon accepted a teaching position as Head of the Dance Department at George Washington University in Washington DC, where she eventually bought an apartment at the Watergate as it was close to her office and dance studio. This was, as you may remember, during the Nixon years and after the famous Watergate break-in. Her neighbors were, for example, Helen and Arthur Burns, the latter being the then Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and next door neighbor Pat Hillings who was the Congressional Representative from Whittier, California, that took Nixon's place when Nixon became Vice President.

Being a neighbor to Pat Hillings, Sharon was invited to many high profile parties next door. She was also very popular with old friends from her Trenton State days as everyone wanted to visit the famous Watergate.

In 1974, Glenn... remember him, was visiting friends he knew from his grad school days at the University of Connecticut who were living in the DC area. While in DC he contacted Dr. Clark to visit and of course to see the Watergate.

The two had kept in touch over the years as many former students did with Sharon. She had written recommendations for Glenn for grad school and for subsequent teaching positions. On that fateful Saturday in May, Glenn arrived at the Watergate East lobby and after the desk clerk called Sharon to approve, let him in to visit apartment 409N.

The ride up the elevator was uneventful as was the walk down the hall to Sharon's apartment. There she opened the door and before Glenn could even say hello, Sharon spoke those famous words to him...**"I have given up smoking and drinking, but taken up sex, so if you are planning to spend the night, you will be sleeping with me"**.

Thus began a lifelong passionate and torrid love affair.

Soon, Glenn and Sharon were tearing up the Eastern Air Lines shuttle between NYC and Washington. That summer of 1974 they embarked on a cross country camping trip where Sharon always said she fell in love with Glenn somewhere in Colorado while sitting next to him in the passenger seat of his 1959 Chevy panel truck camper.

During the next two years the couple saw each other as much as possible. Glenn drove to Washington for many weekends and Sharon flew to New York to stay with Glenn, sometimes barely making an early morning flight back to DC in order to make it to her class on time.

They enjoyed visiting the many museums and cultural venues in the Nation's Capital. On one afternoon they were returning to the Watergate and while approaching the lobby of Watergate East, Sharon spotted her neighbors Helen and Arthur Burns. They walked over to them and introduced Glenn to Helen and Arthur, whereby Arthur turned to Glenn and said, "**My, you have a young looking mother**". A swift elbow to Arthur's mid section was quickly thrown by Helen! That would not be the last time such a statement would be made by someone, but it never bothered Sharon or Glenn.

In 1976 NYC ran out of money and since Glenn did not have tenure at York College of the City University of New York, he was let go. Glenn asked Sharon if she wanted to go to California with him to live. She said "Yes" and the next adventure began.

Like the Grapes of Wrath, Sharon and Glenn began their trek to Southern California with Sharon driving her 1967 Pontiac LeMans convertible along with her 17 year old cat, Elizabeth Mekong Clark III, and Glenn in the brown '59 Chevy panel truck pulling a very heavy 1950 teardrop trailer dubbed "The Mushroom". Glenn built a large wooden box on top of the truck for their many belongings and a sign which read "California or Bust" much to the embarrassment of Sharon.

They arrived in Southern California in August, staying in their trailer in the Seal Beach backyard of Sharon's roommate from her teaching days in Paris, Lois Wilson, and her daughter Kim. They soon moved to a trailer park in Huntington Beach, California and eventually rented an apartment in San Gabriel, a mile from Glenn's new teaching assignment.

Over the next several years Sharon substitute taught, sold MCI Telecommunications, worked for Documented Vehicle Driver Systems, spent time as a corporate recruiter, and did market research.

In 1979 Sharon tried out for and became a contestant on the short lived Game Show, "**Whew**". She won \$25,680 in 22 minutes! She got all of the questions right except one and she only missed that one because she didn't hear the question correctly. With that money they paid off a few bills, bought a new Mercedes 240D that she picked up in Germany, made a down payment on a condo and started a business. The equivalent amount today would be \$200,000!

During the 1980's new rules required many companies to hire WBE's (Women Business Enterprises). Sharon formed her company, Sharon Clark Associates Inc., and secured a contract with the MetroRail project in Los Angeles, the subway and light rail system beginning to be planned at that time. She eventually had 25 employees who did document control for the large project.

She also had a contract with the Army Corps of Engineers running the public meetings required by environmental and public information laws.

One of her most interesting projects was the SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) contract she won with the US Navy to test water levels in giant jet fuel storage tanks in Bremerton, Washington. She secured both a Phase One and a Phase Two contract...which is rare! Not bad for a PE teacher...

From teaching physical education and dance with a PhD, to coordinating an advanced research project for the Navy, Sharon made a very successful transition from the academic world to the world of business!

During all this time Sharon and Glenn did some interesting international travel. They were early travelers to China back when most of the Chinese were still wearing Mao suits. They went on safari to Botswana and South Africa where one night in their remote camp an angry bull elephant almost took down their tent. All the while Sharon and Glenn stayed inside frightened to death but afraid to leave since the hippopotami were very near and active at night and said to be some of the most ferocious animals in the jungle.

Used to sleeping in the nude, Sharon and Glenn decided to put clothes on in the event that "Death by Elephant" occurred. They thought it might be more dignified to be found clothed.

They camped in Yosemite but also flew the Concord to London returning to New York on the Queen Elizabeth II. They stayed on a private island in Fiji but also ate hotdogs while watching her beloved Red Sox play at Fenway Park or Angel Stadium. They spent time horseback riding and working the cattle at the Hunewill Ranch in Bridgeport CA, and also cruising the Panama Canal on two different occasions. They visited Yellowstone National Park in winter and enjoyed a river cruise in 2017 from Budapest to Nuremberg.

There were many trips to her beloved Paris, other parts of France and of course Wurzburg, Germany. Upon landing in Europe, Sharon was always able to instantly recall and speak in French or German, much to the delight and amazement of Glenn.

One European trip involved travel to Sweden where Glenn was competing at the Masters Swimming World Championships. After the swim meet, niece Patti Clark Arnett arrived and the three traveled to Stockholm, Helsinki, Moscow, Berlin and Dresden.

During the 1990's, they spent one week a year for several years skiing at Snowmass Colorado, many times with Linda (remember Linda) and her third husband. Sharon was an excellent skier (she coached the high school ski team in the late '50s) and she loved the rest breaks they took for hot chocolate with those tiny little marshmallows.

And of course there were many visits to Sharon's beloved Pine Tree State of Maine. They were so fortunate to visit family in Portland and Bangor and in the far northern reaches of Presque Isle.

Everyone knows about the annual Pasadena Rose Parade. Sharon and Glenn had seats to the parade every year for 30 years. They also participated in the not so famous Do Dah Parade, also held in Pasadena for many years. The parade was born out of the dislike of the somewhat staid attitude of the Rose Parade officials not allowing their parade on a Sunday. So the first Do Dah Parade was of course, held on a Sunday. Sharon not only took part, but was the leader of the group, "**Polyanna, the Polyester Princess of the Polyester People of Pasadena**".

Having been raised to be civic minded, Sharon volunteered in the City of Pasadena. She was President of their condominium association, a member of the Housing Mediation Board, and chaired the Tri-Cities (Pasadena, Glendale, Burbank) Transportation Commission. She was a member of Women at Work, National Association of Women Business Owners (she was

nominated for Woman Business Owner of the Year in 1990) and Daughters of the American Revolution (William Bradford, the first Governor of the Plymouth Colony who came to our shores on the Mayflower is a relative).

She frequently told the story of the day she went to a breakfast meeting at a local restaurant and discovered that she could have been at any one of three meetings taking place at the same time in the restaurant.

In July of 2002 they celebrated Sharon's 70th birthday with a lovely stay at The Carlyle in NYC, where she met and talked with one of her favorite musicians, Bobby Short and also attended a Red Sox /Yankee game at Yankee Stadium.

One year later, in 2003, niece Cheryl, the chef from Maine, created one of the most scrumptious meals ever for a group of 30 family and friends to celebrate Sharon's 71st birthday. The meal had eight courses including fiddleheads, mussels, carrot & orange soup, chicken breast with lobster tails, and leg of lamb. It took until 2004 to recuperate!

In 2005 Sharon was diagnosed with lung cancer. She had surgery to remove the upper part of her right lung. She did not have chemotherapy so she kept her beautiful long tresses. Then, after pinpoint radiation at UCLA Medical Center, Sharon had twice yearly CT scans to monitor the tumors.

Not knowing what the future would bring, Glenn retired in 2006 and the couple enjoyed eight spectacular cruises over the next 15 years.

In 2017, in typical Sharon Clark style, no tumors were spotted during the semi-annual scans. In fact, for the next three years no tumors were found. With her positive attitude and maybe some good wine and delicious meals, Sharon beat lung cancer!

In her middle and late eighties, although slowed down a bit ("finally" said Glenn who had tried to keep up with her since 1974) Sharon volunteered at the Boys Republic Thrift Shop and later at the Huntington Hospital, Huntington Collection where she priced the jewelry for sale at the shop. Jewelry sales were consistently \$4,000 a month when Sharon "did the jewelry".

During the Covid epidemic and with her compromised lungs and immune system, Sharon and Glenn stayed in lock down. Unlike many younger folks, this was not a devastating problem since their lives in lock down were not very different than in pre-pandemic times.

In May of 2020 Sharon was experiencing some stomach upset and it was determined that a CT scan was appropriate. Glenn got Sharon into the car and off to the hospital. The scan was done but nothing was found, but just like back in 1974 when they greeted Helen and Arthur Burns in front of the Watergate, when the tech called Glenn into the CT scan room to get Sharon, the tech said, "**Sharon, your son is here**". They looked at each other and smiled, and told the tech that, "**No, I am her husband of 44 years**". They had a good laugh about that on the way home.

In March of 2020, it became clear that at 88, Sharon's body was slowly starting to shut down. She spent more and more time only in bed and eating less and less.

In late September, as her final days approached, Sharon was in home hospice with a loving and caring group of medical professionals giving her amazing care. Thank you Heart2Heart Hospice Care.

And finally, over these many years, there was not a day that went by when Sharon and Glenn did not say, "Lucky us!" Lucky to have the upbringing they had, lucky to have the opportunities they had, lucky to have the families and family support they had, lucky to have the friends they had, but most of all, lucky to have each other and to have had a fantastic journey and an extraordinary life together.

Glenn is so very thankful for his time with Princess Sharon and for a life well lived and lived to the fullest! He remains her loving and devoted husband.

The link below is from the February 2012 issue of Arroyo Magazine. A Magazine of Pasadena, California. (Most of the facts are accurate.) GG

[Portrait of a Marriage](#)

Anyone wishing to donate to one of Sharon's favorite charities in her name should consider the following:

Heifer.org HEIFER USA supports small-scale US farmers to serve local communities in need.

safeMaine.org SAFE helps fund abortions for Mainers who cannot pay the full costs.