

Mrs. Cook (Cookie), gave me a poem, "The White Magnolia Tree", when I was 16. I had no idea that it would live with me and be repeated over and over again. My favorite lines are: "There is so little the serious heart requires: friends, faith, a window open to the world, pride in work well done, and strength to live in a world at war and still maintain the heart's on private peace." And, truly, these are the things in my life that have made all the difference!

John and Kitty Norwood had 5 children. I was second born and their only daughter. The only sister I ever had was my first cousin, Margie Gorman, Taylor. The highlights of my childhood were shared with her—as many highlights still are. My brothers, Joe David, Randy, Thomas Dewey, and Ronnie still remain my close friends. And, we all agree that the greatest gift our parents gave us was their love for each other. They showed us how to live in a loving relationship.

I graduated from Corsicana High School in 1959. I had wonderful friends, good grades and lots of fun there. When I graduated, I had a full scholarship to attend Navarro Junior College where I was a cheerleader and on the drill team. Then I attended The University of North Texas where I made good grades, was a Chi Omega and was on the university debate team.

All my life I have had a yearning to travel. My real travels started when I graduated from college early, taught high school in West Texas, borrowed some money and traveled with two friends for three months all over Europe. We traveled by train, plane and even hitch-hiked some. What an adventure that summer gave us!!

On my return I resumed my teaching in West Texas where I fell in love with country and Western music and learned to dance the two-step and waltz. When I returned to Corsicana singing that country music, my parents did not recognize me. But West Texas gave me my first husband, Homer Kern. He was responsible for my shedding my Texas Provincialism. He was a brilliant philosopher, poet, and artist. After we both received our Masters Degree from Texas Tech University, we moved to California. After living there for 2 years, we sold everything we owned and moved abroad. Homer had a burning quest to know the world. We lived under two dictators: Generalissimo Franco in Spain and Papadopoulos in Greece. We studied the language, art, and culture and we traveled.

In our third year abroad, we moved to Paris, My Paris!! My yearning for art was finally realized. Oh! How I adored that city! This was in the late 60's and Paris was still recovering from the war. Paris was truly the beating heart of the art world! Homer had a wonderful studio in the city and we became integrated into the art community. After almost a year in Paris, I went home to see my family and during that visit, I was offered a teaching fellowship to get my Ph.D. at the University of North Texas. I asked, "Why would I leave my Paris?" When I asked Homer, he said, "You are truly ready to define yourself in your own world now, so go for it!" Which I

did. And, it was the beginning of my academic career and the end of a lovely marriage. I will always be grateful to Homer for the growth-provoking gifts of those years. Homer and I never lived together again. He was in Sierra Leon, East Africa, when I sent him divorce papers two years later.

My first college teaching position was at The University of Texas at Tyler where I joyfully taught for 25 years. Early in that tenure, I met and married Chris Freeman, my dentist. Where Homer was a serious scholar and philosopher, Chris was playful and fun. We were married for 16 years. We checked books out of the library and found structures that were being torn down. We took a beaded ceiling out of an old school house and used it on walls, got beams out of an old church and marble walls out of an old bank for some of our floors. We used heart pine floors from an old school for some of our living room floors, etc. That was hard, hard work and tons of fun! Good friends from Edom who had done the same thing helped us when we needed it. It turned out to be beautiful and many people wanted to see this house made from recycled materials.

The primary subjects I taught at the university were Interpersonal Communication and Intercultural Communication. U.T. Tyler was an upper division University at that time and I taught primarily graduate courses. It was my continuing lust for travel that caused my marriage with Chris to fall apart. During my tenure at the University, I traveled to Europe, Morocco, India, Nepal, and Indonesia. We divorced in 1990.

In 1989, I was a Fulbright Scholar in Yugoslavia. My roommate on that tour was a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist, Sherry Richiardi. When the war broke out there, in 1991, she called me in the middle of the night screaming that we had to get into Croatia and find out what was really going on there! News reporters were not telling the human side of the story. That started a whole new chapter of my life. For the next two years, Sherry and I went back again and again to the battlefronts of that war between Croatia and Serbia. I believe that my ignorance kept me fearless of the mortar and artillery firing, the machine gun blasts. In fact, we called ourselves "frontline junkies" as we realized that we felt that "nothing was going on" unless we were out there in the trenches with the soldiers. We went to get information about the human side of the war and where better to find the real price being paid for freedom than out with the Croatian soldier who was an ordinary person defending his village, his home and family. I refused to return to the battlefronts when I could no longer tell the good guys from the bad ones. But, the war had made its mark on my life! I would forever be changed by it.

But, life goes on. I was teaching my classes and carrying on there for a while. Then I took one year's leave of absence to help teach management skills to women in the oil industry. That was a deliciously interesting year. After that, I was asked by the Canadian military to teach their soldiers about being peacekeepers. Actually, I

never really got to do that as they ended up not being very well organized. But, I got to live in the wonderful city of Toronto for about 8 months. Loved it!

Then, on one of my many skiing trips to Crested Butte, Colorado, I met Henry Gallin. He had a home in Crested Butte, but lived and worked in Manhattan. After knowing each other for about three years, we decided to get married. Henry was the joy of my life, a wonderful man who gave me a truly beautiful life. We married in 1994, we both retired and moved to his home in Colorado. Henry had a plane. We lived on a ranch outside of Crested Butte and also had a home in Denver, an apartment in New York City and a home in Scottsdale, Arizona. I was at last free to pursue my interest in art. I attended The Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design in Denver and studied painting at The Denver Art League.

But, little by little we simplified our lives by selling the plane and all but two homes. We kept Denver and Scottsdale, then only Scottsdale. I became very active in Scottsdale Artist School where I have taken many classes by very well-known artists. Margie and I try to take a class at Scottsdale Artists School at least once a year. We are known as “the cousins”.

During our years together, Henry and I traveled the world extensively. We went to Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Burma, etc. My favorite was our African Safari. We were in Tanzania during the great Serengeti migration. We traveled from one end of Africa to the other. What an amazing experience!! Henry gave me 22 of the best years of my life. I am grateful to him for so many wonderful things. He had an awful stroke and died on March 23, 2015.

And my charmed life continues today. A mutual friend introduced Larry Wilson and me. Our friend told me that Larry was a good dancer and a great cook. That sounded right to me!! We became very good friends before discovering we had fallen in love. We were together for 3 years before getting married in October 2019. Yes, he is my 4th husband! And, a wonderful husband he is!! We have two homes: one in Phoenix and one in Prescott, in the Mountains. I have an art studio in each home. We did a lot of travelling before the Pandemic. And, honestly, I don't know what I would have done without Larry these last two years!

I do continue to be grateful for the many blessings of my life, which have held my interest and continuously challenged me. I am reminded once again of Helen Deutch's poem, “The White Magnolia Tree”. That poem ends this way: “Dear Lord, thank you for the things I did not know before. Thank you for bread, a roof, and for one thing more. Thank you because I still can see the blooms on the White Magnolia Tree.”