

# CLASS OF 1969

———— 50TH REUNION ————



BENNINGTON COLLEGE



## **Class of 1969**

Dian Rains Allen	Rebecca J. Cook	Gwyneth Greenberg*
Kitty Fisk Ames	Jane Costello	Margo L. Grobel
Jane Angermeyer*	Virginia Creighton	Judy Grumbacher
Fran Antmann	Mary Crowe	Katharine (KK) Holabird Haggiag
Daphne Araujo	Victoria Davis	Sheela M. Harden
Margaret Auer	Meril Deane	Holly Harris*
Kristina Baer	Judith DeMarsh	Maren Hassinger
Daiva Balkus	Deirdre Dole	Olga Hauptman
Holly Barrett	Eleanor Isabel Druckman	Jean Holabird
Lisa Bassett	Cordelia Duke	Lucinda Hoyt
Margaret Beauchamp	Ellen Elbaz*	Susan G. Hurd
Janis Beaver	Laurie Eliscu	Annice Jacoby
Barbara Benary	Randi Farkas	Risa Jaroslow
Carole Bolsey	Sylvia Fischbach-Braden	Ann Johnson*
Susan Paris Borden	Claudia Davis Frain*	Lucia Johnson
Caroline Boynton	Susan Franzen	Rachel Kahn-Fogel
Beverly Brown	Evelyn K. Frieden	Gerry Kaplan*
Linda Feldman Brown	Kathryn Girard	Jane Kaufman
Carolyn Burns*	Barbara S. Glass	Karen Krieger
Alice Purnell Cannon	Susanne Elizabeth Fischer Glynn	Brenda Kydd
Janet Capron	Christine Graham	Lori A. Lawrence
Deborah Choate	Peta Gray	Liz Lerman
Erica Robin Clark	Barbara Ross Greenberg	Lauren Levey

Jean Liebenberg	Kathleen Norris	Deborah Shapiro Krasner
Rose Lockwood	Adrian Oktenberg*	Jacqueline J. Shatz
Camille Long	Anna Ormsby	Harry Whittaker Sheppard*
Sarah Longacre*	Margaret L. Parker	Wendy Shomer
Sara Lukinson	Debbie Toan Patton	Elinor Siegel*
Janis Lyon	Janie Paul	Starr Siegele
Judith MacDonald	Andrew Peck	Ronnie J. Steinberg
Michele Maddox	Wendy Perron	Barbara Sternberg
Louise Maffitt	Susan Phillis	Susan Stevens
Sarah Magee	Diana Elzey Pinover	Marsha Flum Taylor
Sharon Stockard Martin	Jane Platt	Ruth Morris Thomas
Merrilee McCabe	Sandra Popik	Ermetra A. Thomas
Ellen McCulloch-Lovell	Cheryl Aldridge Pounds*	Bonnie van Damme
Gay J. McDougall	Verna J. Rakofsky*	Emily Van Ness*
Elizabeth Meyers*	Sherry Stodola Rapport	Martha Weiss
Linda Mockler	Bonney Rega	Shelley L. White
Sally Mole	Diana Robbins*	Margaret (McCain) Wille
Diane Natko	Carol Jean Gerbracht Rose	Jane Willis
Joyce Nawy	Sylvia Savage	Sally L. Woelfel
Robyn A. Newhouse	Pauline Scanlon*	John C. Yeo
Marjorie Newman	Janis D. Schneider	Eda Zahl
Patricia Nice	Mary E. Seaman	
Elizabeth S. Niebling	John W. Secor	
Betsy Johnson Niederman	Doreen Seidler-Feller	

*\* Indicates deceased alumni*

## Dian Rains Allen, Ph.D., LMFT, LPCC

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My life since Bennington:

Currently, I am a practicing psychotherapist; my office five minutes from my home: a Dutch bungalow, powered by solar panels, with a deck viewing the Napa River and sunsets, and a pool. So grateful to be here and draw energy from the sun, at last.

Practicing psychotherapy is relationships of care with young adults to the elderly and couples. You can google for my website on Psychology Today: Dian Allen, Ph.D., in Vallejo CA.

Also, when I realized I had not planned for later income (aka retirement) about 10 years ago, I used some of the equity in a Marin home to buy some homes in Vallejo, when the unethical beasts on Wall Street caused the housing market prices to crash to rock bottom. So time is taken, now, in managing those properties. Getting a little weary of that role, while I had loved fixing up and maintaining those homes.

I raised two daughters in Marin, as a single mother. I have enjoyed the single status, while I get the down side, too. When my daughters were grown, I moved to Vallejo, which feels more grounded and diverse. I am a joyful grandmother of three and one more on the way.

At Bennington, I experienced my authentic creative self. I also had confidence that I had learned from some of the best teachers. I did art, writing, and watercolors for years. My most meaningful work was an inspired performance

piece of my original writing on the nuclear complex as a collective cultural dream. "A Blind Man on the Road to Compassion. He took a wrong turn." Bennington gave me the courage to hold tensions and conflicts in abeyance and grow. Bennington helped me to have the courage to not lose my soul into the materialistic culture, as best I could. I was further reinforced by getting my Master's at Pacifica Graduate Institute and Ph.D. at Saybrook.

One challenge is that I am too busy to clear my space for writings, whose ideas accumulate in a folder on the computer. My other challenge has been that one big idea bites the tail off another, unable to complete a self-contained





work that does not lead into another. I've only had 2 pieces published, which was in *Psychological Perspectives*, a Jungian periodical.

Another challenge is the pain of the climate crisis and what corporate materialism and unconsciousness are doing to life and planet. I believe individual responsibility in interconnected support is the path and see that chaotically forming. I believe we, people, need to mature emotionally, find peace in ourselves, and learn how to manage and soothe ourselves without projecting and blaming others, which comes from our own, unfaced inner conflicts and traumas. I am encouraged by the spread of the mindfulness meditation practice and mindfulness-based stress reduction (Jon Kabat-Zinn) throughout the healing professions and that the climate crisis is getting more air time on the airwaves (while not nearly enough).

One of my pictures is on a recent trip to Costa Rica and the rainforests, an environmentally conscious country. I loved being there.



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In many ways, I was not a great fit for Bennington College. I wasn't particularly creative, enjoyed structure, and competitive sports. I remember getting the equivalent of a C minus in modern dance on my first report card. A dance course seemed like the easiest way to get exercise. I was terrible!

Things began to look up in Stanley Edgar Hyman's Myth, Rit, & Lit class. He was approachable and encouraging and I loved the readings, particularly poetry. I became an English major, took all his courses, and Stanley ended up becoming my thesis advisor and good friend. When I told him I wanted to marry Charlie, my high school sweetheart, after junior year he suggested a senior year "in absentia". His only caveat was that Charlie be "kind". We married that summer and lived in Belmont (half way between our two schools—Harvard and Brandeis). I mailed Stanley thesis chapters and drove to Vermont once a month. Charlie and I got straight A's that year and have been married 51 years this June!



*Kitty and Charlie in New Zealand*

After teaching for three years we both entered graduate school—school of education (moi), and law school (Charlie)—at UVA in Charlottesville. Virginia was a happy place to live, study, and raise children. We had two little boys by the time we graduated and I learned a valuable lesson that people could be wonderful mothers and fathers and still be Republicans!

After graduate school and two clerkships—one on the First Circuit in Boston and a second on the Supreme Court in DC—we settled in Brookline, MA where we lived for almost 40 years. While Brookline has over 60,000 citizens, in many ways it is a small town—children walk to school, there is a town meeting, an independent movie theatre, little leagues, and soccer moms. Charlie and I immersed ourselves in the community. Two highlights were my election to the Brookline School Committee where I helped to lead a successful property tax override to build a new elementary school and Charlie's landslide victory to the Board of Selectmen. For

a brief period the local papers called us Brookline's power couple. In the middle of all this excitement I got pregnant with our fourth child—twelve years after our third! Parenthood in our 40s was exhausting and we fought the constant battle against video technology, but William brought us much joy and many, many young friends.

When Will was ten, we took a sabbatical year in Devon, England. Charlie apprenticed with a fine woodworker and I took a horticulture course sponsored by the RHS (Royal Horticulture Society) and have enjoyed digging a potager garden (combination of vegetables and flowers) ever since. In Devon, we learned that rainy weather should never stop anyone from “getting on with it”, and began our love/hate relationship with the game of golf while learning to play on some of the world's greatest links courses.

As I write this I realize that my life both at and after Bennington has been inextricably linked with Charlie's. We are joined at the hip. He is my life partner and best friend and we have been blessed with four wonderful children. Brooks, a civil rights lawyer; Jamie, an orthopedic surgeon; Elizabeth, a lawyer, a teacher, and now stay at home mom; and William, who's in business school after six years teaching in LA's inner city. They have produced eight delightful grandchildren.

Three years ago, we retired to a house and workshop we designed/built in Scituate. It's still a work in progress and leaving Brookline friends and family has been more difficult for me than for Charlie. We try to stay in touch with what's important and every Wednesday I drive to Brookline for school pick up.



*Some of Kitty's grandchildren heading out to trap lobsters;  
from left to right: Andrew, Ben, Noelia, Sam, Gigi*



*Kitty and granddaughter Mabel (age 2) in Scituate*



*Kitty's garden helpers*



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I've always been a traveler, searching for the extraordinary. At 32, I went to do field work as a photographer in a mining town 16,000 feet high in the Peruvian Andes and also, perhaps to discover myself in a different mirror. But I didn't know that at the time. That same impulse took me to the Arctic tundra, to First Nation settlements along the Mackenzie Delta, to Inuit communities on Baffin Island and then to a Mayan village on the shores of Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. Most of the work turned into exhibits and publications.

But my journey began much earlier when I left my family in the Bronx, immigrant parents who survived the Holocaust, to go to Bennington College. Although my father was a learned man, I was the first in my family to attend college.



*Yasmin*

Bennington opened doors to a world that I had never before imagined. Art had been my escape throughout my childhood, but at Bennington I found practicing artists, writers and kindred spirits. Over the years, Vicki Davis and Annice Jacoby have been very supportive of my work. I left Bennington with a deep love of art and literature that has stayed with me all my life, but I also left without a clue as to how I would make a living. I eventually realized that the loneliness of the empty canvas each day was too daunting, and I turned to photography to make art and connect with the world achieving a Doctor of Arts degree at NYU. As a Fulbright scholar, I went to Peru to recover the work of a deceased, unknown Peruvian photographer (whose work is now part of the History of Photography Collection at MOMA) and to continue my own photographic project in the same mining town where he had worked.

Even though I lived through the sixties, at Bennington I felt uninvolved in the political movements of our times. It was



*Fran and Elena*



*Fran and Yasi at Bennington*

Peru, and its turbulent politics, that largely transformed me, and marked my political awakening.

I continue to teach photography and photojournalism at Baruch College, CUNY with time away for post-doctoral fellowships and grants that allow me to travel and work on my own projects.

In 2005, Janie Paul, with whom I had shared a studio at Bennington and who has been a lifelong treasured friend, invited me to a memorial for her father in the Guatemalan village where he had worked as

an anthropologist for over 60 years. By that time, I had adopted an indigenous Guatemalan baby with my partner Gerhard Meilen. My daughter Yasmín was seven when she, Janie, and I returned to Guatemala. I have continued to work there, accompanied by my daughter, almost every summer since then. In 2017 my book of photographs and writing *Maya Healers: A Thousand Dreams* was published. The work has won various awards and continues to travel as an exhibit, bringing me back to Bennington to do a presentation.

To my great delight and deep satisfaction, my daughter is now in her junior year at Bennington.



*Fran and Gerhard*



## Kristina Baer

In 2013, during a poetry workshop at Hedgebrook, I photographed the pond near the marsh on Whidbey Island. A detail in the print I made later surprised me. Barely visible against the packed stems and spikes of its dense cattail border, a few fuzzy seeds rocked and jostled one another in the breeze. Headed for the marsh?

Surely the seeds landed somewhere eventually. But did they sprout? I know cattails reliably germinate from rhizomes. I learned that they germinate less reliably from seeds. “Hope against hope,” I thought. Several months later, I wrote “Cattails,” my side of the conversation with the pond and the cattails, a record of my presence there at the time, in that moment.

Often, since 1969, like those airborne cattail seeds, I’ve ridden down drafts and up drafts, occasionally settling in a congenial, unfamiliar place, to which I’ve adapted largely through planning, planting, and tending a garden. And writing—poems and stories, and bits and pieces of novels.

My first novel, *Minerva’s Fox*, came out in 2015 (Two Harbors Press). She Writes Press will publish my second novel, *Aftermath*, in 2020.

### *Cattails*

by Kristina Baer

Rising from rhizomes  
embedded in the mud  
cattails’ spring-tender shoots  
sprout in water  
brackish or sweet,  
claiming the shorelines  
of pond, marsh, and swamp,  
mustering regiments  
of nine-foot stalks  
against winter’s barrage.  
Hope against hope,  
spikes flout the wind,  
surrendering downy  
seed drifts to spring, at last.

*Hedgebrook, 2013*





## Holly Barrett

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I came to Bennington from Illinois for the dancing. I felt a little of out my league at first studying among so many beautifully trained New York dancers. But by far my best experience at Bennington was the support of dance faculty Joe and Martha Wittman, Jack Moore, and Viola Farber. They helped me find my choreographic voice, and I am grateful for their encouragement to this day.

After graduation, while still living in Vermont, I was hired to do some movement therapy for United Counseling Service in Bennington as they operated a day treatment center for patients with serious mental illness (RIP community mental health). I was not familiar with the new field of dance therapy at the time so I made stuff up.



Fortunately, they also offered outstanding in-service staff training and I was subsequently motivated to move to Los Angeles in 1975, earn a Ph.D. in psychology, and begin a private practice. My earliest training included an introduction to the work of Wilhelm Reich which instigated a life-long personal and professional obsession with the body, movement, and spirituality. I studied Taiji and Qi Gong for decades, so I guess I kept dancing in my own way.

I haven't kept in touch with too many classmates, save for Wendy Summit Kaiser and, now sadly missed, Joyce Keener. When I still lived in LA I used to get together with Brenda Kydd. And I spent some time with Liz Lerman and Martha Wittman when I lived in Washington, DC for a few years in the late 90s.

My husband, Barry Abel, and I moved to New Mexico in 1999. For a while we raised alpacas, llamas, goats, and poultry which was a fantastic experience but a financial drain. Now we just have a house full of big dogs.

No biological children but I've been blessed with wonderful step-children and grandchildren—one of the latter is a semi-professional tap-dancer, and so the world turns.



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### *Moonlight Sound Design*

A choral piece by Latvian composer Raimond Tiguls

“In the moonlight, time stands still. The present melts into the past,  
And my spirit communes with souls that have passed before me.  
I can never explain, can never tell you. No!  
In the night, it smells of morning.  
And in the silence, flowers and birds herald the light...”



True, I can never tell you all that has shaped and graced my life. But here are a few glints that others may recognize.

I came to Bennington from three other small, independent experimental schools. The last two years of high school I lived, worked, and studied at The Meeting School, in Rindge, New Hampshire, a new Quaker experiment in education; after that, at L'Ecole d'Humanité, an international school in Switzerland founded by refugees from Nazi Germany; and then at the Odenwaldschule in Germany, mother of the Ecole, which reopened after WWII to examine the seeds that made Nazism possible, and continued its progressive education in the trades, the arts, sciences, and humanities.

All these schools shared with Bennington a commitment and insistence that we are all creators of knowledge, as well as art. Bennington fed my creative hungers. The attention and respect of faculty for my work taught me more care and clarity in my writing and thinking. The requirement of Non-Resident Terms reminded me that my values could be pursued and honed working in projects like the Cambridge Friends School and the Quaker Office at the United Nations.

But in the spring of 1970, after I had graduated from Bennington, the expansion of the war in Indochina, and the violence against protesting students turned me from academia to community organizing. I worked for three years in Providence, RI. I learned how leadership can grow among people who have been silenced, when they are brought together.

In 1973, I came to Chicago and joined a theater collective called Bread and Roses that sought to offer theater as support and inspiration to groups involved in social movements, and community and labor organizing. We wrote and performed a play called *Sit Down*, based on the 1937 sit down strike against GM that led to founding

the UAW. Then in 1980 I began teaching English to adult immigrants, learning from Paolo Freire and a Master's program at Northeastern Illinois University.

During these years I met and married my Guatemalan husband, and I learned from his large extended family a more spontaneous, love- and laughter-filled response to crisis, however it appears. Our son Marco is a compassionate, curious and dedicated high school teacher, who will move to NYC with his wife Asona for her medical internship year. Last New Year's Day, they treated me to a trip to Machu Picchu!

For the last eleven years, I have returned to my lifelong love of singing. I trained with the Music for Healing and Transition Program to sing for patients who are sick or dying. In one neighborhood hospital, the patients come from all over the world, and I sing in as many languages as I can. It is the most satisfying work I have ever done.

Till the next chapter, I rejoice in all the beauties of life as I know it.



*Marco, Asona and me in Cuzco*



*Me at Machu Pichu*

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I feel kind of breathless writing this—trying to reflect back on the last 50 years. I'd like to start by saying that, to a large extent, I owe my ability to experience a Bennington education to my dad, who worked hard to make it possible. (He turns 99 in just a few days from this writing.) During the span of years, I've worked on underground newspapers, done graphic layouts, danced, acted, went to law school, represented loft tenants as well as tenants in largely Spanish-speaking neighborhoods, and taught movement classes to the local senior population. There's a lot more, of course, but I'll leave that for the reunion, which I do hope to attend.



## Susan Paris Borden

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Oh my—50 years—actually 54 since we arrived on campus in the autumn of 1965. To my astonishment and delight, I find myself back in Vermont after 37 adventurous years with my beloved husband, Bob Borden, who died, very gently, in April 2018.

In many ways, I've returned not very far from where I left in 1968 to work on Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign. Between then and 1981, I helped found the National Women's Political Caucus and the National Women's Education Fund, served as Vice Chairman of Common Cause in Washington, and worked as the Senior Energy Fellow of the Aspen Institute.

In 1981, I married Bob, a New York-born, Canadian impresario in multiple businesses and causes—conventional and renewable energy, hotels and restaurants, clothing stores and art galleries, Middle East peace, democratic institutions around the world, the American University in Beirut and Bennington College. He was marvelous—imaginative, curious, adventurous, thoughtful, tender, athletic, generous and loved to dance at least as much as he loved to debate. We lived in Banff, Alberta, in New York and in Bermuda for most of our lives together, trading New York and Bermuda in late 2015 for Old Bennington, Vermont. With Bob, I worked on several biotech and high-tech start-ups, some successful and some not, and had the fun of grandchildren—two of whom graduated from Bennington.

From 1986 until 2014, I also had the great good fortune to work with Nobel laureate Gerald Edelman at the Neurosciences Institute which had the not-very-modest objective of exploring what it is about the biological composition, organization and functioning of the brain that gives rise to human imagination. This inquiry remains a major interest of mine and has lent support to a range of ideas I am beginning to write about. First up is why, biologically speaking, talking therapies may be the modality of choice for a number of mental illnesses.

For nearly all of this time I have been a Bennington College trustee, which has kept me actively connected to the ethos and pedagogy Bennington has worked so hard to animate and extend. Along with the customary fiduciary responsibilities of governing boards, our college's trustees have two less customary commitments. One is to help ensure that Bennington, in its middle age, doesn't become complacent or self-satisfied or a caricature of progres-





sive education. The other is to find ways to encourage and support both faculty and students to work on authentic intellectual and artistic frontiers. And of course, we are intensely aware that small liberal arts colleges are under siege, that college costs more than most families can afford, and that the world needs more, not less, of Bennington.

Speaking of the world, returning full time to the U.S. has given me the chance to become re-immersed in politics, both in Vermont and nationally via the Democracy Alliance, the Committee on States, Indivisible and a presidential campaign. I wonder if you all share the strong, sometimes desperate sense that the rest of our lifetimes will be powerfully shaped by the next eighteen months and the outcome of the 2020 election.

In so many ways, my Bennington education turns out to have been a laboratory for my life *since* Bennington. At our college in 1965, cautious beginnings could lead to bold journeys. Panoramic outlooks could give way to joy in the particular. No inquiry was off limits. No question was too simple or concern too complicated. No path was too ambitious or unconventional. As we developed and revised our academic plans, faculty embraced John Muir's observation that when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe. (Or maybe that was da Vinci...) Work was fun. Other people's work was important. Making was the thing. No failure was fatal. Revision and resilience were par for the course.

THAT'S an education!



## Carole Bolsey

I have lived from my art over these years, teaching at Harvard University, for thirteen years, at the Carpenter Center for Visual and Environmental Art as well as at the Graduate School of Design, at both of which schools I have had solo exhibitions.

*An excerpt from Carole's website:*

Carole Bolsey works on a large scale, in paint on canvas, installations, constructions, sculpture, and architectural design. Her work appears in public and private collections throughout the United States, Europe and Japan.

Bolsey's artwork centers on nature in highly simplified land and water scapes interpreted through light, space, gesture, and scale. Barns and water shacks, rowboats and canoes, skiffs and workboats, open land, water, and skies reflect each other in brilliant contrasts of light and shadow, near and far, immensity and small scale.

Her subjects also include life-size horses and bulls, and the simple shape of a barn—The Shape with No Name, as she calls it—expressed in powerful contrasts of light and shadow. Bolsey is known for the dynamic energy and painterly expressiveness of her work, using large scale, in her words, to “generate spaces that aren't there, to physicalize the experience so it feels like stepping outdoors.”



Bolsey has taught painting, drawing, and Visual Studies at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design and Carpenter Center for Visual and Environmental Studies, at the Rhode Island School of Design and the Decordova Museum School.

A native of New York, Bolsey studied with Gustav Rehberger in Manhattan as a teenager; at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence, Italy; at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Geneva, Switzerland; and graduated from Bennington College. She lives and works on the South Shore of Massachusetts in the United States.

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*1970s*

I was an entrepreneur with a successful cottage industry in Vermont.



*The Vegimals and horned and winged baseball caps:  
my 15 minutes of fame.*



*I had wanderlust, seeking the ends of the earth. Pictured here in the  
Sahara of southern Algeria on a camel trek with Tuareg nomads.*

*1980s*

I married an architect and had two home births.



*Asher and Ruby, 1985*



*Our high-tech house in Waltham, Vermont.*

*1990s*

I was an environmental activist, a hopeless endeavor, but fun. Especially my six weeks on the *Sea Shepherd* despite being horribly seasick most of the time.



*2000s*

I moved to Sausalito, California! And changed my name to Coco Hall. I switched to animal rights (mostly elephants).



*Feeding a baby elephant in Kenya.*



*2010s*

I built a little house on 80 acres adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park and finally became a full-time artist ([www.cocohall.com](http://www.cocohall.com) or Instagram: [coco.hall](https://www.instagram.com/coco.hall)). My children all live in Boston.



*My son, Asher, and his husband, Joe, are professors and have 2-year-old twins.*



*Everett and Verena.*



*My daughter, Ruby, is a home organizer.*

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After leaving Bennington, I went to film school in London. Hard to believe that in a class of 100, there were only four female students. So I did a lot of acting—and dancing with Matt Mattox. I married a film student and have two daughters—and now four grandchildren. It's a convoluted path to the present, where I am about to retire from my IBM career in digital marketing and live with dogs and horses in rural Virginia. Not what I expected that summer of 1969, but in my own way, still true to my passions of film, dance and theater.



## Alice Purnell Cannon

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For more than 20 years we have lived in Bleak House, built by enslaved craftsmen in the 1850's world of Central Virginia. The house was once part of a 700-acre plantation with more than 35 enslaved people. Gradually, I have learned about them and the family who owned them and their community. I am one of the leaders of the Central Virginia History Researchers, a group that focuses on the African American history of this area. Research and imagining fill many of my hours here and make my mind life rich and often troubled.

My husband, Jon Cannon, teaches Environmental Law at the University of Virginia, which is what brought us here. I teach drawing and painting at a local retirement home and volunteer at a nature preserve which is also the site of an important farm on the African American Heritage Tour.

Our elder daughter is a lawyer in NYC and our son teaches in a private school there. Our other daughter works with autistic children and lives in the cottage—once Bleak House's kitchen—with her family. We have four grandchildren.

At the 25th Bennington reunion, I was moved by how much I connected with everyone who came to it, many of whom I had had little to do with during my time there. It is something I look forward to experiencing again at the 50th, perhaps.

My teachers at Bennington were among the great gifts of my life. Claude Fredericks and Barbara Herrnstein Smith, so different in their approaches to literature, pushed me to think in ways that shaped the way I explore the world now and find it so exciting.

Not so the art teachers I had at Bennington in the 60s. I was told that my art belonged to a “time when people had time for that kind of art” and so, possibly, discouraged me from following a path I might have taken. Pat Adams was the exception, who taught drawing—which I have taught for many years now.

We fight waves of despair at our current political and environmental crises—and try to keep from going under. So we put up solar panels and I planted a lot of milkweed.



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On that list of members of the class of 1969 are a lot of my favorite people—we were a spirited lot. My memories of many of my fellow classmates are still vivid.

You could describe me as a late-bloomer—not that I wasn't blooming all along, but the world lagged behind. Thankfully, my autobiographical first novel, *Blue Money*, didn't have to be published posthumously, which was a growing concern of mine. It's about New York street life in the seventies: cathouses, gin mills, and dead-end relationships. A great literary agent, my fourth and best, sold it to Unnamed Press, and it came out in June of 2017—to a lot of good buzz. The week it launched, *Blue Money* was the #1 'hot pick' of the Huffington Post's National Book Review. Among the interviews I did was one for the Bennington Alumni Magazine in August of 2017. I also attended a Bennington gathering in Sag Harbor, where I was fortunate to meet the remarkable Dr. Mariko Silver. I feel like a prodigal, because, as a few of you may remember, I had to leave in the middle of my sophomore year. And I've been missing you ever since!

Currently, I am hard at work on the second draft of a novel. Probably the biggest news is that I am about to start work on a project with a fellow Bennington alumna, the singer/songwriter, Danielia Cotton. I am writing the book for a musical based loosely on her life called, *Small White Town*. She's assembled an extraordinary core group, and she and I are both thrilled and terrified. We've done a lot of preparatory work leading up to this point, and now we're going in for total immersion.

Can't wait to see everyone!





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For me and, I suspect, most others in my class, to conjure life 50 years ago is nigh impossible. Not that this is exactly what's being asked, yet it's intriguing to see what surfaces—and why it resonates.

Every life has hidden and overt patterns, of course. Mine began with continual turmoil. Bennington was just one more difficult episode in the haze, the end of a childhood made raw by divorced parents and survival on the periphery of the two subsequent families. (Read *Patrick Melrose*. Hey, you asked.) I'm far better equipped for the "Bennington experience" now than I was then, when it was agony to speak in class or to write a paper to my satisfaction. (And oh, those memories of hitching a ride to New York on Thursday nights, curled up in the back of an MG hurtling down the Taconic—returning at the latest possible hour on Sunday.) Thank heavens I *was* at Bennington, home of a thousand outsiders, rather than at a more conventional school. Thank heavens for the superb teaching of Francis Golfing, Julian DeGray, and Nick Delbanco, to name three who still surface long after, and who encouraged me to keep on with my music and writing.

I turned 21 the summer after graduation, and I came to Los Angeles—"land of bilk and money" in the words of my father, who had moved there years before—to study with a great pianist. I faced Tuesday afternoons with terror, yet intensely aware of the rare privilege to be in the company of a blazing musical intelligence, and one who had confidence in my own musicality: the first teacher, since I began playing the piano at age 4, who truly taught me *how* to learn, and the first teacher I'd known whose mastery and passion for the repertoire were all-encompassing. Between a stormy relationship with Linda Ronstadt's road manager, lots of weed in Topanga Canyon, graduate studies in musicology at UCLA (stultifying) and part-time work to make ends meet, I learned the foundations of the piano literature: Chopin Etudes, Beethoven Sonatas, lots of Bach. And then Norman arrived—ending my assumption, since landing in LA, that I'd return to the East Coast before long.

Norman: not what my parents had envisioned for me. Carpenter, motorcycle rider, backpacker. No third person can ever know what goes on between two people. We craved each other.

Three years after we moved in together, seven months after we married, he was killed in a hunting accident in front of me. I was 28.

No question of career or family or piano studies; life simply consisted of hanging on. Five years and unspeakable

turmoil later, Bill and I met, and for the first time ever, I found relative peace. Love of words and crazy humor brought us together and still bind us today, 38 years into our marriage. He's an immunologist, former biology department chair at UCLA, now contentedly retired. A few years after we met, I took my first "real" job as head of development at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA); I went on to establish a new department of "international initiatives" at Art Center College of Design, where I co-founded a program of social and humanitarian applications of design, and a series of conferences exploring the relationships between design and myriad other disciplines. A similar position followed at the Hirshhorn Museum/Smithsonian Institution in DC; I commuted from LA every two weeks for more than 4 years, and I worked to create the first true *cultural* think tank on the Mall, in a city with over 500 think tanks. I loved Washington, but not the paralytic bureaucracy of the Smithsonian; don't let your friends work there.

Each of these positions seemed to materialize with little effort—for once!—and my current position, serendipitously as well: today I'm the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator at Carnegie Observatories, a preeminent astronomical research center in Pasadena. Founded in 1904, the Carnegie is renowned for a continual series of discoveries, past and present, about the evolution of the cosmos that form the bedrock of contemporary astronomy. The Observatories' large telescopes are in the high Atacama Desert of Chile; on each visit I'm stunned by this other-worldly landscape which receives less than an inch of rain per year, where the Milky Way shines so brightly that it casts shadows.

It seems appropriate, at age 70, to be in proximity to these boundless things. I'm grateful to still be working and have no intention of retiring anytime soon. Recently I got a splendid new piano, and now spend as much time as possible with Chopin, Schubert, Schumann, and Rachmaninoff. At a time when the world is in such turmoil, I find peace in thinking about the universe and friendship, and especially, beauty in all forms. They're all that we really have, and I feel endlessly fortunate to have such abundance.



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My sister was taking piano lessons with Stell Andersen in Bennington and I took a trip up from Albany with her one day. I saw the quiet beauty of southern Vermont and we stopped to see Bennington College's campus. That was it. I interviewed with Rebecca Stickney and liked her.

I enjoyed time-lapse films in botany and cool drawing classes with Peter Stroud and Carol Kinne (visiting teacher). Printmaking with Vincent Longo was a treat, cutting out shapes with a jigsaw, inking them separately, putting them back together like a puzzle, and sending them through the press. In ceramics, we built pots and glazed and fired them, throwing asbestos on the kilns to seal them. What fun it all was!

Some of my favorite teachers were Ben Bellit, Lee Supowit, Stanley Rosen, Isaac Witkin, and Sidney Tillim. For an anthropology paper, I was teamed up with Carol McGuirk (Lit, 1970) and she remains a friend to today. I also stay friends with Olga Gussow, a roommate and music major. One year I was a painting buddy with Heidi Glück. Other good friends were Connie Talbot, Jan Cook, Jackie Schatz, Joyce Nawy, and Gerry Kaplan. Later I got to know Harry Sheppard. Sadly, Gerry Kaplan and Harry Sheppard are no longer with us.

A landscape lover, who'd have thought I'd live in NYC over half my prospective life? The Whitney Warehouse Painting Program invited me to the city for my senior NRT, and I just about didn't leave! The Program asked me to stay until graduation, and I commuted back and forth to college. After graduating (BA, Art major), I returned to live in the land of 24/7.

New York was fantastic for a long time. I co-founded a coop gallery (NOHO) and for many years ran an art moving business. Close friendships and trips to visit family and friends provided inspiration and helped keep me centered. I met other Bennington graduates—Hudas Liff and Andrea Halbfinger.

Peter Tatistcheff liked my work. I joined his gallery and exhibited there until he passed away.

My neighborhood was the East Village, and Earth School was my favorite place to substitute teach. Graffiti



Church on East 7th Street became important to me. When it was time for me to leave the city, I knew I needed to find a place with nature and a church. And I found it!

Since May 2017 I have lived in Brandon, Vermont, and I love it. There are mountains and valleys, farms and animals, and interesting people. My sister Judy visits often. I work as a paraeducator in an elementary school and take “The Bus” to work.

No, I do not have a car and do not want one! I am inspired by my daily bus rides.

All seasons are beautiful! I feel I’ve gone full circle yet things are just beginning.



*The Village Farm Barn at Pittsford, VT, Graphite and pastel, 2018*



*Me with cousin Charles Billings and Exhibitions Director Eloise Beil, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, 2009*



*My sister Judy at Harpers Ferry, 2014*



*My sister Judy and I at the Brandon Inn, 2019*



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I didn't realize how important my educational experience at Bennington was until after years after I had graduated. "Learning by doing" taught me to have confidence in my creative goals, follow those goals with passion, and make mistakes (I made plenty) along the way. After a few detours, family deaths, two difficult marriages and divorces, and the challenge of being a single parent to two girls, I have spent the last 25 years working professionally in the areas that I started to explore seriously at Bennington: literature and music. I have worked for a feminist paper, been a co-writer of *Our Bodies Ourselves*, written poetry and short stories. But I have also been a classical and jazz singer for many years (inspired by Frank's wonderful teaching) and it is the combination of poetry and music that intrigues me the most, both in art songs and my own compositions. For the past 20 years I have taught voice and acting at a conservatory and directed music theater and opera productions as well as performing in the Boston area.



Of course, I learned other stuff at Bennington too! How to dress all in black and wear long earrings, (got over that by sophomore year), sex, joining protests and grieving as a community after the deaths of Robert Kennedy and MLK. It was a time of experimentation in all ways. My parents of course had no idea.

I returned to Bennington for a reunion some years ago and was amazed at the creative and interesting ways my classmates had evolved. We were all clearly still Bennington people!

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Although I was only at Bennington for one year, I am profoundly grateful for its impact on my life. It was where I became a thinking person. Bennington opened my heart and mind to possibilities—in literature, the arts, and life!

I continued my undergraduate studies at New York University. Living in Greenwich Village in the late 1960s was a portal to a different world. After volunteering in the New York Office of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, I was invited to become a Senate intern. Those were exciting, tumultuous and heady days until his sudden tragic death in June 1968. We interns were asked to help with the logistics for his funeral at St. Patrick's Cathedral, and I remember walking away from the service utterly bereft.

After graduating from NYU, I worked at the Dalton School as a children's librarian for about a year and then moved to Boston to attend summer school at Harvard. I found a job in the medical library at Boston University and pursued a library science degree at Simmons College. But a career in libraries was not meant to be. I found myself working with an amazing group of people at Harvard School of Public Health, and it was that experience that prompted me to attend law school at night. Four long years later, I graduated from Suffolk University Law School and moved to Philadelphia for a judicial clerkship at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. After that, a few years at the law firm made me realize that I longed to be back in academia in New England. I worked for several years at Dartmouth College and made lifelong friends in Norwich, Vermont.

Today, I'm back at Boston University, as Assistant Director of Equal Opportunity. And I'm still passionate about using the humanities as a means to achieve social (and restorative) justice. In my free time, I love exploring nature, cooking, practicing yoga, reading and watching independent films.

I think about Bennington (the Bennington of then and the Bennington of now) often and with great pride. And I'm so inspired by the new programs and students. As President Silver says, the world needs more Bennington, now more than ever.



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I was 17 when I arrived at Bennington—and I was in Heaven! Free at last to choose my classes, pursue my passion (theatre) and escape my loving but over-controlling parents! While walking down the tree-lined paths, I recall reaching up and eating apples! But this natural Nirvana was set against the shadow of the Vietnam War and social mores that today's students would probably find laughable. I was a natural-born feminist in a family where I was told: "It doesn't matter what you study—you will marry and your husband will support you." But I was determined to have a career!

I had wonderful teachers at Bennington, but in 1965 the theatre department was pretty much a one-man show led by Paul Gray. His favorite message to student actors was "You fail—you fail—you fail!" and his mission was to destroy the ego. When asked to please demonstrate the successful acting choice for an exercise, his answer was "I'm not an actor." In spite of this uncomfortable environment, I made it through three semesters, spending four times as many hours in rehearsals than in all my other courses; I played the lead in *The Midnight Bride* and willingly learned new lines for every performance. Then for NRT I found a job

understudying and assisting off-Broadway. During that time, I realized that Paul's program was not good for me and told him that I was not continuing with it. "But you are so talented!" he objected. I answered, "It's too bad you never let me know that. I'm going to transfer."

But I had another reason for leaving Bennington: early in my sophomore year I met and fell in love with a Dartmouth man who was completing his MBA (talk about opposites attracting!); he had deferred his ROTC requirement and had to serve in the



Photos from 1967-8



*Photo from one of the shows I directed, The Good Doctor*

a pants suit! (“Wear a skirt!”) So we decided to marry at the end of the spring term at age 19 and almost 26. We lived for 3 months in NYC (such fun!) and while he worked at a major corporation, I spent my weekdays studying at Circle in the Square!

A few months later he reported to Ft. Belvoir and I became an anti-War, hippy-ish officer’s wife—(now there’s a good screenplay!) I performed in the Army production of *Kismet* while he crawled around in mud at 4 AM in practice maneuvers. When he was sent to St. Louis, I transferred to Washington U. and completed a year’s worth of credit hours. I had just started my senior year when the dreaded letter arrived—the Army was sending its engineers to Vietnam! I panicked and said, “I want to get pregnant in case you come home in a casket and we never have a baby!” Two weeks later he was re-assigned to build bunkers in the DMZ in Korea. We’d still be separated, but at least I felt he was doing something worth defending! But I suddenly got nauseous—I was pregnant!

I wanted babies anyway (a “creative project”) but it was going to be difficult living alone in St. Louis, so I decided to return to NY where I had my family to help. I soon found out that transferring after junior year was a bit tricky; Barnard, NYU, and most places insisted on two more years! Historical note: Hunter College accepted me but stated that I had to wait until AFTER the baby was born to attend—citing insurance reasons! (I still have the letter.) I finally completed my BA at an uninspiring college and turned my attention to caring for my baby girl, followed by another daughter, two years apart. But I also began tearing my hair out being a housewife at a time when most women stayed at home with their kids. I finally felt it was justifiable to hire babysitters and return to school part-time, close to home. I was accepted at Sarah Lawrence for an MFA in Theatre! My two pre-school daughters played in the “Pillow Room” of the library with student babysitters as I worked hard and loved life! I graduated in December ’75 and, hoping for a boy (a replacement for my long-lost brother, incommunicado in Europe) I gave birth to my third daughter! But I also really wanted to work, and, in deep conflict, I suffered a major post-partum depression. It was the first of several depressions that interrupted my life. Then, when my older two were in college and the third was entering HS, I had a bonus baby – a boy! Do you remember the birth control product called the “Today Sponge?” Well, here’s my ad for it: “Use the Sponge Today! See what you get Tomorrow!” I am glad I had that baby—at 41—(by then there was amniocentesis). His little hands patted me six

Army for two years. Remember how all men had to serve in the military unless they had a medical condition (i.e. Trumpian bone spurs)? Lesson learned: social and political realities can infringe upon one’s personal goals and dreams!

That September I brought home a long-haired, guitar playing boyfriend who “slept in his clothes!”—parental hysteria!!!—but in October I brought home Pat with his Southern charm, his 3-piece suit and a tin of fresh pecans; my mother grabbed my arm and intensely whispered “Don’t lose him!” In spite of her gooey approval of my new boyfriend, I really did love him more and more and did NOT want to lose him. In 1967: “Nice girls don’t live with men until they are married”—especially in the Army where they didn’t even allow me to get into a 25-cent movie wearing



years later when I was crying because my brother Bob (who had re-connected with the family) died in a plane crash in Germany. Most of my life, however, was spent in conflict, juggling children and a difficult career, renovating houses and getting through depressions. I never had a chance to really establish the high-level career I wanted because I started a family at 21. Nevertheless, these adult children and now three grandchildren are SO loved and essential to my life!

So what else did I do? For details go to [www.HudsonRiverRep.org](http://www.HudsonRiverRep.org)

1. I continued to study dance and voice, performed in shows, studied filmmaking...
2. Directed lots of plays—mostly comedies—and some musicals—in various venues.
3. Wrote a few musicals including *Little Orphan Annie*, my Master's thesis, and found out that the commercial rights had just been sold for *Annie*.
4. Taught several college classes as an Adjunct Professor in Theatre—but never full-time, living in such a competitive area (near NYC)
5. Renovated and sold three houses for a profit and designed and oversaw the building of a 4th very large house, which I sold when...
6. We divorced, after 39 years. Opposites also can have communication problems—and it takes two for couple's therapy!
7. Struggled as a woman director—there was and still is prejudice. I love coaching actors, directing, writing...
8. I finally bought (and am renovating) my own NYC co-op overlooking the Hudson!
9. I survived cancer, and other medical challenges. It helped put things in perspective and I have been depression-free for several years—so far!
10. I put my kids in some of my shows, gave them



*Photos of me taken recently*

lessons; the older two are/were professional musical performers; one of them was on Broadway for five years!

11. During the divorce I found my spiritual center, Unity; New Age, it blends nicely with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.
12. I've re-engaged in politics, hoping to save our democracy—after paying little attention to the news during the Mom years.
13. I emergency-delivered a neighbor's baby and, on different occasions, saved 3 lives (plus my own).
14. Presently I am writing and now composing (with a musical arranger) a new musical, *Spirits of Sleepy Hollow*, freely intertwining two Washington Irving ghost stories! I'm creating my own projects!

## Randi Farkas

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I was one of a handful of junior-year transfer students who never quite fit in. We were escaping broken hearts, failed coursework, dubious reputations—and Bennington offered an opportunity for rewriting our stories. I dove into translating Russian poetry, writing bad short fiction, and making art. My NRTs shunted me away from careers in ski-bumming or educational research. But I've always judged myself harshly for not taking advantage of what was offered in some deeper sense; found it difficult to claim myself a Bennington graduate.

For that reason, reading the Class of '68 bios was a healing experience: I wasn't alone in my erratic path. Hurray!

My obsessive escape into coffee and Sherman-fueled intellectualism for those two years led to my deciding against a doctorate in an ivory tower profession.

Instead, I waitressed for a year. Lived in a commune. Fell in love.

San Francisco and cheap wine brought out the writer in me: I gave poetry readings and published in small magazines, co-authored a peace curriculum adopted by Berkeley schools, and later self-published a self-hypnosis manual I used in the classes I taught. After a while, the cheap wine got the better of me, and I became a grateful friend of Bill W's.

A Big Dream propelled me to a Master's in Education at Madison, and fifteen joyous years teaching in and directing alternative schools. Another dream, and I became a licensed psychotherapist, working in agencies and private practice.

Happily married now, on an acre in Sebastopol, California. Two cats in the yard, as the song goes. My husband Eric is an artist and a retired but still fabulous chef. Retirement for me includes literacy tutoring, an improv group, gardening, making art, and most important, family and friends. All these help me in struggling with the changes surrounding and within me.

So, am finally able to say—Thank you, Bennington!



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It was a nice surprise to receive the request to submit this entry. Here is a brief accounting of my time, and some thoughts about Bennington as I currently see it.

I've attended two other universities since graduating: The University of Chicago (Ph.D. in Behavioral Science) and Marylhurst University (Certificate in Piano Pedagogy). Needless to say, neither of these schools was anything like Bennington.

My degree in Behavioral Science led to a career in psychology. While at the U. of C. I met and married my husband Bob. In 1979 we moved to Portland, where we still live. We have two sons, grown now. I always considered that my \*real\* job was raising our children. Motherhood (and—wow—grandmotherhood!) was for me the flat-out best undertaking ever. When my youngest son left for college I found myself with time to fill and I started practicing the piano again. I went back to music school and became a piano teacher, which I very much enjoyed. Now both I and my husband are “retired,” and true to all the clichés, I am too busy.

I am sure I would hardly recognize Bennington today. I recently looked at the website, I find myself in disagreement with the school's principles, or at least with the way it presents itself. I am stuck on their phrase, “A good education prepares you for a set path. A great education prepares you to change course.” The older I get, the more firmly I believe that a great education is really about the path. Soaring from summit to summit may be an attractive idea to adolescents, but now I think it's more important to have some actual foundation of received learning that comes before the flashy results. There is no question that publicly recognized successes are impressive, but to me that is not the point of an education. A few years ago, I went to a Bennington event at which someone asked me if I would apply there now. I said I would probably go to a state university and learn how to actually acquire a foundation associated with a planned track. I knew it was not the expected answer, but it's the truth, for me.

Had I done that, though, I would have missed out on what I feel was truly the best part of the Bennington experience. What really stands out is having had the chance to live and study among so many bright and talented women, who were willing to put themselves in the somewhat isolated circumstances of Bennington at that time in order to learn, cooperate, and grow. It seems astonishing these days to recall a close-knit community based on principles of personal integrity that actually functioned successfully. Smart people, dedicated work, trustworthy friendships. No doubt this can happen elsewhere, but this was my experience in that place at that time and I treasure it.

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My guidance counselor thought Sarah Lawrence, the New School for Social Research, New College of Florida, or Bennington would be good for me. I read the catalogs overnight and decided on Bennington. Beyond the catalog, I had no idea what I had chosen.

I arrived wearing a navy-blue sheath, patent leather heels, and probably white gloves. That first week there was a house meeting. What do you wear to such a thing? A summer hostess gown seemed a good guess.

I went home that first year with a new uniform: work shirt, jeans, and Fred Braun sandals.

I arrived as a theater major, but Paul Grey was not a teacher for me. Barbara Herrnstein Smith was. Her lectures were so richly constructed that each word seemed placed for maximum resonance and meaning. Bye-bye, theater. Welcome, Renaissance poetry and the Petrarchan sonnet.

I learned to go deeply into a single subject or form and then experience the wonder of transferring new knowledge and insight into completely different arenas. Bennington kept me aware of what I was learning and opened the doorways to a lifetime of cross-disciplinary exploration and thinking.



*Jane Larkin and me outside Dewey House - September 1965*

These were wonderful years full of intellectual curiosity, dropping acid, protesting the war, and falling in love. My worry in loving a classmate was that I might not be sufficiently smart or creative to qualify as a lesbian since the women I understood to be gay on campus seemed to have set a very high bar for membership.

In the end, I did qualify on the lesbian front and I entered graduate school at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in September 1970 a radical lesbian feminist. I organized groups around gay and lesbian student needs, sexism, and racism and completed my doctoral dissertation on how schools fail women. I remain grateful that I attended Bennington when it was still a women's college.

Throughout the 70s and 80s at UMass Amherst, I helped to lead the university's women's center and then to co-found the Women's Equity Program. I trained as a mediator and wrote books on conflict resolution. I co-founded and performed with a theater group that wrote and produced lesbian and feminist plays and musicals, including one performance at the Carnegie Recital Hall. I studied Aikido, meditated, facilitated women's spiritual groups, and learned to channel Spirit.

In 1986, I moved to California to set up a research center at Pacific Oaks College and Children's School. By the time I left, I was the VP of Administration overseeing the research center, IT, HR, budget development, advancement, communications, marketing, and publications. I discovered I'm a really good partner for a visionary. That revelation led to the last twenty-four years of work as Associate Director of the Getty Information Institute, then the Getty Research Institute, and now Executive Vice President of the Skirball Cultural Center, from which I am now preparing to retire.

I'm looking forward to more time here in Los Angeles with my wife and partner for twenty-three years, Susan Vogelfang, a retired film producer, and more time for weaving, visual journaling, meditating, and stretching into Spirit, where I feel most at home.



*Graduation 1969*



*Susan and me - sunglasses even in London*



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In 1965, I wasn't ready for Bennington though I wish I had been. I recall wondering if my rather traditional parents had any idea where I was going (no curfew, no grades) and the freedoms then involved. As we drove into Bennington from Iowa, someone had a sign in their window: F\_\_\_? and I imagined an immediate exodus if my parents looked that direction. Fortunately, they didn't, and in October that year, an Iowa acquaintance made history burning his draft card, prompting fellow Bennington students to express astonishment that Iowa might house more than pigs and corn.

During high school, I had taken university classes and become involved with a graduate student, a huge factor in what seems a lovesick first and only year at Bennington: wasted, save for a class with Bernard Malamud and a few memorable moments. I eventually married this man, a philosophy prof, and had my son a few years later (a 1981 Williams grad, now intellectual property prosecutor at DOJ, deeply challenged by the present administration). I graduated from U of Michigan Flint College where my then-husband taught, studying psychology and political science, worked in various anti-war, political, and women's consciousness-raising (now such an odd phrase) groups, earned a MSW and have worked in the mental health field ever since.

My first marriage was over, but I went to England for my spouse's sabbatical anyway in 1975 and met the man (an Irish Quaker psychiatrist) who was later to be my husband for some thirty years. We adopted two daughters who have given me three grandchildren who all call me "Zuzu" and live in this small town in northwest lower Michigan, dubbed the most beautiful place in America by *Good Morning America* a few years ago. When my eldest started college, I too returned to academia and earned a doctorate in social work and women's studies, teaching grad students at Ohio State University, the University of Illinois, and Grand Valley State University.

I planned to retire to northern Michigan, the place I had summered since childhood, but my second marriage didn't survive this transition and I had a brief stint in local politics, learned my skin was too thin, and returned to part time work as a therapist and mediator. My passions throughout the years have been restoring old furniture



*Susanne, 2016*



*From left to right: daughter Catherine, Susanne, son Jason, and daughter Jessica in 2008*



*Daughter Jessica with spouse and sons*

and houses, gardening, tennis, and writing. The opioid crisis has me on a steep learning curve the last few years and I am now guardian of my 7-year-old granddaughter and ever hopeful for her mother's recovery. My eldest daughter and husband with boys 2 and 5 live here too, and I am fortunate to have my almost 96-year-old mother, as well as a sibling and an increasing number of friends electing retirement here in Michigan. I remain active in several "liberal" causes and try to sustain hope for the planet and humankind.

While I've had contact with no one from Bennington and I doubt that anyone will remember me, I fondly recall many of my classmates and entertain a spark of hope for reunion attendance.



*Four generations, 2015*

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I applied to Bennington as a transfer, on a whim, because I wanted to study with Bernard Malamud (which I did). To that point, I had a perfectly happy “ordinary” life (if there is such a thing). Bennington astounded me and changed everything. To that point I had no idea what “rural” meant, that artists and composers were alive and creating, that women could have intense lives of the mind, or what “philanthropy” meant.

I went from a college with housemothers and afternoon tea to a place with no rules, insistence on self-reliance, and powerful creative people. At first it was overwhelming; by the time I figured it out, it was over. But it opened me up to myself and to a totally different view of the world. Like many of us I grew to believe I could do whatever I set my mind to, and to be unafraid to try out my ideas.

I worked at Bennington briefly after graduation, then in nonprofits, education, and the arts. In 1976, Bennington invited me back and I became the Director of Special Projects, then Director of External Affairs in an extravagance of program development: creating the MFA and Abroad programs, summer workshops, the July Program, an Alumni Degree program, and the revival of the Bennington Review, in addition to leading Development, Alumni Relations, and Communications.

It was a remarkable experience that led me to start my own consulting firm in 1982, which I still run today. We provide coaching and advising for nonprofits, mostly in Vermont and New England. I concentrate on fundraising assessment, planning and campaign coaching. Along the way I’ve started organizations, served on boards, and gotten to know an amazing array of passionate, hardworking, mission-driven individuals. My work is so gratifying, I cannot imagine ever retiring.

On the personal side, I married Lou Calabro, and we started the Sage City Symphony (still thriving at 46!), grew all our fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy on our tiny farm, produced concerts, and best of all had two sons, Finnegan and Max: both scientists, musicians and great cooks like their father. Finnegan and his novelist wife have two girls, making me a very happy grandmother.

After Lou’s death, the boys and I moved to Burlington, but kept a home in North Bennington where my roots now go so deep. I had a long and caring relationship with a Vermonter who helped me get to know the whole state, fostering my sense of community, and who is still a part of our family. Now I am happily partnered with



Mike who I first dated when I was 15! We agree that this is a perfect place to live (if you don't mind snow in April!).

There is really nothing about my life that I would have planned or guessed. It is fulfilling beyond what I imagined possible when I first drove up College Drive. On that day, I was horrified by the surrounding mountains that made me feel claustrophobic. Instead, it turned out to open up every possibility for me.

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I'm grateful for the chances Bennington offered to work with people who were passionate about what they were doing and were willing to share that with the rest of us. Although writing your freshman English paper for the person who happens to be judging the National Book Award may give a 19-year-old an inflated sense of her own possibilities, this is on the whole a positive thing. I appreciate the seriousness with which our teachers took our work, and their delight when we managed to "get it".

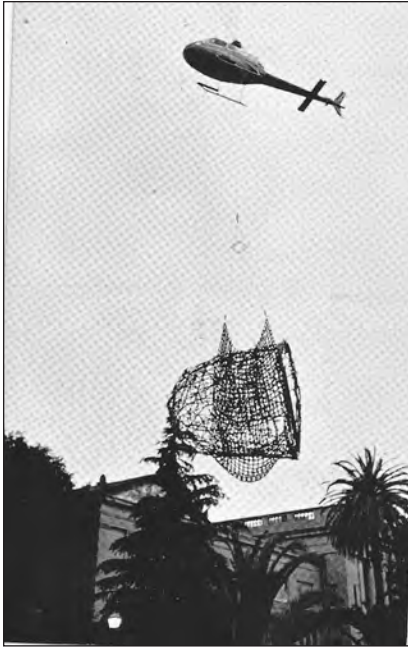
My postgraduate life has been, like most, a combination of necessity, intentionality, and random hits of good and bad luck. I bought a barn near Putney soon after graduation, and set about making it into a house, while working for the Experiment in International Living there. This was the 70s, so there were goats, horses, and a dog, and I spent some time weaving, doing color experiments, going further with some of the work begun with Pat Adams. When my marriage came to an end, I went to Poland to see how they were blending colors in the craft cooperatives in the Tatry Mountains. Through circumstance I met Magdalena Abakanowicz, who was making monumental hanging tapestries—although I had been focusing on color, she said, "Color is nothing without a form," and, under her supervision and encouragement I made only black and brown tapestries for two and a half years. Magdalena talked about time and space as if they were things you could move around with your hands, and it was an enormous privilege to work with her. I helped her install shows in Malmö, Sweden, and in Oslo, and had a show of my own at the Museum of Applied Art in Copenhagen.

In 1977, I married a Polish painter, and after a sojourn in Copenhagen, we moved to New York, where Pawel worked as a conservator of classical antiquities, and I worked as a reader for the Japan Bicycle Promotion Institute (don't ask), and we both kept on with our artwork, having a few shows at small galleries. In 1981, I was invited to be artist-in-residence



*Me on the steps of the Secession Building in Vienna, in April 2019*





*A work made of rags and saplings being delivered to the Stanford Museum in 1981*

at Stanford, and in 1986 I had a travelling Fulbright, enabling me to do research throughout western Europe, gathering material for sculptures made of pigmented cement and also some bronze works.

We moved to the Netherlands in 1991, and settled in Maastricht, a border town (you can walk to Belgium from my house) with Roman roots, a university, a wonderful art fair, and half a dozen foundries—there is a tradition for metalworking in Limburg. Pawel moved back to Poland some years ago, our son lives in Amsterdam, and our daughter, who is an art historian, lives in Glasgow. I am happy to be in Maastricht, still working, making bronze furniture and hardware, mainly on commission. Usually the work has some visual connection to the client—a set of cabinet pulls made from magnolia seedpods for someone who collects magnolia trees, a table with a squirrel for a banker, a lamp with four monkeys for a family with four children. It's a pleasure to make things that really speak to the people that use them in their daily lives.



*A bronze door handle, which is typical of the work I do here in Limburg*

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Five hundred words about what I've done since graduation. That works out to ten words a year. Fortunately, not all years need even 10 words. Some years a lot more. The short version is I survived: a winding path to a successful teaching career, depression, the deaths of my parents, and cancer. The longer version follows.

I loved the idea of Bennington when I first read about it in *Sex and the College Girl*. I fell in love with Bennington when I first set foot on the campus. I know that I did not make the best use of my time there. This was confirmed recently when I found a bunch of comments my mom had saved.

All most all of them mentioned I was not working up to my ability and needed to be less flippant in my writing.

After graduation, I got a job teaching sixth grade in Williamsport, Maryland. All of my students were way below grade level in reading and math. Most were poor and often came to school hungry. The principal was unwilling to have a breakfast program because he thought it would make the school look bad. My students needed an experienced teacher, instead they got me. My only preparation for teaching consisted of two NRTs at the Harriet Tubman Settlement House and reading books about problems with schools. I lasted until Thanksgiving.

I started grad school in early childhood education and had a baby. (Steve and I married the summer before senior year.) I loved being a mom; still do. When Kate was not quite a year old, I started thinking about what I might do when she was older.

Mr. Coburn tried to get me to be a science major, but I was young and stupid and in love and I didn't think my then boyfriend, later husband, would stay around long enough for me to go to grad or med school. A couple of years after graduation, I started taking all the classes Mr. Coburn had tried to get me to take at Bennington.

Before I found a job in science, I worked as the librarian at a maximum-security prison for men. Soon after that Steve got a job at Western Kentucky University and I became a faculty wife. After four years in Kentucky, Steve got a job making films for the Red Cross and we moved to Northern Virginia. Steve also met my replacement there.

For a time, I worked in a dollhouse factory and volunteered at Kate's school. When the teachers found out I knew science, they had me teaching the science kits sent out by the county system. I eventually realized I used to get paid for that and got a job teaching chemistry, physics, and eighth grade science. After two years, I left for the

greener pastures of Fairfax County Public Schools where I taught physics for 26 years. During that time, I had a sabbatical at the National Science Resource Center, a joint project of the Smithsonian and the National Science Foundation. I also received several teaching awards.

Bennington had a profound effect on my teaching. This did not always endear me with my colleagues. Along with physics, I also taught philosophy of science, something Mr. Coburn did in chemistry. I assigned readings from original sources, put books and articles on reserve in the library, had them write papers defending Galileo, lab reports as poems, create musical instruments from found materials. Once I required them to play *Ode to Joy* on the instruments they'd made. A number of my students have become physicists, astronomers, and doctors. One even attended Bennington.

I retired twice, first in 2007 and again in 2012. That September my granddaughter was born and I became a doting grandmother. Sophie is a delight. She's in first grade now. We read and paint and do silly things together. My daughter, Kate, is head of design at the Canadian Embassy in DC.

In Kentucky, I started quilting to keep from going stark raving mad. Since retiring, I started quilting again, mostly art quilts. This winter I went on an 18-day quilting cruise to Hawaii.

At the urging of Alice Cannon, I started taking art classes at the Art League School in Alexandria. I started with drawing and then moved on to watercolors. Much to my surprise, I fell in love with watercolor. I've spent several summers painting in Provence.

I've had both knees replaced, a torn tendon repaired, cataract surgery, and a mastectomy. I am currently cancer free.

My current interest is in keeping Virginia blue and electing a Democrat President.



*Me with Sophie, my granddaughter.*

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I came to Bennington dreaming of becoming a writer, but had no idea how to even begin! In my sophomore year, I took classes with Bernard Malamud and Richard Ellman, but struggled to find a writing voice. That only came later, when I was in my thirties with three children, but Bennington set me on the writing path. A tutorial in James Joyce's *Ulysses* with Stanley Edgar Hyman and a year editing *Silo* with Claude Fredericks helped sharpen my critical faculties. Just living in Bennington's creative melting pot was inspiring—we were all dreamers together.

After Bennington, I found my way to Rome, met my husband Michael, became an Italian speaker, and then talked myself into a job as a 'stringer' for *Variety* magazine. On my first assignment, I was sent to the set of *Death in Venice* and interviewed Lucchino Visconti and Dirk Bogarde—quite an awesome experience for a rank beginner!

We moved to London, and the 70s went by in a blur of nesting and early childhood. I still marvel that I somehow managed to meet and write with illustrator Helen Craig, creating rhymes for her first children's books. Eureka!



*Me and my three grandsons*



I discovered I loved writing for children, and I didn't have to look far for inspiration, my two little daughters were crazy about dancing and ballet. I heard that Helen's publishers were looking for a new storybook, and wrote the first draft of *Angelina Ballerina* with Tara and Alexandra twirling around me in their pink tutus. Since then I've written over thirty children's books, and Angelina has become the star of TV animation series, English National Ballet stage productions, Angelina Dance Academy franchises, and the Angelina Mousical in NYC. After several years out of print, Angelina has a new publisher, Simon and Schuster—who are also publishing *Twinkle*, my new series about a young fairy who has "a spot of trouble with her spells." At 71 I'm still writing for my favorite audience of 3-7 year olds, and still dancing!

And what about surviving life's challenges?

"You can't keep the birds of sadness from flying over your head, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair." Terrible things happen, and we have to carry on as best we can. My younger sister died in a car crash in 1970, my eldest child battled anorexia nervosa for several grim years, and I had my own battle with breast cancer in 2009. Surviving sometimes seems like a miracle, and I'm grateful for every day. After my sister's death, I found my way to the Buddhist Society in London, where I encountered a very wise Buddhist roshi, a small, energetic dynamo of a woman who became my teacher for thirty years, and introduced me to the rigors and joys of Zen Buddhist practice.

My husband and I have brought up three children who've become truly awesome adults, and along the way we've made deep friendships, enjoyed grand adventures, and shared a profound spiritual path.

After almost forty years in England, we sold our London house in 2012 and moved to the USA to be near our children and grandchildren. We now divide our time between the Upper West Side in Manhattan and a country compound outside Bridgehampton, Long Island, where we spend summers doting on three glorious little grandsons. I still believe in America, and that we will survive this very dark period in our history.



*With Michael Haggiag, my partner and great friend for over 40 years*



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Bennington 1965-69. Lord. Eons ago. But its “teachings” have seen me through. Those “teachings” were true introductions to the world.

Those Bennington mentorships led me to sculpture, while denying me my dream of dance. Much later, as my art practice became mature sculpture, it embraced installation, performance and audience participation. All deeply physical. And I was thankful for the openness of my practice.

What I learned at Bennington is how to venture on without being destroyed—to make the most of opportunities and to be, above all, creative about solutions. And I know now, that which is at the root of our being cannot be suppressed.

HALLELUJAH. At Last.



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At Bennington, I was a music major, playing violin and, of course, composing. All my other courses were introductory courses. I was told that I had to take an advanced course in some other area. I chose a wonderful one with Francis Golffing called “Philosophical Themes in Modern European Literature”. I loved the reading, but I guess I didn’t really understand it, because I failed the course.

So I stayed with the violin and became a freelancer in New York City, playing here and there in part-time orchestras and teaching there and here.

In 1983, I married Fred Hauptman, a conductor and musicologist on the faculty of City College of New York. He has been a wonderful guide in my musical and literary experiences. In 1983, he convinced me to join the “early music” world, and after acquiring a violin with gut strings and a reproduction of a baroque bow, I began to play in the various baroque and classical music groups in NYC. I especially loved playing Handel’s *Messiah* with the wonderful boys’ choir at St. Thomas Church in NYC.

In 1988-90 we lived in Seattle where I taught middle school string classes, and played in chamber orchestras. We put together a group called the Versailles Ensemble and played instrumental and vocal music of the French baroque period. We did well with it and came to feel at home here. We spent all the following summers in Seattle. In 1999, we moved out for good.



I’m not playing much classical music now, but have become a fiddler. I play in a large group that jams every week and plays occasionally for contra dances. I also play English country dance music with a pianist and sometimes another melody player. I’m working at improvising chordal and melodic accompaniments, and I enjoy writing out composed countermelodies that get rather elaborate and surprising.

And along with those activities I do some quilting and crewel work, try to keep the garden free of weeds (hah!), and I take pictures. I’ve taken up the treble viol and run the rental program for Pacific NW Viol Society. I also volunteer for the Kruckeberg Botanic Garden Foundation, taking care of some of the membership chores and helping out at events. (Oh! Mr. Woodworth!)



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Dionysian romps in the shrubbery, teaming up with Andrea (Dworkin) to secede from the College (something to do with men-in-rooms), hair-raising drives up and down the Taconic (ask Kathleen Norris about that)... those were a few of my favorite things...

There was, however, time to make art, and although it took a few years to paint the prevailing Greenbergian dictates out of my system, the formal values I assimilated at Bennington are pervasive in my work since.

Perhaps most important is that Bennington enabled me to segue into the life I wanted—the downtown art world of Manhattan. The friends *made there* have shaped my experience of the world, for better or worse, to this day.

(Those dearly beloveds are slipping away with alarming frequency as we age. I salute them.)



There are some teachers to whom I am particularly grateful: Dick Haas (still a friend); Sidney Tillim, a very amusing “counselor”; and Pat Adams, who made me aware of “marks” and used to tell us: “Go into the studio every day, even just to sweep the floor.”

My career as an artist has been sporadic. There were good years (show-wise) and not so good ones, but I have always kept working, and have showed in Mexico, Berlin, and London, as well as many small galleries in NYC. I have published three books, travelled a lot (always with my watercolors) and continue live in and love lower Manhattan while mourning the loss of the great art bars that provided companionship, great networking opportunities, and, yes, fun!

I have never been “married”, but “divorced” at least three times (a drummer, a guitarist, a poet).

I’ve owned a house in Sag Harbor, am rent-stabilized, still read voraciously, cared for an aging parent (by far the hardest job on earth, I think), danced all night, and flown paper airplanes with my grand-nephews.

All things considered, it has been very interesting and rewarding. So far.

Regrets? (more than) a few, but more, much more than that, I did it my way.



*On Safari with sister Kate, Kenya, 2018*

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My morning began with a common act hard to imagine in 1969. I posted on Facebook Gandhi's version of the seven deadly sins: Wealth without Work, Pleasure without Conscience, Knowledge without Character, Commerce without Morality, Science without Humanity, Worship without Sacrifice, Politics without Principle. I was reminded of my long days (and nights) rehearsing *The Wakefield Cycle* in the Barn, when I learned a different set of sins in Old English. This connected decades of life in the arts, cultivated at Bennington, still going and I hope growing. Principles taught in Language and Literature—passion, perception, poema—continue to inform.

I am grateful for my college experience—a gift of time in a paradise of amazing minds and wild imaginations, social justice warriors, working artists. My mentors Chris Koch, Stanley Edgar Hyman, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Kit Foster, Claude Fredericks, to name just a few, continue to inspire me.

After graduation, I worked at Woodstock Playhouse and was a doctoral student at UCSC. I left grad school for

love, to live at a homestead farm in Ohio. A year long drive from New York to Tierra del Fuego followed with the father of my future children.

Chapters in New York, working at WBAI. Pregnant, I landed back in California. Maren Jenkins Hassinger was ballast during my home birth. For many years I organized public events at the Performing Arts, UCSC, launching Shakespeare/Santa Cruz, National Festival Women's Theater, producing at the Edinburgh Festival, raising beloved children, Kaj and Jaiva.

I landed as single mother in New York and started the first cause-related marketing venture to raise money for the arts. Back to California, where I served as Public Relations director at SFMOMA.

I next produced a body of public artwork including City of Poets, directed an oratorio for Allen Ginsberg's memorial, developed *The Roof is On Fire* and *No Blood No Foul*, focused on police



*Annice with daughter Jaiva Larsen, mother Arline Jacoby in Philadelphia (mother's hometown)*

and Oakland youth, with Suzanne Lacy and Chris Johnson. I organized *Watershed* with U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass for the Library of Congress and directed opening performance for Hague Appeal for Peace for the United Nation.

After my book *Street Art San Francisco: Mission Muralismo*, foreword by Carlos Santana (Abrams, 2009), was published, I curated the year-long series, *Cultural Encounters*, for the deYoung Museum.

In response to the wars since 9/11, I launched Saving Grace with the Interfaith Council of New York, reconsidering Thanksgiving, what serves us and what we serve.

I launched UNDERCOVER, to make the humanitarian homeless crisis visible, a creative and media success, yet did not move the needle on change.

I am blessed with a circle of family and friends. My son, Kaj Larsen is an intrepid journalist. My daughter, Dr. Jaiva Larsen, is an emergency physician in Tucson.

Many projects, including a sequel to my street art book and a book on my experiences as an anti-war mother of a Navy SEAL, are in the works.



*Annice, San Francisco*



*Annice with son, Kaj Larsen at Veteran Charity Event*



## Risa Jaroslow

Dance was the center of my world before I got to Bennington, while I was there, and has continued to be since I graduated. There were three relationships that began at Bennington that have been significant in my life. I met David Tobis in the spring of my freshman year and his senior year at Williams. After a three-month romance, he left for a year on a Fulbright in Guatemala. I was 19, wildly in love, and announced to my parents that I was taking a semester off and going to Guatemala. I promised I'd return and finish school. David and I married the following September while I was a sophomore. He has been my rock, my champion, my love for 52 years. We've held fast through the inevitable ups and downs in long relationships. Viola Farber's classes took me in a new direction in my dance training. I continued to study with her in New York long after graduating. Wendy Perron and I met as freshmen. We worked closely together early in our careers in New York and our friendship has grown since those early years.

David and I moved into a loft in Soho in 1972 when it wasn't legal to live there. It was an exciting time. I began to show my choreography at NYC venues. I spent the next forty years based in New York choreographing, teaching and always finding my way as a dance artist. I created a company that performed, taught, and toured. A residency in Poland in 1993 led to a ten-year relationship with the burgeoning dance world there during which I made many trips to teach, perform, and work with local community groups and artists. I recently had the chance, while I was a guest artist in the UK, to return to Poland after 16 years to see some of the people I'd worked closely with during those ten years.

In the mid-eighties, I began a relationship with University Settlement. Created in 1886, it provided services for the Lower East Side immigrant community. I was able to use its large auditorium for rehearsal in exchange for offering dance in Settlement programs for senior adults, new speakers of English, women on welfare, and teens. Working in these programs led me to begin bringing non-trained dancers into my performance work with my company.

Eventually I created an arts program that served the Settlement neighborhood and the downtown dance and performance community. I left after ten years, feeling a need to wear fewer hats and focus on my own work. Arts at University Settlement has continued.

Eight years ago, I began aching for a change. Soho had become a crowded high-end mall. It became so hard to



*Risa in Liverpool, UK*

live and work in NY. I was very unhappy. I wanted to be someplace where I didn't know what was around every corner. In 2013, we relocated to the Bay Area. Once we decided to leave NY we knew where we'd go. Our son and daughter and two granddaughters were in the East Bay. I thought it likely that I could create a satisfying work life and David just needed his computer and an airport. It's been a great move. I have connected with some terrific artists with whom I've collaborated. I have found dancers I love working with. We live in Oakland and in a short time can be in San Francisco, at the ocean or in redwoods.

Though David and I married when we were very young, we didn't have our first child, Mara, for nine years and our son Sam, 13 years after that. Mara is a licensed PI and works for the Alameda County Public Defender. Two years ago, Sam, soon after getting an undergrad degree in Rhetoric at UC Berkeley, bought the one kosher bakery in the East Bay. We now enjoy the best challah. Mara's husband is African-American, and having biracial granddaughters has taught me a lot about the depth of racism in our world. I so admire how both girls, now 16 and 13, carry their Black/Jewish identities with grace and pride.

Recently, ODC Theater in San Francisco presented the premiere of *At Your Service*, a work I created in collaboration with vocalist/composer Amy X Neuburg, 11 dancers, a midwife, a hospice nurse, a public-school math teacher, an SF firefighter, a former naval officer and a fundraiser for non-profits. We asked—how do we serve? How are we served? How can we serve something bigger than ourselves? I always start a new piece with a question and creating a dance is how I look for answers. Another current project is directing the Elders Project at Destiny Arts, an organization that serves young people, most of them people of color, in Oakland. The Elders Project participants create their own work and are part of intergenerational projects with the teen and youth performance companies.

Despite what a bad time it is in our country, this is a sweet time in my life. I'm happy to be able to continue working in new ways with new collaborators and living near my children and grandchildren. My kids are thriving and yet I find that parenting is a lifelong endeavor. I continue learning how to do it as they and the grandchildren continue growing.



*Sam, Mara, and David*



*Granddaughters Isha and Kya on the ferry to SF*

## Brenda Kydd

I retired as a utility administrator from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power in 2010. I had also worked 20+ years at that city's Department of Recreation and Parks. I worked as a Recreation Director, was promoted to Senior recreation director, and Management Analyst. I taught dance and drama during my time as a recreation director. The Spanish class at Bennington served me well as I worked bilingually and was paid for it. I speak about five words in many languages as I learned on my own to say thank you, hello and other simple pleasantries. I also worked in retail, selling fabric for customers ranging from the home seamstress to designers such as Nolan Miller of *Dynasty* and the designer for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

I enjoy classical music and have been a subscriber to the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 2000 and watched as Disney Hall was being constructed from where I worked across the street. How exciting!

In retirement, I launched a jewelry business which is on hiatus right now as I redirect my energies to include more things I make. I travel and enjoy my new "personal trainer," my dog Chico.

I have inherited my mother's green thumb and enjoy my geraniums and indoor plants very much. I sew and often make pieces for my own wardrobe.

I enjoy learning about world culture and history as I travel. I am a happy camper.



## Liz Lerman

*Three Wishes: Adapted from Liz's Commencement speech, Bennington College, 2018*

I recently moved to the American southwest, and among my closest colleagues now are indigenous and Latinx artists from whom I am learning so much. They keep telling me that time is circular. I keep trying to figure out how that works.

I'm Jewish, and I am not sure I have experienced it that way. But today, coming back here and seeing myself as the 17-year-old I was back then... I have a sense of how time spirals backwards and forwards.

Riding up that amazing road, coming over Route 9 today I had a chance to recall my earlier trips, when I was visiting a person in Boston who I married for a couple of years. That marriage was the best mistake I ever made—and I made many. There was something about that period of life for women, no matter how open and thoughtful and smart we were, that somehow, we were wound up to get married. And the fact that I did it and got out of it so fast was a kind of liberation and a way of understanding evolution. You slough the things off that aren't working and then you move on and find better structures. I found you could change your destiny. That is my first wish for you. That just as artists imagine and create change on the stage, that you can do it in life too.

Wendy Perron and I were in school together here and she is still among my most cherished friends. Right now, we are part of the planning for a Jewish dance conference and it is so fraught. We're co-curating a night that will address Palestinian dance forms and the origins of Israeli folk dance, about race and soul. I want to say that there is nobody I would rather wrestle with these issues with than someone I've known for 50 years.

So my second wish is that somehow you have a sense that the people that you are with here today and have gone through so much together—that some of them will remain with you, and they'll be with you through all of time.

When I was in my late 20s, my mother got cancer. She went really fast. I thought I was so independent, and then she died and everything, everything collapsed. So I decided that I was going to make a dance about what happened to my family because I absolutely could not comprehend it. And I decided I needed to have a bunch of old people in the dance because I wanted to welcome her to wherever she had gone. So I went to find old people, but this was in 1975, pre-jogging America. There's nothing like physical activity in the street, and old people are all hidden.

I did find a place near my house in Washington, DC called the Roosevelt Hotel for Senior Citizens. I went there, proposed teaching a class because I knew that if I got people interested, after a while I could say to them, "Wanna be in this dance?" And maybe they would. But the lady thought it was crazy. She agreed to pay me \$5 a week and said I could do whatever I wanted on Thursday nights.





I was trained at that time as a Merce Cunningham progenitor. I believed in post-modernism. I walked into this place and I was met with 80 of the most broken and crazy and amazing bodies in front of me. And when we started dancing, my ideas of beauty changed. My idea of technique changed. My idea of virtuosity changed. We worked on jumping for a long time, and they were sitting and they could just jump out of their chair. It was as virtuosic as anything I could imagine.

We performed the piece about my mother's death and I thought I was finished. And they said to me, "what's next?" Because now that they were dancing and now that they were involved they weren't going to stop. And I stayed there nine more years.

So this is my third wish for you: that you find these laboratories that let you work, make mistakes, try again. I didn't know what I was doing and I learned way more than my initial inquiry. I was learning about collaboration, about equity, about prejudice and problems. And I was learning how to be in this world even as I was creating a new one.



## Lauren Levey

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At White Plains High School I'd been a social misfit. I played the piano (but best privately due to stage fright); secretly scribbled musical phrases; read a lot; wrote poetry; and tried unsuccessfully, like an outside observer, to understand my culture.

Suddenly, in 1965 in Vermont, I was home. No more need for daydreams, or sleep either, real life was too interesting. I'd had little recent experience talking to anyone about anything that mattered; but now the best parts of my education involved talking to my wonderful peers, at great length, about important, outrageous, hilarious stuff. McCullough living room could usually be counted on for a conversation; if not, Commons, or Mary Seaman's room, or Rose Basile's, or Barbara Silverstein's. Vietnam, Civil Rights, art media, college parietals, our childhoods, sex, ethics; Andrea Dworkin's arrest for wearing men's clothes while demonstrating against the Vietnam War; where you could get an expensive illegal abortion from a real doctor.

During sophomore Non-Resident Term I worked at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Studio. Watching and listening to Vladimir Ussachevsky, Milton Babbitt, and other composers working there, I learned you could make cool music using old radio equipment, magnetic tap, and lots of razor blades and Scotch tape. The following summer I took master classes with Darius Milhaud at the Aspen Festival.



I ambivalently left Bennington in 1967 for Sarah Lawrence; and then, after graduation, spent most of a terrible year trying to become a better composer at Harvard, which wasn't a good place or time for me to do that, although I did learn about the impermeability of their glass ceiling. Mercifully, in April 1970 Harvard was shut down in a massive occupation by undergraduates. The fall found me at Yale, much better, studying over the next four years with Kryzstoff Penderecki, Jacob Druckman, and Bulet Arel, who taught me more about razor blades and tape, and synthesizers and acoustics too.

I was hired to join Dartmouth's faculty right after



feminism (Jill Johnston, Sheryl Denbo, Brenda Silver); and Watergate (everybody, all the time).

Eventually, Dartmouth was no longer a good fit for me, and neither was composing music like that; I've had some subsequent careers and passions. But maybe you always love the first one best, and Bennington made that one possible.

they began to admit women undergraduates, then realized they had no regular female faculty. The dozen or so of us hired in a variety of disciplines were specifically charged with changing Dartmouth's culture so that young women could thrive. We were over-represented on every academic committee, we formed a women's faculty caucus, and we were given a generous budget to turn Dartmouth culture on its ear; and we did, at least for a time.

My years at Dartmouth changed me too. Several of us formed a collective where we grew organic vegetables and learned to ride motorcycles. And I met new wonderful people to talk to about music (Jon Appleton, Christian Wolff, Pauline Oliveros);

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Trying to sum up the last forty or fifty years seems like an impossible task. Who was I back then? Can I even remember?

Fate has a mind of its own—something we never knew in our twenties. It seems my time since college has been an ongoing series of adjusting and re-adjusting to turns in roads I never expected. I never expected to create the films for the Kennedy Center Honors for forty years, to write the Obama Inaugural at the Lincoln Memorial, film with Itzak Perlman, write for Carnegie Hall and Mickey Mouse, win awards and get rejected, find myself at home on the page, and sometimes, often, lost too.

I've found that dreams are one thing and talent is another thing, but character—whether it plays out as ambition or empathy or kindness—plays a larger role than you imagine. What you find you are good at—which in my case turned out to be making documentary films about people in the arts, writing television specials and speeches for national cultural events—was never something I imagined. I never knew I'd want to be so good at it.



I also never imagined being unmarried or not having children or having long, ill-fated love affairs. Or losing so many people I loved.

I was ill-served by the drama department at Bennington, and by the raging egomaniac they let head it. Yet a set designer took me under her wing and I learned from her, an anthropology teacher led me into wondrous philosophical waters, and a literature professor encouraged me to think critically. I was discouraged by one producer and praised by another. For the same work. Sometimes, it's the fit that matters. With them. But also with yourself.

I've come to the time in my life when you know that there aren't any answers—so you stop asking. What you do keep doing is asking questions. I'm teaching now, and I love it. Who knew I'd have such a wonderful time in this right turn of a direction.

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Bennington represented a turning point in my life even though I transferred to a college in my home city, Los Angeles, after freshman year. I arrived at Bennington very sheltered, a bit timid and unused to asserting my voice or my beliefs. I was a little intimidated in the beginning, but fascinated by a community of girls who were creative and courageous individuals with grand visions for their lives. Booth House was particularly interesting with girls like Holly Barrett, my roommate and childhood friend Maren Jenkins, Ellen Glick, Linda Gould, and Annice Jacoby who made my year at Bennington the adventure of a lifetime!! My journey since then has led me through a stint on Wall Street, marriage, the birth of three amazing children, divorce, and a battle with cancer that ended 16 years ago. I am proud of the clarity I feel now which defines who I want to be and how I want to serve during this chapter of my life. I am a transformational life coach, budding author, and speaker. Life has never been so fulfilling! I've traveled all over the world from South Africa to the Indian Himalayas. In June, I spoke at my 55th high school reunion in Istanbul, and in September, I'm taking a small group of women to Bali for a spiritual retreat. Bennington marked an awakening as to possibilities I had never considered followed by a very rich and exciting life all these years. Sending best wishes for health, happiness and success to all of my Bennington friends!



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I knew Bennington was a mistake from the first night I was there. Far from the uncertain bustle of urban life, far from the familiarity of the South and its victimized and victimizers, surrounded by the deafening quiet and peace, I was literally climbing the walls.

I'd transferred from a HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and having grown up in a totally segregated South, I didn't have the experience, set of skills, or the will to blend in and share. Apart from a couple of friends from the ten admitted black students and a handful of distanced acquaintances, I spent the last two years of college feeling isolated and sad.

From a culture where adults were greeted by Mr., Miss, Ma'am, and Sir, I could never feel comfortable calling teachers by their first names. I was surrounded by spoiled, entitled white girls who didn't have to worry about life after graduation—Daddy would take care of them. Whenever I would leave the vacuum of the campus for a trip into town, I was stared at like I was some rare, exotic creature.

The feeling of being at the wrong place at the wrong time stood out in stark relief when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. The nation's cities erupted in an explosion of anger, frustration and violence. I remember thinking, while singing "We Will Overcome" at an on-campus memorial service, that something just didn't feel right. I wasn't where I should have been. I remember another time, traveling to nearby Williams College to join other self-proclaimed radicals in taking over some building or other. Those expressions of militancy being the rage in those days, now in retrospect seen as boomers' silly, misguided angst. But we were tolerated. I remember later revisiting my old campus to relive what I was missing and narrowly escaping being attacked one chilling DC night.

It was then that I realized that Bennington was the safest place on Earth. There I could walk outside in the dead of night and not be afraid or have anything to be afraid of.

I'm not saying Bennington was immune from danger and death. Begging and paying for weekend rides to New York and Boston was the norm for those of us without the luxury of a car. Two girls that I'd ridden with only weeks before died in a car accident, their deaths shaking up the school. Another time, one of the few white girls I'd taken the time to know died of an overdose. Both reminders that the harsh realities of life *do* seep into what was designed to be a paradise.

But for me, being at Bennington may have saved me. Its isolation and insulation allowed me to see the world from



a distance and develop a different perspective. Being apart and away allowed me a peculiar take on things—not so inclined to toe the line, fall in step, spout the expected. Bennington allowed me not to be pigeonholed as I majored in anything that began with a P—philosophy, psychology, playwriting, pottery. Of the four, playwriting stuck. An NRT with Ed Bullins of the New Lafayette Theater in Harlem was my introduction to the East Coast Black Arts scene. I'd written plays performed by the Free Southern Theater in New Orleans. Now I could study from my ivory tower.

After graduation, marriage, the birth of a daughter, abandonment, divorce, and a Master's in Education, I became a teacher, motivated to enrich the lives of inner city youth. I wound up assigned to instruct children of the privileged in the toney East Baton Rouge suburbs. Then black students killed by authorities at Jackson State University recalled an earlier moment. I realized that I needed to be somewhere else. I got into the Yale School of Drama playwriting program. I won awards. *The Moving Violation* won the Kennedy Center Black Playwright Award. The play was published in *Center Stage: An Anthology of 21 Black American Plays*.

Then the ascension stopped. I had another daughter, moved from New Orleans to Los Angeles, bounced around from unemployment to eviction and an attempt to add another degree to my resume—this one in Critical Studies at USC—until I had daughter three and realized that stability and comfort were more important than ambition and art. I returned to teaching. Like my mother before me, I taught second grade. I taught at the same school and same grade for thirty years. I was teaching the underserved. I wanted to enrich their lives, to share with them a way to aspire, to be, to become. But changing demographics and administrative cross purposes made me realize that educating the children of the poor was a fixed game. The cards were stacked against them and I couldn't change the stacked deck.

I focused on my daughters. Through a mixture of mistakes and successes, I ushered my daughters into adulthood toward their own talents, ambitions and futures. Seeing how public education failed my first two daughters—and me—I got my youngest daughter into a renowned private girls school. Surrounded by spoiled white girls of the rich and famous, she learned to play the gamelan, do horseback riding, and excel at photography. I learned that



*With daughters Sonja, Simone and Stephanie*



you can only compete if you're truly equal. Ironic.

Now retired, I have returned to writing. Dismayed that I have not kept up, not having created a body of work that would have made me competitive, now trying desperately to catch up. I am like a modern day Rip Van Winkle, having slept for decades. I've added ageism to my intersectionality of race and gender. I struggle with technology and rely on my daughters to save me from my ignorance.

Still I have lived long enough to be grateful for health and home and garden. Grateful now for the experience of Bennington, believed for decades to have been a mistake, now seen as a rare opportunity to explore interests, to determine dislikes. To be coddled in a world that was both alien and familiar was a blessing, allowing me to explore, succeed or fail and realizing that one can survive both.

## Ellen McCulloch-Lovell

When I resisted being locked in my dorm at the women's college I first attended and realized I was taking requirements to attain good grades, I decided to transfer to Bennington in the second semester of my junior year. I graduated the following year—probably stretching the requirements for earning a degree—with a senior study that combined my two areas of inquiry, philosophy and art. I'd entered the “cauldron of creativity.” Small seminars, unfiltered Camels, dance performances, art shows, and parties with faculty members were thrilling. Most important was thinking for myself, designing studies, taking intellectual and artistic risks, and enjoying close contact with professors. Bennington was freeing, it was stimulating, but it was not what I would call friendly. Eventually, I found a few friends who have endured. Any social life was complicated by the fact that as a second semester senior I was married to Christopher Lovell; our son, Evan, was born in September 1969.

Bennington inculcated a love of the arts, an understanding of how fields of study interact, and the confidence to do my own research, and to explore my own ideas. It made me more self-reliant and courageous. In 1970, I joined the fledgling state arts council as its first education program director and stayed for 13 years, eight as executive director, supporting artists and cultural organizations. One aspect that intrigued me was how to argue for state and federal money for the arts. In 1983, alumna and friend Christine Graham helped me create a Governor's Institute for the Arts; she introduced me to choreographer Susan Sgorbati who directed the first institutes, now in their 36th year.

The next job was a leap—to Washington, DC as Senator Leahy's chief of staff. In late 1983, I left our hand-made house on Spruce Mountain for Capital Hill, and in 1986, when it was clear he would be reelected, Chris and Evan moved there. The work was non-stop for over ten years: coordinating his initiatives, involved in Senate and national campaigns, navigating both in the minority and majority. I relied on the mentoring of Senator Leahy and his wife Marcelle, and the love of my husband and son. It was hard to leave. The next leap was to the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities as its executive director. Hillary Clinton served as an active Honorary Chair as First Lady, and within a few years, I was invited onto the White House staff where I served from 1997 to the end of the administration in 2001. Meanwhile, Chris taught at Old Dominion University as associate professor of Counseling and Educational Leadership. Evan graduated from UVM and was mastering the world of international business.

I moved on to the Library of Congress as the founding director of the Veterans History Project, a national collection of first-hand accounts of war. When Marlboro College called in 2003, the question of how to educate the next generation of citizens was compelling for me and Vermont was calling us back. I found that Marlboro and Bennington share common values dedicated to student-driven learning. I was named president in 2004 and stayed in that rewarding intellectual and creative community for 11 years before stepping down in 2015. Chris gave up his tenured position to support me at the College and worked with doctoral students at the Union Institute and University before retiring.



The next plunge again was unexpected: to become the Legacy Minister of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, running a campaign to preserve and improve Rock Point, the church's 130 acres on Lake Champlain in Burlington. That goal was met in September 2018, and now my professional involvement includes some consulting and serving on nonprofit boards.

Life is full. I earned my MFA in Writing in 2012. All along I have been writing poems, publishing some, and now summon the courage to keep doing it. I am less interested in organizations and more in individuals; less in the political process and more the creative process; less in national issues and more in what I can do for Vermont. We are fortunate to have Evan and Kristi and their three beautiful, bold girls nearby. Chris and I celebrated 50 years of marriage. I spend time with my 97-year old mother and am happy for more time with friends. Even as I try to make sense out of many rich life experiences, I look ahead, still thinking about what philosophy and art have to teach about living a good life.

## Gay Johnson McDougall

*Adapted from Gay's bio for the 2018 Elizabeth Coleman Visionary Leadership Award*

Throughout her life, Gay has consistently challenged inequality. She works on the fault-lines of race, gender and economic exploitation in the American context and in countries around the world. Gay has been a leader on human rights within the UN for more than 3 decades, holding positions such as the first UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.

For 15 years she helped secure the release of thousands of political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia. She was appointed to the electoral commission that ran the first democratic elections in South Africa that ended apartheid and installed Nelson Mandela as president.

She was awarded a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Fellowship in 1999 for her work on behalf of international human rights.

Since graduating from Bennington, Gay received a JD from Yale Law School and earned an LLM in public international law at the London School of Economics. She also has several honorary degrees.





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I transferred to Bennington from a more conventional college, which I found to be too much like boarding school. I wasn't a particularly adventuresome or self-motivated student, and although Bennington wasn't a great fit I enjoyed it and graduated. I probably would have been a good candidate for vocational school. I was thoroughly programmed to get married and have children and, despite the emerging changes in expectations for women, that's exactly what I did when I graduated.

We lived on a farm and raised animals and vegetables. I went back to school and earned a certificate in landscape design from Radcliffe. I have worked as a designer, in a private school library, and cooking in two bakery/cafes for over twenty-five years. I am still doing design and library work. And what I call crone care, driving and cooking for older women. I have enjoyed all of my jobs.

I am divorced, have four children and seven grandchildren, and live in my home town. I have a small house and a big yard. I do a lot of gardening, walking, reading, and knitting.



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As a drama major at Bennington, studying with Paul Gray and Victor Bumbalo, I spent virtually all my time in the Barn Theatre, rehearsing and performing in, among others, *The Wakefield Cycle*, Marquis de Sade's *The Cenci*, *The Visit* (starring Paul Gray's wife Gretchen), and the 1921 Polish play *The Madman and the Nun*. When I graduated I was sure that I would become a successful actor, but, alas, that did not happen. The cruelty and arbitrariness of theatre, combined with my deep insecurities and childhood trauma, made it impossible for me to function consistently in my chosen field. I have many good friends who are playwrights, so I still occasionally act in readings of their plays. My interest now is to pursue my goal of producing plays by finding a really good new play that my husband and I could invest in.

My personal life has taken a remarkable, miraculous turn. When I was 46, I married my second husband Bob, a brilliant biochemistry professor, and when I was 50, I underwent massive fertility treatments and gave birth to my beloved only child Matthew. (Matt has recently legally changed his name to Mountain.) Mountain is 21. He is brave, resilient, empathetic, loving, and multi-talented. He has developed a passion for cycling, and, as a semi-pro racer, he has competed successfully in races at Velodromes in Cleveland, Detroit, and Colorado Springs. Bob and I have flown to all these cities to see him race because we are so proud of him! Another source of our deep admiration for Mountain is that he has chosen to identify as non-binary and queer. He has allowed himself to find and accept his true self, and we are hopeful that this liberation will enable him to flourish and thrive in whatever he chooses to do. He has embarked on a difficult path, but he knows that he has our love and support along the way.

Thanks for reading this. Bob and I hope to attend the Reunion in September.

## Kathleen Norris

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Bennington was enormously formative for me. In my freshman year, Ben Belitt suggested that I might be a poet; Claude Fredericks gently guided my senior thesis of poems and essays. I'd long assumed that I'd become a librarian, but Bennington gave me the courage to embrace freelance writing. My NRT experiences were influential: as a kindergarten aide; as a library assistant at William and Mary, and Honolulu's Bishop Museum. My last NRT job, at The Academy of American Poets in New York City, led to employment after graduation. My first book of poems, *Falling Off*, was published in 1971.

I credit Bennington with giving me the nerve to move with my husband, the poet David Dwyer, from New York to my mother's home town in western South Dakota in 1974. That proved to be a great place to write, and I produced another volume of poetry and my first prose book, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*, which became a bestseller. More books followed, and in 2009, 40 years after my graduation, I returned to Bennington to give a talk on my life as a writer. But my premier literary accomplishment is having my photo on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times* Sunday lifestyle section, alongside Dolly Parton.



*Photo of three generations of my family; one of our annual Christmas photos taken in the backyard of the house in Honolulu, where the entire clan lived (except for myself and my husband)*

My husband and I remained in South Dakota, with visits at Christmas to my family's three-generation household in Honolulu. We never considered ourselves good parenting material, but were a proud aunt and uncle to three nieces and a nephew. David and I were married for 26 years, until he died of cancer. I was a caregiver for him, and later for my aging parents and a sister who died in 2014. I consider it a privilege to have accompanied them on the journey, and for doing all I could to give them a peaceful death.

I now have four young grand-nieces who call me "the book auntie" because I so frequently give them books. I became a gym rat in my 50s, and this has helped me avoid prescription drugs. At 70 I developed severe arthritis in both knees, and it's only steady exercise that keeps me mobile. I still travel extensively across the US, giving



*Photo of me and my husband, David Dwyer, about a month before he died of cancer*

talks at universities, churches, monasteries, and retreat centers.

The silence of the Great Plains gave me room to hone my skills as a writer. And it was there that I discovered the Benedictine men and women who have become my family, people who understand the value of silence. I have been an oblate (an associate) of a Benedictine monastery since 1987. Unlike a monastery, Bennington is a resolutely secular place. But it was at Bennington that I discovered the spiritual import of literature. I now realize that Ben Belitt's meticulous, line-by-line explication of William Blake's poems and the prose of James Joyce was my introduction to *lectio divina*, the "holy reading" of the Benedictines. And I'm still at it.



*Photo of my parents (John and Lois Norris), husband, and myself, on the day I received an honorary doctorate of letters from Notre Dame*

## Margaret Parker

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I continue making art and writing poetry which is all becoming more political. I'm the president of the Women's Caucus for Art, Michigan Chapter whose upcoming show, *citizenSHIP*, explores the balance between the people and the state. It's a participatory show in Ypsilanti, MI, that will invite viewers and organizations to tell us and show us what they think citizenship means today and what they want it to become in the future.

Bennington gave me confidence in myself as an artist, a lifelong student and an experimenter. When I left Bennington after sophomore year and returned to the Midwest, I finished my BFA at the University of Michigan, having gained the knowledge that I could find my own way wherever I landed. I valued so many Bennington teachers—Pat Adams and Isaac Witkin who gave me tools for drawing, painting and sculpture which I continue expanding on. In Claude Fredericks' Shakespeare class I acted out Lear's confusions, and we discussed the daunting layered stories of Beckett with Mr. Golfing. Following Martha Wittman around the Barn, I loved dance more—the reason I'd come to Bennington—by realizing that was not my field. Paul Gray's Theatre of Cruelty theories that he loved to practice on us cringing students did not stop me from designing sets and costumes, including for the University of Michigan School of Music Opera, confirming that cruelty was not a theatrical universal. From Mr. van der Linde, the most jovial of math teachers, I discovered that finding multiple ways to reach a correct mathematical conclusion was something I liked doing. In Joanna Kirkpatrick's class on Hobbes' *Leviathan*, I learned that if I outlined my notes, I too could understand even difficult material and Hobbes' body politic is still working on me today. Jules Olitsky, my second-year counselor, in a cloud of references and stories that equaled the dense fog of his paintings, invited me into his world.

The challenge of showing and selling my work did not really resolve itself until I got involved with the Women's Caucus for Art and began aiming for local shows in nontraditional spaces where political content was not toxic



*Me from 1969, by Bill Yee*



but necessary. The national WCA and its network of chapters led me to into shows around the country.

My husband, Mark Hodesh, has been my greatest supporter and partner. I've worked for our family businesses in graphic design and marketing, finding my studio space in the hundred-year-old building that houses our family store, Downtown Home & Garden. He is as intuitive and hands-on in his small business ventures as I am in art, his energy for work is a constant high mark for what it takes to be successful. His projects always become community gathering places, very much like my shows and participatory ventures. Our daughter Jeanne lives in Brooklyn, NY. She attended Sarah Lawrence, then Hunter College for her Master's in creative nonfiction, and has found a home working at the amazing New York Public Library.

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A few of you may have noticed that I did not graduate with my class after four lovely years at Bennington. I failed to get a grip on the senior thesis and didn't think it was going to be important to have a degree. Some highlights after that: I lived in NYC briefly, then I worked in a natural foods restaurant in Cambridge, MA, then I came back to Vermont (a lot further north). I worked for a cartoonist and joined a band. Eventually, I met my husband and played music with him and others for a dozen years or so. I sang girl group and swingy trios with two other women in an eight-piece band featuring some truly outstanding players, like Big Joe Burrell on sax.

I am a part-singing fool. I led a small mixed group for 17 years, and then an eight-voice women's group for another ten or so. I was in a Balkan women's group, several bluegrass bands, and other mixed up configurations. Right now, I'm preparing some songs for a friend's experimental/modern project.



*Deb*

I live in the rural town of Bakersfield, VT, population 1,230. We built a house and raised two wonderful children who are both musicians, as is my husband. We travel, most often to France where we have friends, but also Scotland, Brazil, India, and other places. We love to sail and have spent many weeks cruising Lake Champlain. I taught music in the local elementary school for five years and had a long-time job as church organist (electric and foot pump organs.) Mine has been a do-it-yourself sort of life, including a couple of years of homeschooling and much learning on the job. I became a draftsman, by hand and then CAD, and worked for civil engineers. At one point, I finished up a job and was wondering what to do

next. A friend threw out a challenge: "If I were that close to finishing college, I would do it." I called Bennington on the spot. It was a Friday afternoon and no one answered. I didn't hear back for weeks and would have dropped the whole thing, but finally someone did call. Dear Anne Schlabach had left a letter in my file that said something like, "All Debbie has to do to graduate is write a senior thesis." So I did. In absentia, working with someone I barely knew.



*Debbie*

While writing that paper, I met the head of the graduate program in counseling at nearby Northern VT State U, as it is now called. I thought I'd take a course in counseling theories. Next thing I knew, I had an MA. It was not my goal really, but I just kept enjoying the classes. After that, I thought I should get a job in my new field.

I have been working in the St. Albans office of Howard Center as a drug and alcohol counselor (LADC and LCMHC) for twenty years now and am starting to get pretty good at it. I love helping my clients put their lives back together and being a support to them in their recovery. We are helping to develop the statewide response to the opioid crisis.

I still make music with my friends and family and am a member of Social Band, a small alternative chorus that performs wonderful original compositions, early music, and more. I have a great community here.

I have fond memories of Bennington and still dream about it sometimes. I especially loved Anne Schlabach and Lou Carini, who were my advisors. It was so amazing to have those long conversations about ideas with your teachers, something that Bennington allowed for and encouraged. I am grateful that Bennington took me back and let me graduate twenty-five years late. I also had very good friends there and hope to see them in September.



*Ben, Deb, and Anna*



*Clockwise from upper left) Deb and Will in Paris; "The Fabulous Spiders"; home; Will and Deb playing bluegrass (Will is more known as a jazz mandolinist); sailing on Lake Champlain; son Ben, wonderful song-writer and recording artist/producer; daughter Anna, multi-styled clarinetist, composer, teacher, MM New England Conservatory.*



*Friend, Ben, friend, Deb, Anna, Ethan, Will*

## Janie Paul

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I transferred to Bennington for my junior and senior years and wished that I had started there. I am forever grateful to Dean Donald Brown who let me start classes the day after my interview, two weeks after fall semester began. Fran Antmann and I became friends for life; we loved printmaking with Richard Haas, art history with Sidney Tillim, and our shared studio above the Commons. I treasure what I learned from Pat Adams, Isaac Witkin and my American philosophy teacher, whose name I can't remember. I studied color with Pat and subsequently taught color theory for forty years; Isaac's sculpture class forever informed how I taught figure drawing; and John Dewey's *Art as Experience* got me thinking about art as a basic human need. I loved the beautiful landscape, the friendship of women, and our teachers who exemplified what it means to be committed to one's beliefs.



After graduation, I got an MA in painting from Hunter College and a Ph.D. in art education from New York University while I taught children at the Brooklyn Museum and adults at Parsons School of Design. Then, with the Studio in a School Program, I taught in underserved New York elementary schools. In 1995, I moved to Ann Arbor to teach at the University of Michigan School of Art & Design where I developed classes that took students into prisons, juvenile centers and Detroit public schools to teach art. My husband, Buzz Alexander, professor of literature at the University of Michigan, founded the Prison Creative Arts Project; and I worked with him to develop PCAP into one of the largest prison arts projects in the world.

Buzz and I founded the Annual Exhibitions of Art by Michigan Prisoners in 1996 and we are now in our twenty-fifth year. Some artists have been exhibiting since the first show, and I have developed close relationships with them. It is hard to be so close to the suffering of so many people serving long sentences in our cruel criminal justice system. But it is wonderful to be part of the artists' growth. I have learned so much about art, incarceration and the resilience of human beings. I also initiated the Detroit Connections classes which take university art students into underserved Detroit public elementary schools to teach art. For all of this work I have been gratified to be recognized by the university with various awards for teaching and service.

I have two stepchildren, and a godson and two grandsons who I adore.

I am completing a book about the incarcerated artists and their work called *Worthy to the World: Art and Voices from Prison*. It presents their work, their stories and my reflections. When I finish the book, I plan to spend more time in my studio. My life as a painter is the core of my life and I have maintained a studio and exhibition practice. All my work with prisoners and children comes from this creative source.

## Wendy Perron

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My life has been dance, dance, dance, with different entry points along the way. I still occasionally perform in under-the-radar group improvisations, but I am more active as a writer. I spent almost ten years as editor in chief of *Dance Magazine*, and continue to write for it and for my own website and occasionally for international publications. I can't help it; dance is my passion, and although during a lull I thought about dedicating myself to either gun control or environmental action, the thing I get the most juice from is dance: doing it, seeing it, writing about it, thinking about it.

After about 25 years of choreographing, mostly for my own company, I transferred my videotapes onto DVDs, only to notice a few years later that the DVDs were damaged. Realizing that I basically had nothing to show for all that work, I decided to collect my writings about dance into a book. You can't embalm choreography but you can save words in black and white. *Through the Eyes of a Dancer*, a selection of my writing over 40 years, was published by Wesleyan University Press in 2013—the same year *Dance Magazine* “let me go” as editor in chief. (In order to collect severance pay, I had to sign a document saying I wouldn't sue the owner for ageism.) But I was soon quite happy with my freelance life.

I teach a graduate seminar in contemporary dance at NYU Tisch School of the Arts. It's a yeasty challenge to discuss anything related to the arts in this age of cultural identity. I have also been a guest in other MFA programs, often to give feedback to budding choreographers. Past teaching stints have included Princeton, Rutgers, Mt. Holyoke, and CalArts. As I write this, I'm making plans for a trip to give talks and workshops in Shanghai and Beijing.

But I have to admit that my favorite teaching was at Bennington College, where I was on the faculty from 1978 to 1984. I loved re-entering the school as an instructor, seeing creative sparks fly from that perspective. The students were game for all kinds of projects. I had ongoing conversations with people in other divisions and was free to create new courses. While on faculty, I developed the Bennington College Judson Project, which brought post-modern pioneers Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown and Simone Forti to campus to work with students. The project also included an exhibit of photos, reconstructions of historic works of the early 60s, and a series of video interviews—all of which were shown in NYC as well as Bennington. I am happy to say that this project served as a foundational source for the exhibit on Judson Dance Theater mounted by the Museum of Modern Art last fall.

Other positions I've held include leading sessions for the adult mentally disabled, heading the NYC chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility (a sector of the peace movement), being associate director of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, advising the Fall for Dance at City Center, and curating exhibits where dance and visual art intersect.



I've written a manuscript on the anarchistic group Grand Union (1970–76), partly as a way to revisit that era for me, and partly to celebrate a dance collective that was truly leaderless, bucking all versions of hierarchy. I love every person in that group (Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton, Barbara Dilley, David Gordon, Nancy Lewis, and Douglas Dunn) so writing the book was a labor of love. It's slated to be published next year by Wesleyan University Press.

My husband of 32 years, Jim Siegel, is my rock. Although he incurred a spinal cord injury in 1995, he is ambulatory and (after a rocky period) feeling OK. He stayed home a lot and became the primary parent for our son Nick while I was busy. His support for me is unwavering; he reads many drafts of my writing even though he is immersed in his own epic book project on Carl Jung. Nick is a cinematographer who travels often for gigs. His calmness, professionalism, and sweet sturdiness are a tonic to me. In the category of family, my cup runneth over.

I try to acclimate to my slower, stiffer body. Because of back spasms starting in my 20s, I exercise twice a day just to maintain normal core strength. I've been lucky (so far) that those exercises allow me to hold onto a small semblance of dance readiness.

My connection to Bennington goes deep. I've met people up and down the generations who stimulate my thinking; I am still in conversation with some of them. The essential value of the arts that we breathed in every day at Bennington—that is still my oxygen.



*In a downtown talking-and-dancing performance, March 2019.  
Photo by Whitney Browne.*

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I arrived at Bennington from suburban New Jersey, expecting to set the world on fire. Which I didn't do. But I persevered, learning things about the world and where my place in it might be. Lesson one: nobody promised me that any kind of success would be easy.

The Bennington of that era—1965-1967—seems almost magical in retrospect. So tiny, and so beautiful. (The fact that I've spent the intervening years in New York City might have blinkered my vision.)

I was lucky to be sheltered by the music department. I studied flute with the extraordinary Henry Brant for four years. As a freshman, I performed an Ernst Bloch suite in a concert for the inauguration of President Edward J. Bloustein, and ended at our senior concert. I remember being photographed with my flute, on the top step of a ladder with other instrumentalists on lower steps, in one of Henry Brant's spatial experiments. Laurie Hyman's impressionistic photo was printed in the Bennington Review.

By 1968, the sixties reached Vermont, and it seemed time to join the real world. I focused my class work in the social sciences. The department's small size called for idiosyncratic work in depth rather than breadth. Instructors of note included Rush Welter and Arnold Ricks in American and European history, Anne Schlabach in philosophy, and Peter Wilson in anthropology.

I wrote a thesis under Welter on 19th century religious perfectionism, and titled it "Paradise Now," in ironic homage to the Living Theatre.



After graduation, I drifted to New York, and found a research job in an urban affairs think tank, under the leadership of psychologist Kenneth B. Clark, author of *Dark Ghetto*. I worked on position papers in support of school integration and other issues. Eventually I was named a Fellow.

When funding for social research dried up in the early seventies, after the Vietnam War had decimated the U.S. economy, and thousands of American soldiers and Vietnamese died, I picked up a Master's degree at Columbia, and spent many years working in the financial industry.

Along the way I married my RPI architect, and together we created Anna Claire and renovated a loft in Tribeca, and a Victorian house in Brooklyn.

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In the fall when I started college at Vassar, my mother had just died after a long, painful illness. I was an emotional mess, but trying to hold it all together. I left Vassar in December. My father refused to support me financially or let me come back home to Ohio. From my mother's death, I had a small survivor social security check. That was what I had to live on. To continue to get the money, I had to be in school. So, I went to Bennington in the spring. I had a little apartment in Brooklyn, depended on friends for many meals, sometimes didn't eat, and at one point had no winter coat. It was a bad time in my life and I was not ideally suited to take advantage of Bennington's lofty educational ideals. I got through it. And, of course, there were absurdities and humor.

My favorite activity was being Fire Chief. It encompassed a simple undebatable purpose amidst the arguments and theorizing of being a philosophy major. Holly Harris drove the World War II salvage, four-on-the-floor fire truck. We were an all-woman or mostly woman crew. One of our best moments was a competition with the North Bennington Volunteer Fire Department. (We lost. They had unified spanners.) During one drill, I got to yell at both President Bloustein and Mr. Scott for standing too near the chem labs. What power!

One spring, Student Government had the now very laughable debate about the constitutional underpinnings of Bennington's rules about students having men in their rooms. I was intensely involved but I don't remember what it was about other than sex. I do recall that it was a glorious Vermont spring at Bennington and I should have been frolicking in the flowers.

After college, I worked at the NY City Parks Department, managing summer theater and dance productions in the parks for the Lindsay administration. And I applied to law school. I wanted to earn money to pay off my student loans and apply balm to my financial insecurity and sense of abandonment. I went to NYU Law, where I shocked the admissions director by telling him that I had no idea what grades I had gotten at Bennington because we weren't allowed to see them. Then he shocked me by showing them to me. NYU was then considered progressive admitting 15% women, the highest of any prestigious law school in the country. Nonetheless, I actually had a male student yell at me for occupying a seat that could be filled by a male who would support a family. I met my husband, Gene Pinover, in a first-year seminar at law school in 1970. We got married shortly after graduation. If we had married when we were both students school policy at the time said I would have lost my scholarships and loans. Things have changed; things have stayed the same.

Law school was different from Bennington. Before my first exam I had to ask another student what a blue book was. I did well. I got offered a job at a large prestigious Wall St. firm at a salary that allowed me to pay off both Bennington and my law school loans. I was hired by a firm of 150 lawyers, of whom 8 were female. During my stay there, they celebrated some big anniversary with a black-tie dinner, and the black and white panoramic group picture shows a three-foot-long spread of penguins with a few spare white ibises looking very odd. I was an ibis. I did securities and commercial litigation spending a lot of time in windowless rooms with piles and piles of documents. Once, after several weeks of arduous brief writing I was forced to stay home from exhaustion and the flu. Freed from legal toil, I started reading *Bleak House* and I was so unaccustomedly engrossed I read until the sky outside lightened with the dawn. After five years and two firms I quit because I hated it.

Over the next seven years, I spent a little time writing but then started having children. I was intrigued. Children were interesting and delightful and sometimes drove me crazy. I threw myself into the process. I made a family. I wanted to give my children what I had not had, and nurturing my children was of paramount importance.

I made one foolish attempt to retrieve my abandoned law career. I went back to NYU to get an LLM in intellectual property law, primarily copyright and trademarks. Interesting stuff until you start to practice it rather than discuss the theory. I worked for a short time, published some law review articles, but gave it up again. Litigating cases over the trademarks of squishy toys just wasn't as interesting as being with my kids playing with squishy toys. I'm proud of my kids, now adults in their 30s. They are thoughtful, engaged and caring. And they are caring for me now.

Now I spend a lot of time reading, writing for myself and engaged with ideas. I have had a long rewarding engagement with psychoanalysis which has provided valuable insight and continues to give depth to my thinking. I drove away some demons and some remain. Intellectual curiosity is my most potent driver. The most important thing Bennington gave me is a sometimes fearless, sometimes foolish notion that I can find out about anything if I just apply myself to the subject. Right now, I am learning about cancer and the philosophy of death.

In August 2017, I was diagnosed with Stage IV lung cancer. It is incurable. I have had targeted therapy, radiation, chemotherapy and immunotherapy. I go for treatment every three weeks. As one doctor said, it works until it doesn't work. The diagnosis has illuminated mortality but brought gnawing uncertainty. I'm trying to understand the science of cancer better. The biological understanding and advancements that have occurred in the last fifty years since we graduated are astonishing and exciting to read about. When I was first diagnosed the five-year survival rate from this cancer was 5%. But now that dire statistic is much less certain. Will the present cocktail work and for how long? Is a clinical trial around the corner? How do you calibrate hope? And what is time?

I have my husband of almost fifty years, Gene Pinover; my three children, Julia, 39, Ben, 36, and Hannah, 32, and they are wonderful, giving and supportive. So I read and write and go on. Until I don't go on.



*Me in February at my daughter  
Hannah's wedding*

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Starting as a freshman mid-year (the only one) was difficult. I left after only two semesters but still learned a lot about how to approach education in general. And still have some good memories.





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Bennington was my gentle re-entry to American culture, following five years in Brazil. After completing a B.A. in Psychology from NYU, Washington Square, I drove across the country to Berkeley. An M.A. in Education of the Exceptional Child, from San Francisco State, earned me a teaching job in East Palo Alto. When Nixon was re-elected, I emigrated to Melbourne, intending never to return. But California came to look good from there, and I was back in a couple of years to work for the Rand Corporation, gathering data from schools integrating in the south. I married, gave several years as a Program Specialist working with juvenile felons, and left LA's fast lane for my first return to wooded acreage since Bennington.

His teenaged children joined us, against their wills, from the Bay Area. This began commitment to writing, in a cottage, down the path from the log cabin we shared. I self-published *The Full Four: Indigo Hymns to Inner Seasons* and *Step-Mother: An Epistolary Novel*. One year, for my birthday, I bought a Tarot deck. Then, in my weekly drive to town for library books, lunch with a friend, and return to the woods with the goods, whenever I had a spare twenty bucks, I bought another and another, which launched a binge of study on the ancient symbol set. The Bigger Girls call *The Book of Books*. This resulted in *The Tarot Gypsy Tales: Definitive Resource on The Cards* and purchase of an antique Winnebago for a decade of psychic fairs, workshops, and keynote speeches to international symposia, returning to cook on the woodstove between gigs. *The Tarot Gypsy Trips: Emerald Secrets of a Road Scholar*, *Tarot Comparisons: 78 decks of 78 cards*, and *Singing in My Chains: Violet Formalist Verse* kept me peddling wares from coast to coast.

At midlife, 25 years with Tom morphed to 12 with Annie driving the tractor, felling the firewood, and husbanding dogs, cats, chickens. Spent a year running for State Representative in a very red zone. Went back to teaching other teachers. Became a professional storyteller, a role which finds me in a retirement village back on the pavement, where I practice gardening, duplicate bridge, yoga, and tai chi.

On my own now, still defining myself as a Bennington girl, I identify with



the Native American Contrary, longing to be understood and appreciated for my authentic self, and come to see that understanding others, listening with empathy, recognizing our fundamental sameness, is my challenge.

I believe unity is inevitable, as consciousness evolves, and I do my best to have faith in humanity. I've mastered an ability to bloom where I'm planted, and I hope this is the place where I can stay, read and write, profess stories of providence, and surrender with nothing more to prove. I pledge allegiance to the love which unites us all beyond boundaries, and to the compassion which we all learn, one planet in diversity, with mercy and justice for all.

I thank Bennington forever for everything you do.



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I have taught in the Department of Psychiatry and the Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA for many decades. I continue the project with third year medical students, helping them cope with kaleidoscopic demands on their talents and energies. It combines the love of science and the humanities. That was very much apparent at Bennington. It's also a way to stay close to the path I didn't choose—medicine. Apart from teaching, I continue with my private practice of clinical psychology focusing on couples and individuals doing long-term ambitious work. Very fulfilling.

Like most my challenges have been various: the death of my mother in 1993 and its aftermath still cause me to flirt with the idea of writing a memoir focused on mother-daughter paths. I developed breast cancer at 50 and got through it with the help of my husband, children, friends and a lifetime of thinking like a psychologist.

My children are grown—beautiful adults in mind, body and spirit—all I could have hoped for. I'm very grateful for all the riches I have with them and the blessings of a long-term, fine marriage.



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After a lifetime writing books and magazine articles about food and design, leading and hosting culinary vacations in Italy and Vermont, designing kitchens for serious cooks such as Marcella Hazan, and representing food writers as a literary agent, I returned to working in clay three years ago. It has been an unexpected pleasure to be back in the studio, throwing pots on the wheel. Part of it, I think, is that I feel 25 again, doing what I did then. Part of it is also discovering the power of muscle memory, and the pleasures of remembered technique, close looking, thinking about form, and what makes something work visually. And, just as it was in my youth, pottery making is challenging and exciting. Doing it makes me feel connected to the self I was at Bennington.

Bennington made me feel that I could do anything! I remember when I wrote my first book, someone asked



*My two grandsons*

me what had given me the confidence to write it, and my mental answer was Bennington (although I think my public answer was probably something else). I've published seven books over the course of my career. While many of them have been award finalists, two of my books actually won the highest awards in my field, the James Beard Award and the IACP Award (International Association of Culinary Professionals), respectively. My last book, *Good Meat* (the very first book on the benefits of sustainable pastured animals), has a forward by Bernie Sanders, written well before he became a presidential candidate!

I've lived very happily in southern Vermont for the last three decades, after moving there first after two years in Denmark, and before that, the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

My husband, Michael Krasner, teaches politics at Queens College in NY. I stayed in Vermont and raised our daughters, while he commuted weekly during the academic year. Our kids went to a rural two room schoolhouse in Westminster West, to Brattleboro High School, and then on to Yale and MIT, respectively. The elder is an historian and professor at NYU, the

younger is an architect who works at Studio Gang. Three years ago, when Michael discovered that he both didn't want to retire, or continue to drive weekly between New York and Vermont, I agreed to move back to New York with him. We now divide our time between the Upper West Side and our home in Vermont.

We chose the location of our new New York place to be close to our eldest daughter and grandchildren, and that has been a great part of the pleasure of being in the city. Our second daughter lives in Chicago, and fortunately travels often to NY for work, so we see her pretty frequently as well.

When my daughter was at Yale, I was struck by the enormous benefits of a large university, and felt my education was quite lacking in comparison. She seemed to have so many options and levels of professional support that Bennington never offered, at least in regards to a career that was not in the arts. More recently, I've come to feel that it's not a binary choice, although I do wish that Bennington had offered more help in figuring out graduate schools, possible professions, grants, and career pathways. At least in my experience, Bennington was terrific preparation for being an artist; much less so for being a scholar or other more conventional professional avenues. And yet, when I got my MFA at Columbia University's School of the Arts, I never felt that I got the quality of teaching and learning that I got at Bennington in both the Art and in the Literature departments. What I most remember and miss about Bennington was the stimulation and excitement of a shared intellectual life.



*My elder daughter and her family*



*My younger daughter*



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I went to law school and still work in litigation. Most of my work has involved front page news: fraudulent mortgages, fake securities, fake bank accounts, harassing media executives, fraudulent business consultants. It is interesting and a reflection of our times. Barbara Herrnstein Smith told me as a feminist to work in heavy industry and, as it turned out, I have fulfilled that advice. I was married and had a wonderful son who has his own firm and loves trial work. He performed in operas at the Met as a child and still loves opera.



*Marsha Flum Taylor top right*

*Son Zachary Taylor bottom right*

*Daughter-in-law Maria Gambale top left*

Although my memories of Bennington are happy, I am reminded that the times were sad. KK and I went on a picnic with some nice handsome Williams men. We bought them sandwiches at the Rainbarrel and said we made them. Then we went swimming in a swimming hole without bathing suits on a beautiful day. After graduating, I asked a friend from Williams about one of the young men and he said that he had died in Vietnam. I also remember crying with my friends when RFK died. In a class about comedy, Kit Foster told us to go out and laugh at the bushes. I think at the time I had a hard time seeing comedy.

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I was happy to be included in this Class of '69 project. Bennington was my dream college even though I left after my freshman year.

I loved Bennington. Literature with Howard Nemerov, Anthropology with Mr. Salwen. For lack of PE and the fact that pottery was full when I went to sign up, I ended up as possibly the clumsiest dance student of Bill Bales. I discovered my talents were stronger elsewhere.

I spent my NRT as an assistant poetry editor for a teen magazine in New York City.

Spring 1966 I was spirited away to San Francisco to rendezvous with my Williams boyfriend who had enlisted in the Air Force hoping to avoid Vietnam. We were married in September and lived on Old Cannery Row in Monterey. Our neighbor had worked with John Steinbeck. The Air Force guys living off base had access to pure Owsley LSD. Big Sur, Monterey Pop, etc.

After an honorable discharge, we moved to San Francisco, volunteered at Shire Free School, attended the Human Be-In, squatted in the Reno Hotel where Kesey held his famous "acid test" and independent filmmakers and photographers each claimed an entire floor of the abandoned building, went to Idaho and worked a potato harvest to earn money to travel to Mexico and lived in Oaxaca for a few months.



*Me and White Eyes hiking in the Black Hills, South Dakota*



*Curtis and me in Rosebud, SD*



We split up when we returned to San Francisco. I was invited to stay with friends in Santa Cruz.

From Santa Cruz, I moved to The Farm in Tennessee in 1971. There I was married, trained and practiced with the midwives and the two resident physicians until 1985. On the Farm, we adopted an amazing baby boy whose mother showed up one day and abandoned him at the age of

3 months. He is now 43 and the best son anyone could wish for. We moved to Nashville in 1985. There I became certified as a physician assistant, the husband went to Vanderbilt Law, met wife #2, and became “my ex” and a lawyer in that order. I gave up midwifery and continued my 40-year career in medicine as a Certified Physician Assistant.

I worked in family medicine and edited a medical journal in Spine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center for seven years.

In 1992, I went to South Dakota with friends from Pine Ridge and visited the Rosebud Reservation. On the suggestion of a Lakota medicine man and his wife, Earl and Edna Swift Hawk, I toured the underserved Native American hospital and applied to work there. I gave up my job at Vanderbilt and moved to Rosebud in 1993.

I remained there for 25 years working for the federal Indian Health Service, practicing family medicine, geriatrics and palliative care. I started an elder clinic and was an appointed member of the State of South Dakota Advisory Council on Aging. I cared for eight generations of Lakota Sioux during that time and was accepted as an adopted member of many families. The Lakota elders and medicine people were generous in sharing their wisdom, traditions and stories. I gained the trust of the community and was able to incorporate my respect for Lakota culture within my practice. Sixteen years ago, Curtis and I moved in together when he came to Rosebud to participate in the Sundance Ceremony. We have been together happily since then. He is of Cherokee and Muskogee Creek descent, a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran. Our first year, we moved in with and cared for an elderly Lakota medicine man. On retirement this January 1st, I was honored by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. I will not miss the ten-foot snow drifts, 60-hour work weeks or the 400-mile round trip to the closest synagogue in Rapid City.

Like the beautiful star quilts given to me by the Lakota, I will begin piecing together the many scraps and remnants of my past experiences in hopes of creating a harmonious life and legacy for the years that remain.

I was impressed by the life stories of the Class of 1968. The strength of the Bennington philosophy seemed to be reflected in each individual person. In their courage, determination, successes and sorrows. My life derailed from Bennington early, but I feel that I integrated that year and steered my path as I set out from that place very differently than if I had never had the opportunity to be there at all.



*Retirement from Indian Health Service*



*My retirement from Indian Health Service*



*My son Michael volunteering in Nepal after the earthquake*

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As I was preparing to write this, I remembered a recurring dream that I used to have. I'm at Bennington, happy, at home. The students are doing their thing; open, engaged, smart. Then I realize that this is my THIRD time at Bennington! I don't want to tell them because it seems embarrassing, but I do love being there. I'm back because something was not completed.

My interpretation of the dream is that "I" was not complete. When I recognize who I am now, I know that I would get much more out of being there than I did in the 1960s. I'm more confident intellectually, emotionally more secure, AND I know how I best learn, i.e. through discussion and interpersonally.

I didn't know then that I had ADHD. I have realized that I do NOT LIKE TO WRITE PROSE; sacrilege for a Bennington education! Papers were agonizing and induced mental paralysis! They turned out fine, but I doubt that I learned much from writing them.

So, since I do NOT enjoy writing prose, my list follows:

*The three best things that I got from Bennington were:*

1. A lasting deep friendship with my roommate, Wendy Perron. She and Jim graciously let me stay with them in NYC. It's close as we can get to being roommates again!
2. Being a split major with psych and photography. I had a senior photography show of which I was very proud, and years later am still pleased with the prints. I did fine arts photography for five years and then moved on to getting a MA in clinical social work. I've been in private practice for many years, specializing in childhood abuse and neglect, and early attachment issues. I'm truly fortunate to have work I love and can earn a living from.
3. Freedom to be as I was. I remember thinking when I was freshman: "wow, there are places that are not cliquey!"



*My sons and I in Aruba for my 70th birthday!  
We love to travel together.*

### *Along the way:*

I married Lee Richmond, a Williams boy, whom I met in Commons! We have two sons, both in the arts, and a super fantastic one-year-old grandson. For years we've had a friendly post-divorce relationship and share holidays.

Numerous relationships: I had one, surprisingly and lovingly, with a woman, which caused me to recognize that I'd been bi for years. I got involved with the bi/lesbian community in Boston, but never felt a resonance with it.

Sailing: I re-learned to sail in Boston Harbor and was consumed with it. What's land, anyway?! I did frostbite sailing in the winter.

Dance: At 60, I took tap lessons with (the late) Pam Raff, who was highly gifted and revered. Tap dancing had been a dream my whole life. Pam taught me more than tap. First, she let me teach her how I learned. And then for four years, she taught me that I **COULD** learn, could take risks, accomplish, and attain mastery. This confidence was something essential that I did not get from Bennington.

Horses: I discovered that I loved them, took lessons, rode in Wyoming and in Aruba. (see pic)

Seeking: I'm Jewish but only celebrated the holidays growing up and never was a part of organized religion. Something felt missing so I searched: Hinduism, Quakerism, meditation and chanting, the Unitarian Society. Finally, in the last few years I've become a member of an unusual havurah. We meet in a beautiful barn. The rabbi, who used to be a doctor, plays the guitar during shabbat services; there's drumming, and singing, along with prayers and learning. I never resonated with the concept of god or believing in god; at this havurah that's fine. Something has opened in me.

### *Favorite memories:*

Aretha Franklin, "Respect", blasting across Commons lawn on a warm spring morning, everyone's joyful and dancing.

Downpour on Commons lawn: everyone's outside sliding around in the mud!

Friday lunch: grilled cheese and brownies!

A "happening" at Jennings: Cathy Weis' dance project, an amazing surreal event with dancing in the ballroom and then sexual overtones in the creations/experiences in the basement of Jennings.

### *Blessings:*

My two sons and I are very close and frequently in touch. Together, we're into humor of the absurd, talk deeply, and take wonderful trips.

My gardens and home.

Sweet friends.

My therapist.

My three lovable, funny, crazy cats!



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Currently living on the “Big Island” in Hawaii. Still working full time in my three-attorney law firm: Margaret Wille & Associates LLC. Learned a lot at Bennington but it did not influence my direction in life. Studied Anthropology at Bennington, went on to get a Master’s in Education at Antioch School of Education and then later received my JD at Antioch School of Law in Washington DC. I regret that our class of 1969 was not more engaged with the crisis of our day— the Vietnam War and the Mideast crisis of 1967. We should have raised these issues and considered options as to how we collectively could have a voice in resolving those disputes and instead as a group watched passively as so many in our generation died or were severely injured physically and/or emotionally while serving in Vietnam. I hope many of you are still pursuing interests that are aimed at healing our world for all peoples and all of the web of life that we are a part of.



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The public swimming pool I attend in LA keeps changing the name of our age group. First it was *Over 65*, then it was *Senior*, now it's *Older Adult*. Soon we'll be called *Others* without a hint of ageism. No matter what words they use, I get in for \$1.00. Not to mention movies and museums. And in Hollywood, the land of Botox and Restylane, they practically give the stuff away.

It's been a long time since Bennington, and my life goes from the occasional success to long stretches of happy anonymity. A first novel published in England and a grant from Yaddo promised much, but my closet is stacked with unpublished books, which my mother just loved. I supported myself with acting and also worked for an independent movie company run by crooks with erudite taste that won Academy Awards. All the money went to the Cayman Islands, however. I actually loved the job and they told me I was the only honest person on staff, so I got frequent raises, amazing benefits, Fridays off, and all the petty cash. When multiple lawsuits forced them into bankruptcy, I was the only one who didn't get fired because I had the keys to the restrooms.

Like many in our generation, I wrestled with addiction in my 30s and finally beat cigarettes and alcohol. I didn't think about Bennington much until I attended an exciting *The World Needs More Bennington* event this spring in LA. Even though I was the only 1969 graduate to show up, President Mariko Silver and the speakers reminded me of the value of individual development that our college really did foster. Both Nick Delbanco and Francis Golfing encouraged me to major in literature, which led to NRTs where I worked for Arthur Miller and Elaine May.

My parents' passing is a loss, but they left me the legacy of travel, and I use it. In 2017, I toured Sri Lanka, and often fly to Baja, Mexico, where Loreto and La Paz revive with dolphins and whales in the protected Sea of Cortez. My longtime companion, Jack Favere, died recently, but I'm moving forward with a trip up the Amazon near Iquitos, Peru. Somehow every place I want to see requires drastic vaccines. This time, yellow fever and malaria.





Meanwhile, I'm polishing a book I've spent six years writing. A decade ago, a terminal diagnosis rushed me to an LA County hospital. As maligned as these teaching facilities are, the interns kept me alive along with a group with an even worse reputation: tongue-talking televangelists. Only the desperately ill listen to this stuff, but I qualified and joined a primarily black Pentecostal church that my county nurse recommended.

My best excuse is that I'm researching a book. It keeps me sensible and literate, but the truth is that I've got a fresh take on the Holy Rollers, speaking in tongues, and healing: both medical and hands-on.

Even Bennington might think I've taken individual identity too far, but it turns out that four years with gifted teachers in the late sixties taught me to explore the boundaries of geography and faith, even as an *older adult*. All the best, Eda

## **In memoriam**

### **Claudia Davis Frain**

In Memoriam, written by Maren Hassinger

Claudia was from Long Island. Beautiful, glamorous even! And so, so sophisticated in her MG convertible sports car, and soft slouchy slacks and sweaters. She reminded me most of the actress Lizbeth Scott from Hollywood. Blond hair swept across her face, a cigarette dangling from her mouth, smoke rising. Husky voice and a flash of utter style and beauty. Rest in Peace, Claudia.



### **Gerry Kaplan**

In Memoriam, written by Virginia Creighton

Gerry Kaplan was a music major and piano was her instrument. She was conscientious but also outgoing, very present, and very friendly. She did graduate work at Juilliard.

After her studies Gerry lived in Freeport, Long Island, and taught music in a public high school in Amityville. She was proud of her students, as they were of her, encouraging them to perform publicly. She was there for them and backed them up.

She was likewise a good friend to other adults and was sure to make time for them to visit. She kept fit, eating healthy food even before it was popular! Her amazing apartment was right by the Atlantic, beautiful, airy, and bright, like Gerry.

We miss her!



## Cheryl Aldridge Pounds

In Memoriam, written by Maren Hassinger

Cheryl was my roommate sophomore year. We lived in Dewey and she later spent an NRT with me in LA as I had spent an NRT freshman year with her in New York City. Our birthdays were the same day—June 16 (also Sidney Tillim's and Lori Lawrence's). We turned to Visual Arts as a major. Cheryl was an abstract painter of large canvases and wrote marvelous art history/theory papers, which I believe Sidney Tillim admired greatly.

Cheryl was quick-witted, articulate, and had a broad impish grin. She loved smoking, drinking, painting, discussion of all sorts (especially art), and controlled but somehow wild dancing. She enjoyed herself! And she was always quick. A quick talker. A quick walker. Quick with opinions. She loved the drama of dating and her suitors loved her. Cheryl's son is Oliver Sloman. Oliver was the true love of her life

I see her standing above a huge canvas on the floor. It has a deep blue central square; a cigarette in one hand, she anticipates her next move. Then with brush and a can of paint, she begins circling the perimeter making the additions she decided were necessary. Rest in Peace, Cheryl.





## Harry Whittaker Sheppard

In Memoriam, written by Wendy Perron

I originally wrote this letter for The Estate Project, which commemorated dancers who died from AIDS complications.

Dear Harry,

You were the kindest person I knew. Each time you danced in a piece of mine, you helped me through. Remember when you played the doctor, all dressed in white? I wanted you to be a soothing presence, someone who could guide the main character (me) out of turmoil. We had a long, improvised duet. In rehearsals, I couldn't do it more than once. I would take breaks and sit and "think about the piece." But you weren't ready to stop dancing. You just kept going. And instead of thinking about the piece, I would just watch you. Watching you improvise was like watching a fish in water.

Do you remember how we first got to know each other freshman year? We would stay up late at night, talking about dance and people. Part of it was because we were both in love with the same guy.

You were socially comfortable in different milieus. In the dining room in Commons, you could sit with the other black students or you could sit with the dance students. Both groups were equally happy to have you.

You always had intuitions about people—visions really. You once said about Linda Wilder, "I can see her as a child hiding under a blanket." And you said to Risa Jaroslow, when she was mixing a salad with her fingers, "I can tell you're gonna be a good mother."

In my piece for Art on the Beach (c. 1980), I wanted you to play a strange and sinister character. So you decided to wear a black stocking over your head with streamers coming out of the top. You were definitely strange, but sweetly so, especially when carried over the dunes by a bunch of other dancers.

Do you remember *Bartholomew* and the *Oobleck*? That was the children's play by Dr. Seuss that we did at Belvedere Castle in Central Park. You were the Royal Trumpeter who blows his horn and find gooey oobleck coming out of it. You were so funny while handling the icky stuff, all the kids screaming with laughter.

The summer I was teaching at Sainte Baume, France (late 70s), you came to visit. You had just come from a nudist colony near Grenoble. For you it was normal, just something people do, and you weren't at all put off by our questions.

While traveling in France, you were always prepared. You had a baguette, a knife, and a jar of peanut butter in your backpack. Anyone hanging out with you never had to look for a restaurant.

I remember your hearty laughter. If something struck you funny while you were sitting down, your head would go



back and your knees would spring up in alternate rhythm.

Once when I was having trouble choreographing, you said, “That’s what I call making, making dances.” Choreography was just part of life, both sacred and ordinary. It wasn’t something special that one person could do and another couldn’t.

Harry, there’s something I feel bad about. It was around 1991, and you already had AIDS. I was feeling injured by someone we both knew, and I vented to you. You talked me through it and made me feel better. Later I realized that I had completely forgotten your own impending medical disaster—and maybe you had forgotten too. You were so willing to immerse yourself in my sob story. I hope I thanked you for that.

Around the same time, you performed with Yoshiko Chuma in Central Park. You started a solo by taking a drag on a cigarette and exhaling a long stream of smoke. Then you danced through it, with that special Harry-type continuity that was somehow spiritual and funky and funny too... disappearing thru the smoke rings of time.

Everyone loved your dancing. The year that you won the Bessie Award, 1989, I had been on the committee. Every person around the table voted for you in the final round. That has never happened before or since, that I know of.

But you never made claims for yourself either as a dancer or a choreographer. It was just what you did. As you said, you learned to dance in your mother’s arms. You showed us all a beautiful, low-key dignity, an extraordinary way of loving your friends.

I remember one time at Bennington, there was a party on Commons lawn. Late into the night, most people went back to their dorms, but I watched you, far in the distance at “the end of the world,” still dancing. I can close my eyes now and see you, still dancing.

Love,

Wendy

## Elinor Siegel

In Memoriam, written by Olga Hauptman

As I look back on my Bennington years, Ellie is still in the forefront of my thoughts. She was so cheerful, energetic and optimistic and I still remember her playing Beethoven's first violin sonata. (I can't remember what year, whether she was studying it under Eric Rosenblith or Sylvia Rosenberg. I'm pretty sure it wasn't Orrea Pernel. We all had three violin teachers in four years!) After we became friends I enjoyed her laughing as she told me how wrong was her first impression of me. I still have a pair of earrings she chose from Ed Levin's shop, given me by our string quartet after we'd performed a concert I'd arranged at Princeton. After I graduated, I continued to see her parents, whom I loved, and I am still a warm and admiring friend of her sister Martha (Bennington '71).



## No update available



Daphne Araujo



Margaret Auer



Daiva Balkus



Margaret Beauchamp



Barbara Benary



Caroline Boynton



Deborah Choate



Rebecca J. Cook



Jane Costello

## **No update available**



Deirdre Dole



Cordelia Duke



Sylvia Fischbach-Braden



Evelyn K. Frieden



Barbara S. Glass



Peta Gray



Margo L. Grobel



Sheela M. Harden



Lucinda Hoyt



## **No update available**



Susan G. Hurd



Lucia Johnson



Rachel Kahn-Fogel



Jane Kaufman



Karen Krieger



Lori A. Lawrence



Jean Liebenberg



Rose Lockwood



Camille Long

## **No update available**



Janis Lyon



Judith MacDonald



Louise Maffitt



Sarah Magee



Merrilee McCabe



Linda Mockler



Diane Natko



Joyce Nawy



Robyn A. Newhouse

## **No update available**



Marjorie Newman



Anna Ormsby



Andrew Peck



Jane Platt



Sandra Popik



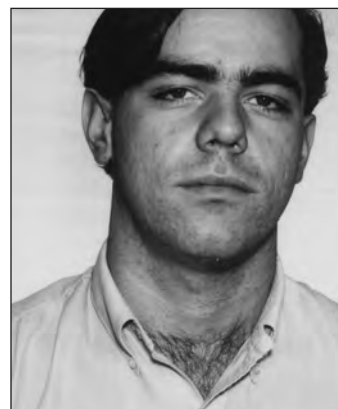
Sylvia Savage



Janis D. Schneider



Mary E. Seaman



John W. Secor

## No update available



Jacqueline J. Shatz



Wendy Shomer



Ronnie J. Steinberg



Barbara Sternberg



Ermetra A. Thomas



Bonnie van Damme



Shelley L. White



Jane Willis



Sally L. Woelfel

**No update available**

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John C. Yeo

**No update or photo available**

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Victoria Davis

Sally Mole

Starr Siegele

Meril Deane

Patricia Nice

Susan Stevens

Judith DeMarsh

Bonney Rega



## We remember



Jane Angermeyer



Carolyn Burns



Ellen Elbaz



Claudia Frain



Gwyneth Greenberg



Holly Harris



Ann Johnson



Gerry Kaplan



Sarah Longacre

## We remember



Elizabeth Meyers



Adrian Oktenberg



Cheryl Pounds



Verna J. Rakofsky



Diana Robbins



Pauline Scanlon



Harry W. Sheppard



Elinor Siegel



Emily Van Ness

## Faculty List - 1965-69

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### ART

Pat Adams  
Robert Cronin  
Paul Feeley  
Richard Haas  
George Holt  
Vincent Longo  
Kenneth Noland  
Jules Olitsky  
John Plumb  
Lawrence Poons  
Stanley Rosen  
Peter Stroud  
Sidney Tillim  
Michael Todd  
Roger Williams  
Isaac Witkin

### DANCE

Bill Bales  
Bill Dixon  
Jane Dudley  
Viola Farber  
Jack Moore  
Linda Tolbert  
Josef Wittman  
Martha Wittman

### DRAMA

Robert Corrigan  
Judith Davis Raffael  
Catharine Foster  
Paul Gray  
David Hamilton  
Arthur Sainer  
William Sherman

### LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES

Ben Belitt  
Michael Benedikt  
Michael Dennis Brown  
William Butler  
Nick Delbanco  
Barbara Downing  
Manuela Escamilla  
Richard Elman  
Stanley Eskin  
Donald Finkel  
Catharine Foster  
Claude Fredericks  
Regine Giffon  
Francis Golffing  
Ladislav Gonczarow  
Georges Guy  
Irene Hasenclever  
Stanley Edgar Hyman  
Harold Kaplan  
Isabelle Kaplan  
Doris deKeyserlingk  
Christopher Koch

Bernard Malamud  
Nora Montesinos  
Howard Nemerov  
Ulises Pico  
Barbara Herrnstein Smith  
Thomas Smith  
Richard Tristman  
Barry Westburg

### MUSIC

Frank Baker  
Henry Brant  
Louis Calabro  
Julian DeGray  
George Finkel  
Vivian Fine  
Lionel Nowak  
Orrea Pernel  
Eric Rosenblith  
Gunnar Schonbeck

### SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Edward Apgar  
Robert Coburn  
Robert Cornwell  
Henry Hunter  
Kent Lawson  
Irving Lyon  
Lee Supowit  
R. H. van der Linde  
Robert Walters  
John Wohnus  
Robert Woodworth

### SOCIAL SCIENCE

Richard Blake  
Thomas Brockway  
Donald Brown  
John Cairns  
Louis Carini  
Margaret DeGray  
Marion Downes  
Lucien Hanks  
Joanna Kirkpatrick  
Norman Klein  
Joseph Juhass  
June Nash  
Francis Oakley  
Harry Pearson  
Arnold Ricks  
Leonard Rowe  
Bert Salwen  
Anne Schlabach  
Wallace Scott  
Gerald Surette  
Robert Teare  
Rush Welter  
Peter Wilson  
Charles Wood



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