

Life History
of
Gretna Ann Phinizy Palmer



A Woman of Faith

Life History of Gretna Ann Phinizy Palmer
by Thomas Lee Palmer
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Gretna's life history incorporates many of her memories as recorded in some of her writings and her personal journals. The decision to do her life history as a biography was motivated in part by the fact that she is too modest to reveal the real wonder of her life and her Christ-like character – her posterity needs to know of that wonder.

Gretna Ann Phinizy Palmer
A life of love and service to God, family, and all of mankind



A daughter, sister and friend



A bride and wife



A mother



A grandmother



A missionary



A temple worker

“Born of Goodly Parents”

Gretna: *“I have contemplated often writing my life history or story. I feel a need to let my wonderful children and grandchildren know how very blessed I have been. I was born into a family with a mother (Violet Mae Post Phinizy) who had the gospel of Jesus Christ in her life; she had a firm testimony and love for her Savior and taught her children of this love. This gospel is the center of my life, I love my Savior and want to be with Him, but even more so I want to become like Him!!! I hope and pray that all of you, my wonderful family, have this same goal.*

My Patriarchal blessing given to me on 29 October 1961 in Flagstaff, Arizona by Patriarch Verd A. Hanks says; “Your days upon this land shall be many and they shall be eventful.” They have certainly been eventful!!! And just as Nephi of old was born of goodly parents, I also was born of goodly parents.”

Gretna often spoke of her father (Paul Bryant Phinizy) as a hard-working man who loved his family. Though not a member of the Church until later in life, he taught his children principles of integrity, responsibility, and hard work – He supported the family in their membership in the Church and activity therein.



Bryant and Violet Phinizy



Gretna with her Dad



Gretna with her Mom

Gretna: *“ I was born on July 15, 1943 in Morenci, Arizona, at 8:20 AM; on the steps of the hospital. The hospital was on a hill in Morenci and while going up that hill Dad got a flat tire on his truck. The truck just barely made the climb but ruined the tire. As a result, Mom did not make it all the way into the hospital before I made my appearance in this life. Mom said I had a very fair complexion with a lot of reddish-brown hair and very dark blue eyes. I weighed in at 7 pounds, 1 ounce, and was 21 inches long. A year or two after my birth we moved to Clifton, Arizona – just below Morenci – and I lived all of my growing up years in Clifton.”*



Early Clifton, Arizona



The Morenci copper mine above Clifton began open-pit mining in 1937 and is now the largest copper mine in the US



Clifton-Morenci Ward Chapel on the bank of the San Francisco River

Gretna: “I don’t remember a whole lot of my younger life, but I do remember being happy and very content. When we moved from Plant site down into the valley of Clifton; Dad bought a very old home which was literally falling apart. It was on the side of the mountain, we climbed 20 or so stairs from the road up to our home that was literally on the side of the hill. My mother used to put a leash on my pants and have it hooked to the clothesline. I guess I was quite the wanderer and would lead Pam on several adventures. One time Mom got a call from Sheriff Tommy Sidebottom. He had a call from the train engineer that two little girls were walking down the tracks approaching the bridge over the river. He knew who it was; guess he had to return us home often 😊. He called Mom who picked us up and brought us home. I was going to see Grandma and Grandpa Post. I knew the train went through Benson so I thought I could get there by following the tracks.”

Phiniza family circumstances growing up were humble, Gretna recalls: “I remember sitting on the front porch with Mom and Valora Webster and her children after a very hard rain storm. Us kids had just finished running through the puddles on the street. For some reason I climbed under the porch and found an old red wallet floating in a puddle. I opened it and there was a very red \$5.00 bill in it. I took it up to the porch and showed my Mom. She started crying and said now I can get you some shoes for school. What a blessing this was for us.”

Our Clifton Home



Gretna: “As you can tell, we literally lived on the side of the hill. The mountain was our playground. One of our favorite places was a big rock that had fallen from the bluff many years prior to our living here. We called it “Big Rock” and it was our playground. I remember how hard it seemed to climb, but we conquered!!! When I returned from my freshman year at ASC I went up to my rock—it sure had shrunk in the last few years!!! I guess because of all the rocks in my growing up, I love rocks to this day. I used to have a big wooden box full of my “pretty” rocks that I had collected over my growing up years. To my dismay, I discovered that my Dad got rid of my box of rocks. I was broken hearted. Thankfully I had a few small rocks that I dearly loved tucked away in my “special box” and I still have them.”

Gretna was blessed with 4 siblings – 3 sisters and a brother:

Pamela Lee - October 17, 1944

Helen - December 21, 1946

Paul Bryant - February 5, 1952

Pauline - March 21, 1953

Gretna remembers fun times with her siblings in their growing up years – they were her sisters and a brother, friends and playmates. She loves each one of them for their goodness, for the memories they shared, and their continuing closeness. They have each been a blessing to her in her life.



Helen, Pauline, Pam, Paul, Gretna



Pam Pauline Mom Gretna Helen Dad Paul



Gretna and Pam



Pam Gretna Helen



Helen, Gretna, Pam



Paul and Gretna



Pam Gretna Helen Pauline

In addition to her siblings, Gretna had many friends – her closest friend throughout her growing up years was Nedra Webster – they did everything together!! They remain dear friends to this day.



Gretna



Nedra

Gretna: *“We were together all the time. Our mothers made us matching dresses for special occasions. Most of our play clothes they made from our dad’s old shirts and pants. We were known by all in town as the “Bobbsey Twins”. Nedra and I along with my sister Pam and Janice, Nedra’s sister, had many fun adventures – including, riding our bikes and doing special tricks on them, skating, making stilts and walking on them, and climbing the mountain. We became inseparable. Our families were very close; we went on picnics and did many things together. We loved to play and build forts in Nedra’s yard - it was a much bigger yard than ours. This was the best of times to be a kid!!! We had no TV so we played outside all day and into the evening. We rode bikes, played “kick the can”, “hide and seek”, and “red rover” under the streetlight. The mountain was probably my favorite - I explored every inch of my mountain. We even were sitting on the edge of the bluff once and called down to my Mom who was in the yard, actually calling for us. She looked up and saw us and about had a heart attack. We were not wise sitting on the edge of such an unstable mountain. I do think that is where I first developed my fear of heights! It was indeed very high and very scary. I never did it again. We would hike up to the top, but I never got even close to the edge again. The fire siren would blow at 9:00 PM every night, and we would all go to our homes. It was the town curfew for young people telling us, ‘it’s time to go home and go to bed’.”*

“We had a chicken coup up a little higher on the hill behind the house. I remember climbing the stairs every day to collect the eggs. Pam and Helen were afraid of the chickens, but the chickens were my friends and I really liked them. I was always fascinated by the different sizes and colors of eggs. I loved to go into the coop barefooted - I was always barefooted and loved to feel the chicken poop squish between my toes!! Not now however!!

I started Kindergarten when I was 5. There were about 25 children in my class that I went all the way through High School with. We had a few families that moved in or out of town during that time, but for the most part I was with the same children for all my schooling. There were about 8 Anglo children, a few Apache Indian children, a couple of Black children and a lot of Mexican children. I am grateful for the diverse culture I was able to grow up in—it helped me become “color” blind to skin color.”

Gretna participated in Girl Scouts, rode her bicycle to school, and was active in her participation in school and extracurricular activities. Her mom was her Brownie leader.

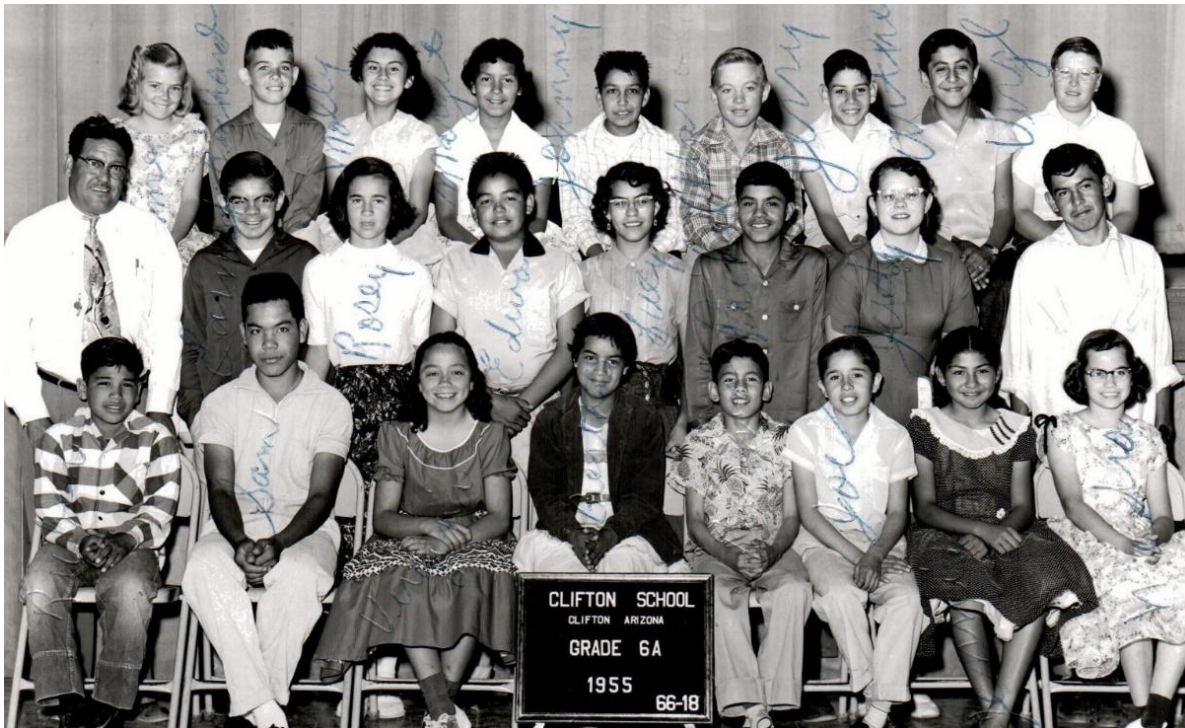


Gretna, a Brownie girl scout



Gretna with bicycle

Gretna: *"When I was a Girl Scout, they had Girl Scout Camp for a week in the summer. Nedra and I wanted to go so badly but neither of our parents could afford for us to go. Mr. Studie, our neighbor, knew how badly we wanted to go, so he came up with a plan to help us be able to raise the money to go. He was an expert carpenter and had a lot of wood around his shop. He made picture frames for us and I was able to get old Arizona Highways magazines from Nana (my Grandma Phinizy) and used the beautiful pictures in these magazines with the frames. Nedra and I went door to door and sold enough of these pictures to pay our way to Camp for two years."*



6th Grade Class Gretna top row on the left.

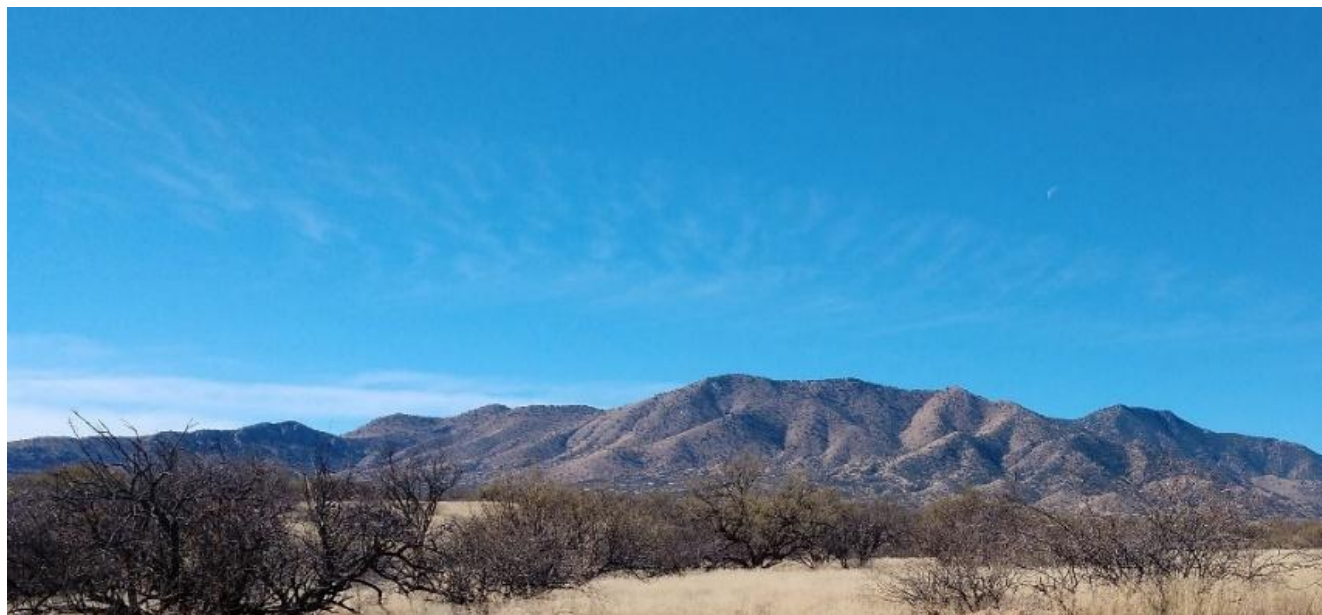
A highlight in Gretna's youth was the opportunity she had at age 13 to go to the Mesa Arizona Temple and participate in baptisms and confirmations for many who had passed on and needed these ordinances.



EAST VIEW

Date Oct-13 1956
Gretna Ann Phisizy of
Clifton
Mosier Ward Mt. Graham Stake
Acted as Proxy for 15
male female baptisms
At
The Arizona Temple
Mesa, Arizona
Bapt. By Le Roy C. Beach

One of Gretna's favorite memories is the time she was able to spend at her Grandpa and Grandma Post's ranch near Benson, Arizona. She often spent much of her summer with her grandparents on the ranch.



The Post Ranch below the Whetstone Mountains

Gretna: *"I was the oldest grandchild on this side of the family and had a wonderful relationship with Grandpa Post. He took me everywhere he could with him - on the horse or in his pickup truck or just around the homestead. I spent many summers with them. I loved horses and from an early age had a Shetland Pony named Peewee. He was mostly white with a few brown and black spots on him. I loved this horse!! I loved riding with Grandpa more than anything else in the world."*



“Uncle Jesse standing and Uncle Wart and I on Peewee - My uncles spoiled me 😊”

Gretna: *“I loved the Post Ranch and spent much time growing up at this beloved second home. This is where my love of horses came from. When I got older, my horse on the ranch was ‘Old Henry’.”*



Gretna



Old Henry



Grandpa and Grandma Post



Post Ranch House

Spending time on the ranch through the years brought Gretna close to her grandparents and her uncles and aunts.



Violet Phil Grandpa Jack Grandma Wart Jesse Ella

Gretna: *"I often went with Grandpa looking for new baby calves. I was Grandpa's little shadow. I remember one such day so very clearly. We were looking for new baby calves and knew they would not be really far away. I was riding "Old Henry" down the slope of a wash. I was just very relaxed enjoying the beauty of the green fields. Old Henry suddenly seemed anxious. I was unsure why. He jumped sideways and I slid off the saddle. To my surprise I was on the ground just a few feet from a great big rattlesnake. I hate snakes and was so frightened I did not know what to do. The snake was coiled and in a striking position. I was so frightened I froze in place. I knew if I moved the snake would strike at me. I hate snakes more than anything!!!! I prayed that Grandpa would come and see that I was in trouble. He did and before I could even blink an eye Grandpa had taken care of the snake. I don't remember what he did, I was so afraid I had my eyes shut. He asked what had happened and he reminded me that I was to always listen to my horse. Grandpa was my hero that day and still is!!!"*

Another "favorite place" for Gretna was Alpine. The family worked together to build a nice cabin in Alpine where many family memories were made in her youth and later with her own family.

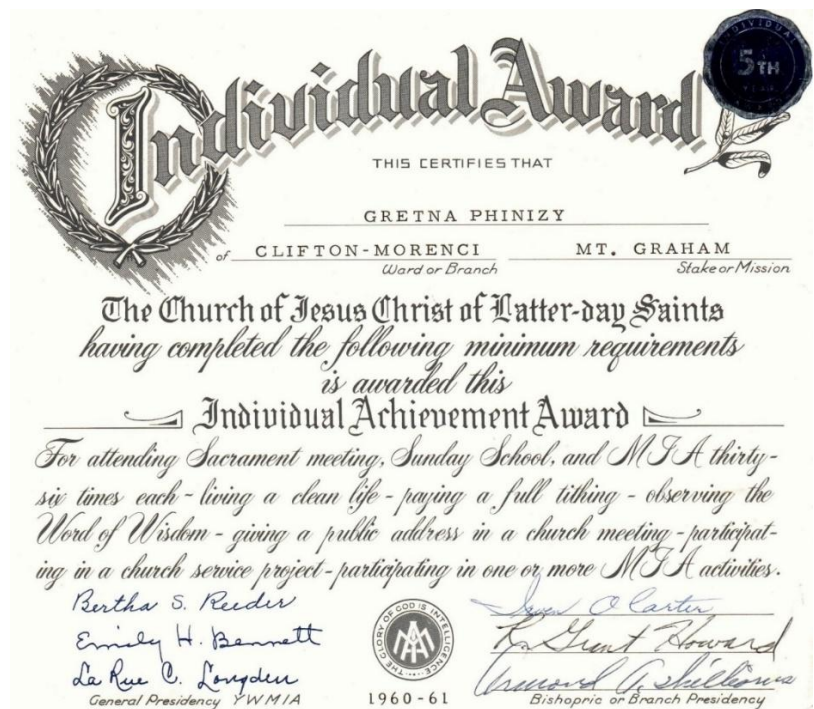


Alpine Cabin

From Clifton to Alpine took the family up the Coronado Trail – miles of switchbacks



Gretna showed her continuing commitment to following the Lord by each year of her time in Young Women earning the Individual Achievement Award.



Gretna was active in sports and music. She played the tenor saxophone in the school dance and concert bands. She also participated in the Music Festival sponsored by Eastern Arizona Junior College in Thatcher.



Gretna was active in Choir, Girls' League, Future Teachers of America, Honor Society and Student Council.



FIRST ROW: Carol Rietz, Ed Danenhauer, Norma Morris, Magaret Baker, Sharon Smith. SECOND ROW: Nedra Webster, Gretna Phinizy, Ruth Fernandez, Marilyn Alvidrez, Pamela Danenhauer, Judy Berry. THIRD ROW: Marcia Medina, Karen Berry.

HONOR SOCIETY – Gretna is second from left on second row.



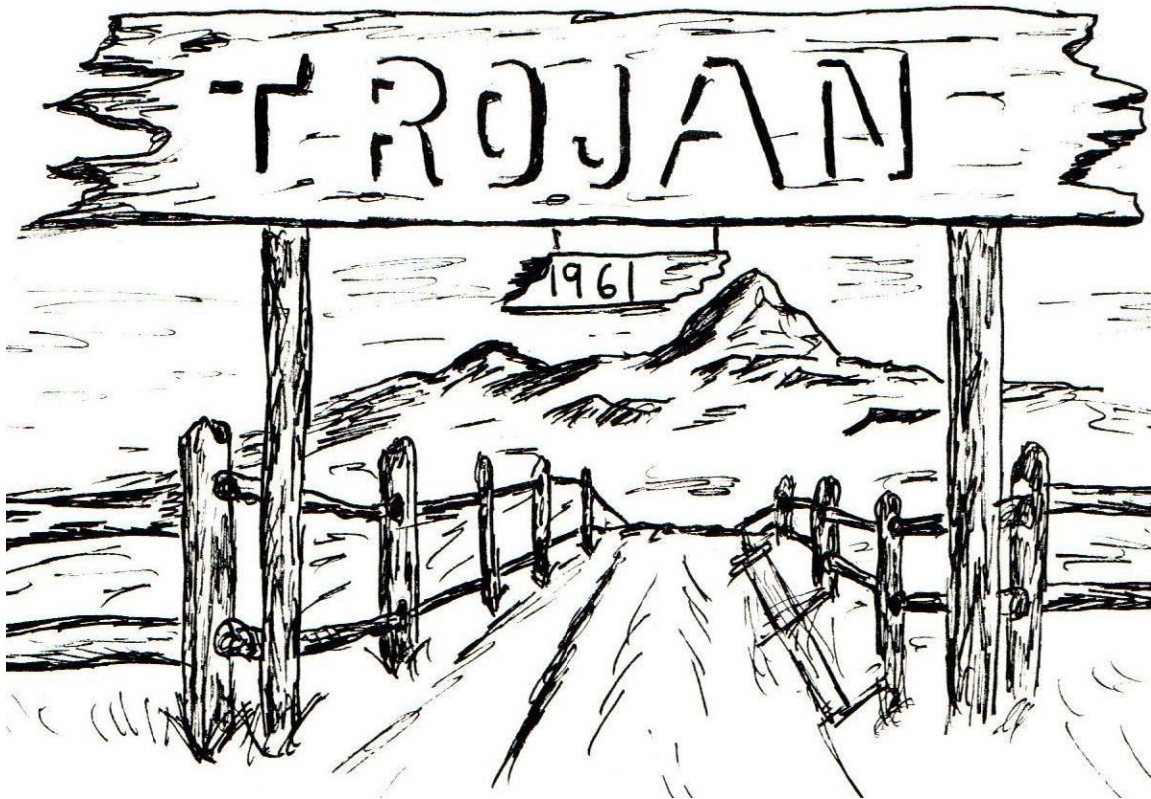
FIRST ROW: Amelia Lucio, Bernice Lujan, Mary Salcido, Ruth Fernandez, Sharon Smith, Pam Danenhauer, Mary Silva, Carol Rietz. SECOND ROW: Nedra Webster, Judy Berry, Gretna Phinizy, Margaret Tea, Donna Brown, Sharon Gough. THIRD ROW: Mr. Patton, Sponsor, Bonita Duke, Karen Berry, Norma Morris, Ray Morales, Abe Martinez, Brice Willis, Stephen Stanton, Robert Locke, Ed Danenhauer, Hank Marquez, Miss Meyer, Sponsor.

Student Council – Gretna is center on 2nd row



Prom – dress was made by her Mother

Gretna was active in the TROJAN – the school newspaper and annual – for all four years of her high school experience. Her senior year Gretna was the Editor.



Gretna was awarded a scholarship to the Publications Workshop at Arizona State College in Flagstaff during the summer prior to her senior year at Clifton – this experience gave her a yearning that led to her desire to attend Arizona State College in Flagstaff.

Gretna graduated from Clifton High School on June 1, 1961

Diploma of Graduation

CLIFTON HIGH SCHOOL
Clifton, Arizona



This Certifies That **GRETNA ANN PHINIZY**
Has satisfactorily completed a Course of Study prescribed for Graduation
from this school, and is therefore awarded this Diploma
Given this 1st day of June, 1961

H. C. McCuller
PRESIDENT OF BOARD

J. Alex Peterson
CLERK OF BOARD

Margaret H. O'Connell
MEMBER OF BOARD

David J. Pilsbry
SUPERINTENDENT

Victor L. Meneley
PRINCIPAL

Admission to Arizona State College
Fall 1961



Arizona State College
Flagstaff, Arizona

Fa 61
Resident

Certificate of Admission

This certificate is evidence that Miss Gretna Ann Phinizy
114 7th Street, Clifton, Arizona
having presented satisfactory credentials, is hereby granted admission to _____

Freshman * _____ standing in the Arizona State College.

* Clifton HS, Arizona - 61
Rank: Upper 1/3 of 43

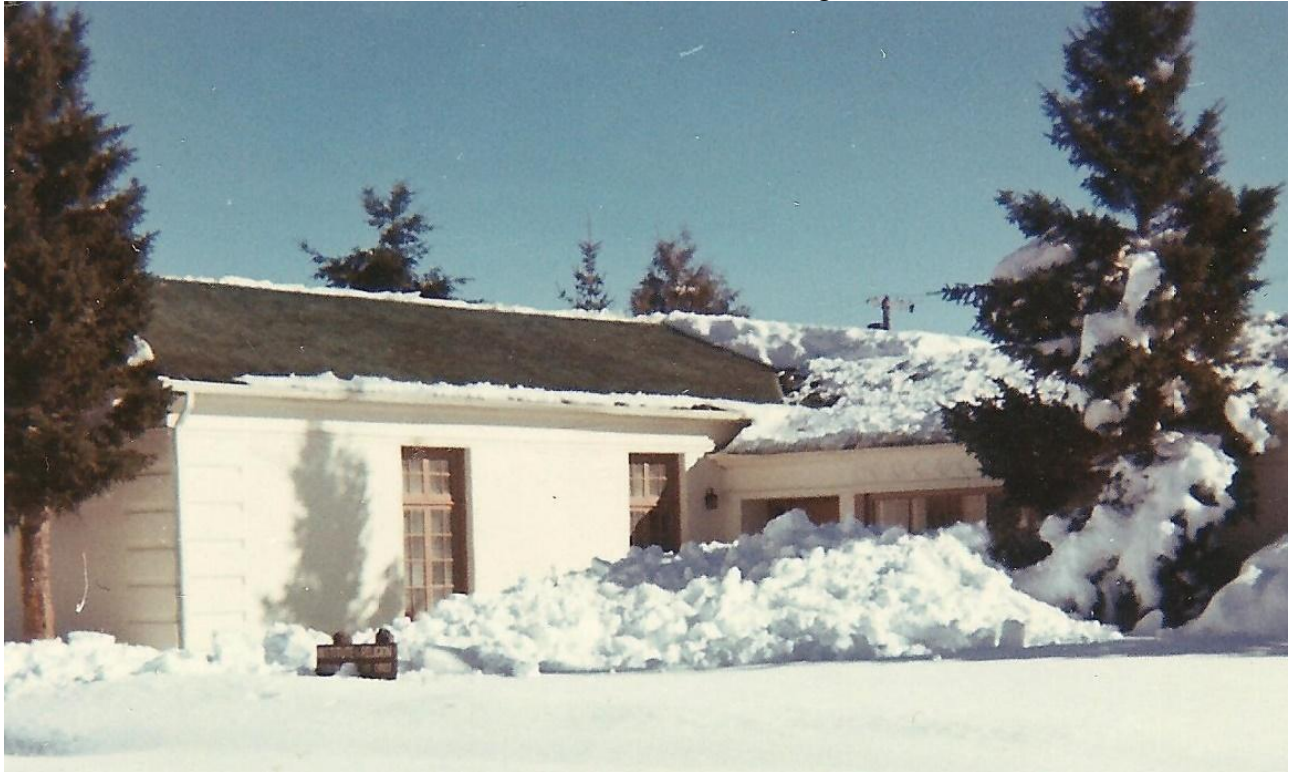
W. R. Pilsbry
Registrar

Seal

June 28, 1961
Date

This Certificate must be presented at the time of registration.

The center of life at Arizona State College for Gretna and all LDS students was the LDS Institute of Religion



The Institute was “home” for LDS students. It was home for the College Ward, Lambda Delta Sigma, table tennis between classes, dances, snow carnivals, and other activities. Gretna was loved by all who knew her – she was a friend to all! (Her nickname on campus was “Girt the flirt” because she was so friendly.)

She had fun friends and roommates at Arizona State College



Gretna

Some of her close roommates were Marilyn Kennedy, Joyce Peterson and Sheila Dugan



Marilyn Kennedy



Joyce Peterson



Sheila Dugan

Lambda Delta Sigma Volleyball

In 1963, their volleyball team was first place in the Women's Recreation Association volleyball tournament at Arizona State College.

They also won the Stake Women's Volleyball Tournament – Gretna was on both teams.

The *Church News* reported: *"It is not always the case that intellect, beauty and sports combine in a single achievement . . . The girls Chapter of Lambda Delta Sigma also won the Dean's Award for outstanding scholarship."*



● Champs in sports and brainwork (front l to r) Joyce Petersen, Gretna Phinizy, Sylvia Cowley, Sally Langston, (back) Judy Hancock, Verlene Robb, Cherie Hall.

After Gretna's Junior year at Arizona State College, she spent the summer of 1964 working at Zion National Park in Southern Utah, and she recalled the following:

"I had a dear friend my junior year at ASC named Linda Gutierrez from Winslow.

Linda lived in the dorm room next to me and we talked of going to Zion National Park the next summer and working. The couple that was over the cafeteria at NAU that year were LDS. I worked the morning shift at the cafeteria and got to know them very well. My job one day was to keep the coffee pot full during the morning shift. The coffee pot was so gross to me that one morning when things were going a bit slow I emptied the coffee pot and used all kinds of cleaners on it. I had it sparkling clean by the end of my shift. I was very pleased with how nice and clean it was. The next morning I got the shock of my life. I was told 'you don't scour out a coffee Pot!' I didn't really know much about coffee pots. I was thereafter

forbidden to have anything to do with the coffee. It was a blessing to never have to touch the coffee pot again.

That summer – 1964 – Linda and I went to Zion National Park and worked on staff for the summer. The LDS couple I worked with at the ASC cafeteria also worked at Zion National Park for the summer – I didn't have to deal with coffee pots at Zion 😊.

As a staff member I helped clean and ready the cabins, I worked in the soda fountain, and helped in the kitchen when asked to. We got to explore the canyons and streams when we were not on duty. I came to love Zion and the wonderful people I came to know and love so much there. I am so very thankful for my parents who loved and supported me in so many “adventures” in my young life.



Cabins at Zion



Soda Fountain at Zion



“The Narrows” at Zion



Zion National Park

On March 6, 1964, Gretna wrote the following:

“The Boy That I Marry”

“The boy that I marry will have to be able to love me eternally; the boy that I marry will have to be able to return the same love to me that I will give to him. This boy will have faults I know, but with the love I have for him I will be able to look beyond these faults and see so much good in him that I'll never find an end.

I'll be able to share with this boy my every thought, express to him my deepest wishes and desires, and share with him moments of spirituality, fun, serious thought, sorrow, and happiness and not be ashamed to let him see my real feelings.

The boy that I marry will be willing and want to work with me and raise a fine beautiful family, strong in the Church and strong physically, mentally, and morally. We

will work and prepare together here in this life for our life to come. Our goal will be to be heavenly parents and a God and Goddess.

We will have in our home no room for anger, jealousy, harsh words or envy because we'll have so much understanding, consideration, appreciation, trust and loyalty for one another that these bad seeds won't have a chance to grow.

We'll enjoy doing together the things we enjoy. We'll enjoy most of all a simple humble life based on our testimonies of the Gospel and our love for each other. We'll not be rich, but we'll love every minute we can spend together building our heaven on earth – this will make us the richest of all!

Yes, the boy that I marry must be able to lead me spiritually and eternally, but I will be his helpmeet and together we'll go through this life and together we'll forever stay."

Gretna returned to Arizona State College following her summer at Zion National Park to start her senior year at the college where she majored in secondary education. Her senior year would be her most memorable year – a year of an unexpected courtship with a young man who had just returned from his mission in Northern California – Thomas Lee Palmer.



Tom and Gretna



Tom



Gretna

Our Courtship Story - Tom & Gretna Palmer

"We first met in 1961 at the LDS Institute of Religion on the Arizona State College campus in Flagstaff, Arizona, where we were both freshman in college. Gretna lived in the dorm and Tom at home in Mountain Dell. We both attended meetings and activities at the Institute, danced a couple of times but never dated. A girl-ask-boy formal was scheduled for December 1961, and Gretna's roommate told her that if she didn't ask Tom to the dance she would. Gretna didn't and Marilyn Kennedy did. On December 6th Tom was involved in a very serious automobile accident (a tough way to get out of a date) and was hospitalized for three weeks. Gretna would come with some friends to visit Tom at the hospital, but she was too shy to come in his room. A Flagstaff girl, Glenna Whiting, wasn't so shy and visited him often and then they dated until Tom went on his mission to Northern California in August 1962. About one year into his mission, Tom quit writing to Glenna. While Tom was on his mission Gretna continued with college classes and worked during the summer. In the summer of 1964, she worked at Zion National Park and was surprised when a scout group from Flagstaff came to Zion. Their leaders recognized her and told her of some "eligible" returned missionaries she ought to check out when she came back to ASC. She asked them about

Tom, and they said he wasn't home from his mission yet. At about the same time, some kids from the Institute were in Northern California and stopped by the mission home to see Tom. He met with them briefly and he asked about Gretna. When Tom returned from his mission, we ended up in the same accounting class and Tom sat by Gretna – they walked to the institute after each class. Tom asked Gretna on a date and on September 25, 1964, we went bowling and to a movie and dated several more times that semester. Gretna records in her record, "At Thanksgiving vacation I told my parents I had found the man I wanted to marry – all that was left was convincing him of this important fact. On November 29, 1964, Tom brought me home from church and we sat in front of the dorm and talked for quite a long time. Just as Tom got ready to take me in he gave me a quick peck on the lips – this just about sent me into orbit! I liked it!!" Gretna went home for Christmas and Tom was a "basket case" – his Dad finally told him to go see her. Tom went to Clifton and met Gretna's family, then brought Gretna home for the New Year's dance in Flagstaff. On January 31, 1965 Tom proposed and Gretna accepted. On February 16th Gretna asked Tom's dad if it was ok for her to marry Tom and he said yes and provided some valuable advice. On February 21st Tom asked Gretna's dad for permission to marry his daughter – he asked a few questions (and scared us both) and then said we had his blessing. During the spring semester 1965 at ASC the college was renamed NAU – Northern Arizona University. Tom ran track for the University and thus had a 10 pm curfew. Gretna and Tom often "hung out" at his home and when it was time for Gretna to go home Marena often took her to the dorm, as Tom could be in violation of curfew. Several of our dates were doing janitor work at Kaibab Lumber Company where we cleaned the offices and the molding plant adjacent to it. Our love and respect for one another grew and we were married for time and eternity in the Mesa Arizona Temple, and our wonderful eternal journey together began!"

On May 30, 1965, Tom wrote the following letter to Gretna in advance of their planned marriage:

"Dear Honey, (kinda mushy, huh?). I was glad I got to talk to you on the phone today – I was about to get cold feet (not really). I've even missed you – quite a bit in fact. Today wasn't quite like Sunday without you here. I've been busy but I still get lonesome at times. Going to the temple with the Lamanite children was a great experience. In the chapel preliminary service they all bore their testimonies and they were really humble. (They all knew I was soon to be married) One of the little girls, Lucille, asked me if she could be my flower girl – she was just kinda joking around, but I did get really attached to these kids. Everyone has been teasing me about being nervous – but you know I don't ever get nervous. Tell your family hi and behave yourself – remember, I'm going to be on time. I love you and am seriously looking forward to your love and companionship for eternity. Love, Tom"

Gretna Ann Phinizy and Thomas Lee Palmer were married in the Mesa Arizona Temple on June 3, 1965. Gretna received her endowment just prior to their marriage ceremony. Jesse M. Smith, temple president, performed the marriage and Tom's father, Elwyn Gus Palmer, and Gretna's grandfather, Clarence Evans Post, were the witnesses. Gretna's parents were unable to attend the wedding because her father was not yet a member and her mother was not yet endowed.



Our Wedding Day!



Gretna and Tom in front of the Temple



Grandpa and Grandma Post with Gretna and Tom



Gretna and Tom with Dad and Mom Palmer

Wedding Reception



**Wedding Dress made by Gretna's mother and Velora Webster
(Gretna wore the same dress that her dear friend, Nedra Webster, wore for her wedding)**



Tom and Gretna with Wedding Cake



Dad & Mom Phinizy, Gretna & Tom, Mom & Dad Palmer



Nedra Webster-Maid of Honor; Bride's Maids: Pam, Helen, Marena, Pauline

Honeymoon

Following the reception in Clifton-Morenci Ward Meetinghouse, Gretna and Tom left Clifton on their honeymoon. Their 1956 Chevrolet (they bought for \$250) was nicely decorated for "newlyweds", but unknown to those decorating the car they had already made plans to take Tom's parents' car on their honeymoon. Tom's parents with Bob and Mary and their young baby boy, Nelson, agreed to drive the decorated car to Flagstaff.



In those days when you purchased gasoline an attendant always filled the car with gas. The following note had been placed inside the gas cap flap: "This couple was just married – don't laugh! Don't tell them this note is here! Aren't they cute?" The gas attendant was likely a little shocked to see a couple with a young baby in the back seat.

Tom and Gretna had planned to drive to the Phoenix area to stay in a really nice hotel, however, Tom's parents' car had car trouble and they spent several hours getting it repaired in Thatcher, Arizona. Already tired, they decided to spend their wedding night in the Pima Motel.

Tom and Gretna went to California on their honeymoon and attended the Los Angeles and Oakland temples and visited sites in the San Francisco area including, the Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf, and the Muir Woods National Monument.



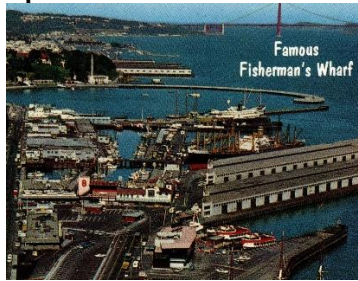
Los Angeles Temple



Oakland Temple



Golden Gate Bridge



Fisherman's Wharf



Muir-Woods National Monument

Gretna had not been around the ocean, so Tom took her to the beach in San Francisco just to have her photo taken there. He had her remove her shoes and walk just a short distance into the water and then face him so he could take her photo in the ocean. She didn't know much about waves coming in and Tom stalled until a good one came in and snapped the photo as she came running out.



After returning to Flagstaff, Tom carried Gretna across the threshold of their new home in Mountain Dell and they undertook their lives as students and young marrieds.



First home – a 13' x 39' barrack (from the Navajo Army Depot) purchased from Tom's Dad. The home was next to Sinclair Wash and the Mountain Dell Miniature Golf Course



They got a dog "Pat" and planted a lawn and garden, and Gretna made the little house a "home"

Mountain Dell was a fun place to live – they were close to Tom's parents, NAU campus, and the Institute. They enjoyed the College Ward with Bishop Bushman as their Bishop. Tom and Gretna were close to Orvil and Louise Bushman and their family and often babysat their children.



Louise and Orvil Bushman



Bishopric of the Flagstaff College Ward
Stan Beus (counselor), Max Spilsbury (counselor), Bishop Bushman, Frank Gordon and Jim Waters - clerks

Tom was called to serve as a counselor to Bishop Bushman the September after our marriage. They had a fun young married group in the Ward and did a lot of things together. Some of the couples were Frank and Donna Greer, Steve and Joyce John, Wayne and I don Johnson, Sheldon and Snookie Webb and Kenny and Pam (Gretna's sister) Crosby.

The 1965–1966 school year was a busy time – Gretna finished her classes at NAU and did her student teaching with Mary Randall at Flagstaff Junior High in the spring of 1966. Gretna graduated from NAU with a degree in secondary education in June 1966.



Gretna – a college graduate

During 1966-67 school year (Tom's senior year in school) Tom was working 6 part-time jobs and Gretna was babysitting in their home. Tom taught a couple of institute classes at the request of Keith Crockett, our Institute Director – they became very close to Keith and Katie Crockett and their family, occasionally babysitting their children when Keith and Katie had to be out of town.

February 1, 1967 was a wonderful day for Tom and Gretna – Kenneth Lee Palmer, their first child, was born in the Flagstaff Hospital.



Kenneth Lee Palmer

The Palmer family took on a whole new dimension! Gretna was a perfect mother and wife – caring for Kenneth's every need and supporting Tom in his busy schedule. Spring of 1967 was a fun time for the family with a delightful son brightening their every day.



It was a busy time – Tom's last semester of school and his preparation for the CPA exam. **Gretna recorded:** *"In May 1967, Kenneth and I took our first flight on an airplane (the one shown below) – we went from Phoenix to Tucson to stay with my folks while Tom took the CPA exam."*



Tom had been employed part-time for some time by Kaibab Industries. Kaibab made a move of their headquarters from Flagstaff to Phoenix in June 1967 and asked Tom if he would be willing to learn the payroll responsibilities in Flagstaff and do the payroll for the company in Phoenix for the Summer 1967. They moved to Tempe, Arizona in June and were able to secure a nice little apartment owned by the Church near the LDS Institute on the Arizona State University campus and just down the block from the Law School that was under construction. Tom was to start law school in the Fall of 1967.



Tempe Apartment – their family home from June 1967 to June 1970

The next three years of law school was memorable for both of them - Gretna being the ideal "helpmeet". Tom set a schedule during law school that he would always end classes and studying at 6 pm and the evenings would always be family time (and a few basketball games 😊 and bishopric meetings). He was already committed to never studying on Sunday and was hopeful to study some on Saturdays, but except for exam time it was his desire to be with his family and he was. They ate a lot of pinto beans, lived VERY modestly, and enjoyed this time as a family. They could walk almost anywhere they needed to go – church, law school, and games on campus. They took walks on campus with their boy(s), went to football, basketball and baseball games at ASU and enjoyed some very dear friends in their ward. They had family home evenings with 3 other couples – Ron and Jan Cox, Dan and Joanne Williams, and Ernie and Margaret Ritter.



Family Home Evening – Ron & Jan Cox, Kenneth, Joanne and Dan Williams

One of their most memorable Family Home Evenings was held in their home and Tom had the lesson – the lesson was on the importance of parents setting a proper example for their children, because their children would mirror their behavior. About that time Kenneth came in from the bathroom with his potty chair on his head. So much for an impressive lesson 😊.

They helped clean the Institute building to justify \$75/month rent for the small apartment on Institute property. Tom did some reports for Kaibab Industries every month to earn some money and they rented out their little home in Flagstaff.

Tom shared his observations of the amazing mother Gretna was in a Christmas letter from Kenneth (then only about 11 months old):

"Merry Christmas Mommy!

I don't have any money to buy you a present and if I had I wouldn't know how to wrap it. But, that doesn't matter I heard you and Daddy talking about gifts that can't be wrapped . . . and they don't even cost money. Well, that's the kind of gift I want to give you . . . that seems to be the best kind anyway. The gift I want to give you Mommy is my love: 'I love you Mommy.'

*I know, I don't talk yet . . . but I still want you to know how I feel. You see, I know you and Daddy love me – yes, you tell me that that's one way I know, but there's other ways that make me know even more. I've fallen my fair share and taken the knocks as they've come, but not alone Mommy – you've taken them with me. Oh, if only you knew the love you express as you kiss my tear smeared face, as you rock me to sleep at night and as you squeeze me tight in your arms. And that's not all . . . I am with you all **day long while Daddy** is off to school. I watch you Mommy – you work hard! Oh, I know, you think all I do is play,*

make messes, cry and get into things. But I've watched you Mommy – you cook, sew, clean house, make beds, change my messy diapers, wash and dry clothes, and lots of other things – all for me and Daddy . . . wow! You must love me too Mommy – all that you do tells me you love me.

Well, I've been thinking, if you can tell me in so many ways that you love me, why can't I tell you "I love you" without even knowing how to talk. I try to tell you with a smile, a laugh, a hug, and sometimes a cry. I don't always get the message across, but I try. The next time you pick me up Mommy, I'll try to tell you I love you, but if I can't say it . . . remember . . . I too can speak without words – this is my gift to you although it can't be wrapped – "I love you Mommy!"

Merry Christmas – your son, Kenneth Lee"

Two more precious sons were sent to Tom & Gretna by a loving Heavenly Father before Tom finished law school in June 1970:



Steven Gus, born August 24, 1968



Michael Thomas, born April 14, 1970



Summer 1970 Family Photo

THE WAGON – for three years a very common site on the campus of Arizona State University was a small red wagon with one, then two and later three little boys in the wagon and two parents leading the way. Most Saturdays they would take the boys on a long wagon ride on the sidewalks of the campus.



Steven in the wagon and Kenneth ready to pull him.

Tom graduated from Law School in June 1970, worked for Kaibab Industries for the summer, passed the Bar Exam, and began work in the fall as an attorney for Gene Wade . . . the firm soon became known as Wade, Robson, Palmer & Bethea.

They purchased a new 4-bedroom home on Del Oro Circle near Mesa Community College in 1970 for \$22,400. This would be home for the next 4 years.



Gretna made this nice house a wonderful Spirit-filled home

This was a wonderful family time – They had 3 wonderful sons, who loved their new home, their sandbox, their neighborhood, and their dog – “Sparkie”. During the four years in Mesa, Kenneth and Steven started elementary school at Roosevelt Elementary School, the boys enjoyed swimming in the summer months, Tom was lawyering and serving in the newly

created University Stake Presidency, playing basketball in the winter months and softball during the summer, and they enjoyed time together as a growing family at games, home and church. With Tom attending meetings most of the time at one of the University Wards (4 wards at ASU, one at Mesa Community College, and one at Phoenix College), many in their home ward wondered why this mom with three children had no husband and dad at church with them. One Sunday when Gretna was about 7 months pregnant with Daniel, a single member of the ward asked Gretna to go with him to a singles activity – Tom decided he had better do double-duty and attend meetings both at home and at the University. One Sunday, the boys told Gretna they wanted to go to “the true Church” that day. Gretna explained that they always went to “the true Church”, they responded: “no, Daddy’s true Church”. The next week they went as a family to the Mesa Community College Ward – definitely an awakening for these young college students who normally attended meetings in “total silence”. During the Sacrament, Michael leaned out into the aisle and waived at Tom on the stand and said, “Hi Daddy!”. Tom motioned for him to come to the stand and sit on his lap. They had fun neighbors and ward members and especially enjoyed their neighbors – Richard and Barbara Franchard, the Calls, Tedrows, Browns, Crandalls, Cardons, and the Ericksons.

In May 1972, Kenneth gave Gretna a hand-made Mother’s Day card with the following words on the card:

*“They say we chose our Mothers up in Heaven long ago,
To teach us Heavenly Father’s plan, to help us learn and grow.
I’m still very little, Mommy, but I know it’s true, of all the
Mothers in the world, I’m glad I chose you.”*

[This sentiment is felt by each of her children to this very day!]

In August 1972, Gretna received the **“Golden Gleaner” award** from the Church. This award was earned during the period of graduation from Young Women to age 30 and required achievement in five areas: Spiritual, Executive, Cultural, Creative, and Athletic and Special Recognition.



GRETNA ANN P. PALMER
has faithfully fulfilled the requirements necessary to
become a
GOLDEN GLEANER
in the YWMA of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
and is entitled to wear the
Official Golden Gleaner Insignia

Flonora S. Jacobson
General President YWMA

Valerie B. Gibbons
Chairman General Board Gleaner Committee

Peggy Cardon
Stake President YWMA

Cherri Lynn Salk
Stake Gleaner Supervisor

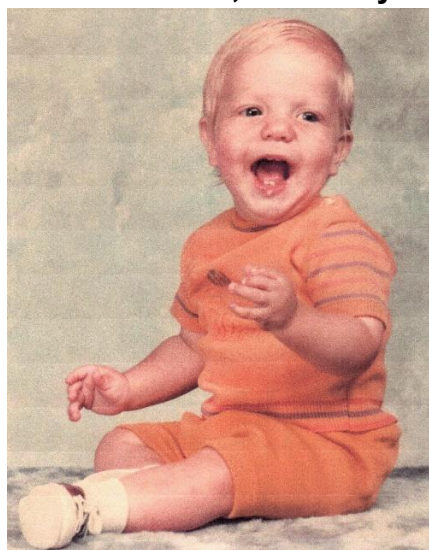
Diane A. Olson
Ward Gleaner Teacher

DATE August 21, 1972

In February 1973 Tom and Gretna enjoyed a special experience – Tom recorded the following in his journal:

“Gretna and I had a very special experience. Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Twelve and his wife attended an all-stake sacrament meeting for the Tempe University Stake. Following the meeting we were invited to join with others at President Huish’s home for a dinner with Elder and Sister Kimball. It was exciting to feel of their spirit, sense of humor, and great love for all of God’s children.”

On June 1, 1973 they were blessed with another precious son – Daniel Aaron



Daniel Aaron Palmer



1973 Family Photo

Gretna experienced a very difficult time with this birth – the doctor worked for several hours and successfully turned Daniel and avoided the need for a C-section. **Tom recorded in his journal**, *“Gretna is a wonderful mother and wife and at times like this I realize how she literally lays her life on the altar to bring these wonderful children into the world and into our family.”*

We continued to enjoy our ward members and neighbors. At Christmas time 1973 we had a fun Christmas gathering at the Tedrow home and even had Santa Claus come.



Gretna on Santa’s lap

In January 1974 Gretna had Thyroid surgery – Dr. Hiatt felt the surgery went perfectly. Gretna’s and Tom’s Mothers came to help out with the children during her recovery time.

Tom received word in April 1974 that he would begin teaching at Northern Arizona University beginning Fall semester 1974. Their time in the valley was a wonderful growing experience and has been good for the children as they got to visit Tom’s Grandma Palmer and Uncle Lon and Aunt Ila often.

Memorial Day weekend 1974, they got to go to Flagstaff. **Tom recorded the following in his journal:**

“We enjoyed Memorial Day weekend in Flagstaff and got to work some on our fence – our home is progressing well. Kenneth is now playing on a T-ball team for the summer, Steven is playing in the mud, and Michael is diving into empty swimming pools. Daniel is about to start walking and is a real live wire.”



Kenneth, Daniel, Steven, Michael

The family moved to Flagstaff in August 1974 – their new home was on Lindsey Road east of Flagstaff and just south of Townsend-Winona Road.

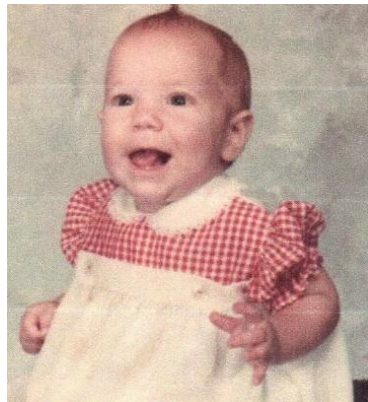


Lindsey Road Home and tree fort



Boys at Lindsey Road home

They welcomed their first daughter, Kalynn, to the family on January 27, 1975 – Tom was playing basketball on a city league team when he received word that Gretna’s water had broken. He hurried home and rushed her (on very slick roads in a snow storm) to the hospital. When Kalynn was born almost everyone who knew the family ran through the hospital halls hollering “the Palmers have a girl!” – and the family rejoiced with them in this precious gift from our Heavenly Father.



Kalynn Palmer



Family photo – 1975

The family enjoyed family life on Lindsey Road: a milk cow “Claudia”, two Shetland ponies “Peanuts and Buffy” - pigs, chickens, and a dog “Nipper” (their dog “Sparkie” was killed on the highway shortly after they arrived in Flagstaff).

On May 13, 1976 they were blessed with another precious son – Richard Bryant.



Richard Bryant Palmer



Family photo – Summer 1976



The family hosted a fun family reunion in 1977 with Gretna's siblings and their children

The family lived at the Lindsey Road home from 1974 to 1978 when Tom and Gretna partnered with Bruce and Jerri Porter to buy the Young's Canyon Ranch south of the Winona interchange of I-40. They sold their home and moved to the "Little White House" on the Winona ranch property in the summer of 1978. This home was made of railroad ties with chinking in between the ties and was only 20'x30', with a living room, small kitchen/dining room, one bedroom, a small laundry room and a single bathroom. The plan was to live in this home until they completed construction of a new home to the west of the little White House.



"Little White House" – "Little House on the Prairie"

Even in this humble little home, Gretna was always a gracious host to visitors. We had a special visitor for Stake conference while living in the “Little White House”. Tom recalls: *“Our stake president, Willis McEuen, called and informed us that Elder John Groberg would be the conference visitor and that he wanted to visit the home of every bishop in the stake. Elder Groberg and President McEuen visited our humble little home which Gretna - as always – had clean and acceptable for such a visit. Elder Groberg also visited the home we had under construction and provided some helpful tips.*

Through the years Gretna hosted many General Authorities of the Church in our home and always did so without a lot of fanfare, but with a welcoming spirit that always made them feel comfortable in our home. One of the things I admire most about Gretna is that she puts on no pretense – she is Gretna and people love her for who she is! She often provided meals for them and many of them stayed in our home during stake conference weekend – our daughters graciously gave up their bedroom for our guests and the Church leaders often commented on the spirit they felt in their clean and tidy bedroom. Gretna’s cooking and baking skills were always very much appreciated by those who visited our home (and by all of the family 😊).

The Church leaders we had in our home over the years included Elder L. Tom Perry and his wife, Elder D. Todd Christofferson, Elder John Groberg, Elder Jack Goaslind, Elder Mack Lawrence, Elder Francis Gibbons and his wife [she is the author of the early books on our common ancestor Andrew Smith Gibbons], , Elder Gordon Porter, and Elder Dale Shumway and his wife. Each of these leaders commented on the way they felt in our home because of Gretna. Many of those who visited commented on the beautiful rural setting of our homes and the wildlife that they saw in the fields or even in our yard. I remember seeing Elder Porter many years later and he asked if we still had deer coming right up in our yard.



Elder L. Tom Perry



Elder D. Todd Christofferson



Elder John H. Groberg



Elder Jack H. Goaslind



Elder W. Mack Lawrence



Elder Francis M. Gibbons



Elder Gordon Porter



Elder Dale Shumway

One fun memory was when Elder Christofferson was in our Cosnino home, and we were all at the table ready for our evening meal. I called on Timmy to bless the food. He said, ‘Heavenly Father, pless the food (short for please bless the food 😊), thank thee for it, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.’ Elder Christofferson said, ‘he got to the point – let’s eat!’

Shortly after the move to the “Little White House” they were blessed with another precious son – Timothy Paul was born on August 16, 1978.



Gretna with Timmy



Timothy Paul Palmer

With seven children in a 600 square foot home, they had to be pretty creative to maximize the space – they had two hide-a-bed couches that would fold down in the living room and sleep three children sideways on each bed, then Timmy was in a bassinet next to the bed in the bedroom. Gretna somehow made even this very old and small house into a lovely home where we felt the Spirit. They heated the home with a potbelly Franklin woodburning stove.



Little White house on Sunday



Adjoining garage with basketball hoop



Family in 1978



“Ringo” joined the family



The family in 1979

Building the new home at Winona was a family project – ALL of the family contributed to the construction of the home, completing the home in late 1979.

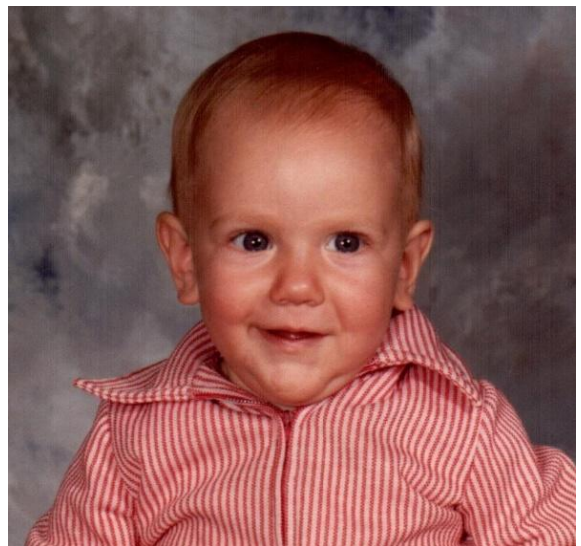


Tom and boys helping with block work



Moved into the new Winona home in December 1979

The move into the new home happened with Gretna 8+ months pregnant. We welcomed another precious son – Mark Russell – into our family on December 27, 1979.



Mark Russell Palmer as a baby and then several months old

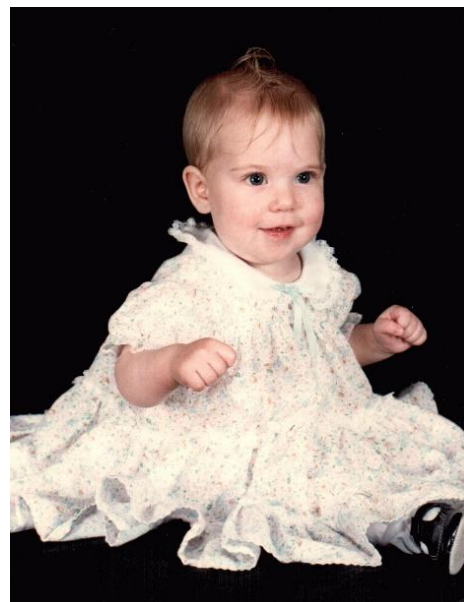


Tom & Gretna's children in early 1980

On June 22, 1981 we were blessed with another precious daughter – Pamela. Kalynn was so excited to have a baby sister and we were excited to have another daughter.



Pamela as a baby



7 months old



Family in 1981

“One cannot forget mother and remember God, One cannot remember mother and forget God. Why? Because these two sacred persons, God and mother, partners in creation, in love, in sacrifice, in service, are as one.”

Thomas S. Monson

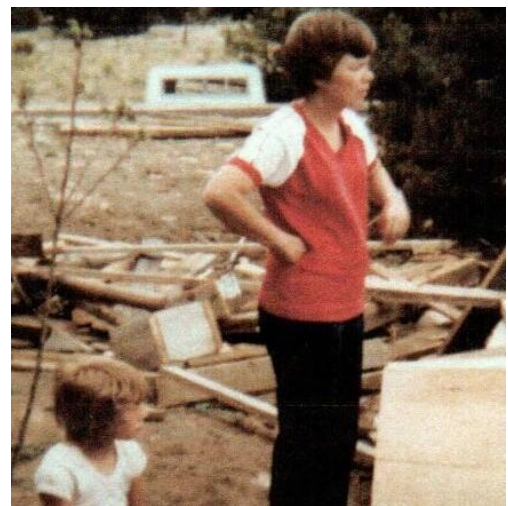
In the first 16 years of marriage (with 9 full pregnancies and 2 miscarriages), Gretna was pregnant for almost half of that time and was either pregnant or nursing for about 14 years of the first years of marriage – she gave of herself, her love, to partner with Tom and with God to bring nine beautiful children into mortality - making possible a forever family – a family for which Tom and Gretna are eternally grateful! Gretna’s sacrifice is one of the sweetest offerings of faith and love that can be imagined.

In the years to follow doctors strongly recommended that Gretna not have more children for it might endanger her own life. After fasting and prayer, Tom & Gretna came to know with certainty that **“this is our family”**.



Oh, how grateful we are for these precious little ones our Father in Heaven blesses us with!

Imagine the sacrifices that Gretna made in the many years of raising and nurturing nine children – teaching, feeding, doctoring, transporting, disciplining, playing with them, working with them, supporting them, and loving each one of them.



feeding the “multitude” – she fed the family well!

“Family First”

The Lord invited us to always put Family First after our devotion to Heavenly Father and the Savior. Gretna lived by that invitation devoting her life to her husband, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren and all of their families.



Being in the temple with ALL of our children – a dream come true!

“The Family – A Proclamation to the World” states:

“The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. . . Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.” **What joy Tom & Gretna feel striving for this happiness in their family!**

Children sealed to their companions for time and all of eternity



**Deborah & Kenneth
St. George Utah Temple**



**Colette & Steven
Mesa Arizona Temple**



**Heather & Michael
St. George Utah Temple**



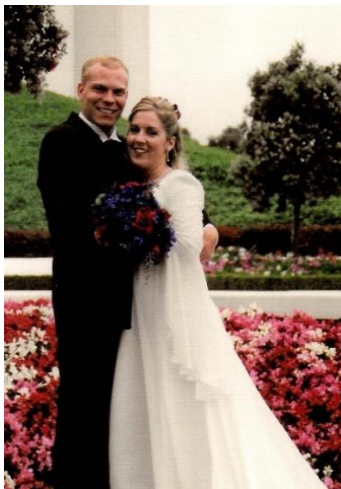
**Daniel & Julie
Las Vegas Nevada Temple**



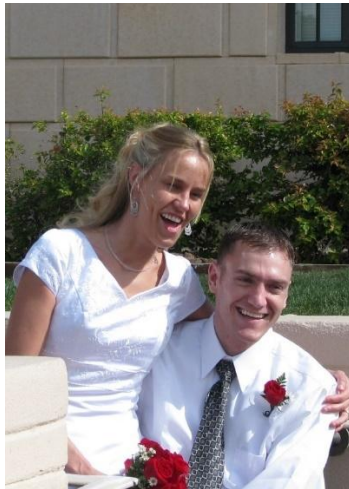
**Kalynn & Mike
Mesa Arizona Temple**



**Ricky & Shannon
Mesa Arizona Temple**



**Timmy & Tia
San Diego California Temple**

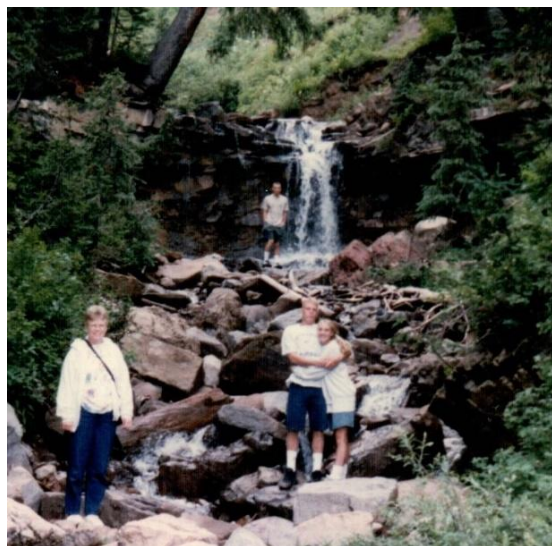


**Celeste & Mark
Mesa Arizona Temple**



**Pam & Ronnie
Gilbert Arizona Temple**

Gretna and Tom traveled many joyful miles supporting their children in temple trips, athletics, scouting and young women, and transporting them to activities throughout their lives. They worked together, played together, prayed together, read books together, and worshipped together. On one occasion, Gretna and Tom picked up Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles from the airport for him to preside at regional meetings on Saturday and Sunday. When Elder Packer got out of the car, he asked Gretna if she was going to go with the “ladies” to Sedona. She did not hesitate and said, “No, with Tom at your leadership meetings I feel I should support our children at their track meet.” His response was, “Finally, someone is listening to the Lord’s message – putting family first.”



Gretna put family first on excursions to Oak Creek and Colorado.



Family excursion to the Mazatzal Wilderness

Always there for the family!



Hiking Sunset Crater - 1971



Hiking Mount Humphreys - 1995

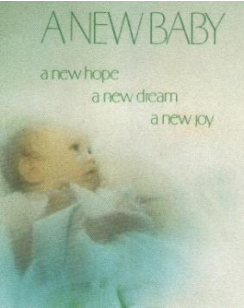


She made every birthday of our children a special day!

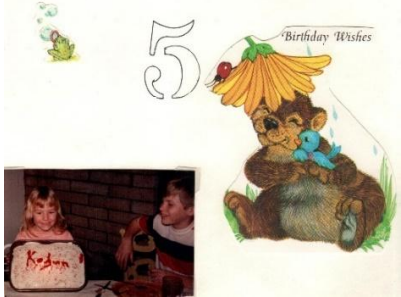


Gretna made Easter dresses for her and the girls

With her total devotion to family it is amazing that Gretna found time to create for each child 2-3 volumes of SCRAPBOOKS covering their lives in photos, certificates, memories and treasures from birth to graduation from high school.



Births



Birthdays



Achievements



Music and Fun



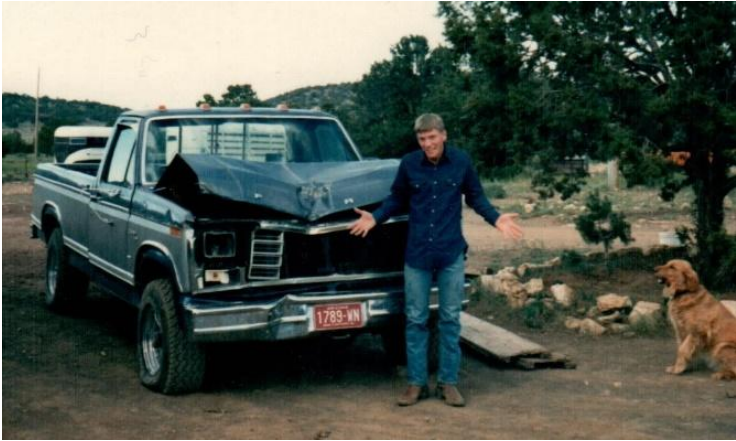
Surgeries



Animals



Sports



Accidents



Zion & EFY , Sons sent on missions and returning

*All of this and so much more captured in
SCRAPBOOKS for each child*

Grandchildren love their Grandma and she loves them!



Reunion in Alpine - 2006



Candid photos of Carter, Sarah, Tana, and Hailey



Grandsons - pure innocence? Torin, Trent, Lance, Darris, Colton



Colton, Jacob, Sam, Tessalyn



Jaxxon



Quinn

Each new grandchild found a way into Grandma's arms

A family tree grows at NAU



Professor Tom Palmer (front row, right) and his wife, Gretna (front row, center), are two NAU alumni who have kept that Flagstaff tradition well-rooted in the family. Surrounding their parents are five current NAU students: (top row, left to right) Daniel, a sophomore; Michael, a senior; Rickey, a freshman; Steven, a senior; and Kalynn (front row, left), a sophomore. Not shown are Kenneth, who graduated in 1993, and three younger siblings who Tom says will “probably go here.”

At NAU’s 1994 Parents Day, Gretna and Tom were recognized as the “Parents of the Year” having the most children at NAU at that time.

Sewing – more than just a hobby for Gretna!

Gretna made quilts, wedding dresses, matching Easter dresses, sports coats, and repaired clothes for children and grandchildren – including several layers of patches on Tom’s work clothes.



Many quilts Gretna did on her own – others with dear friends – Carolyn, Marilyn, Gretna and Nancy



Gretna made wedding dresses for Kalynn and Pam



Gretna made Levi quilts for her grandchildren.



Gretna made baby quilts for her great grandchildren.

Gretna passes on her sewing skills to her children and grandchildren.



Bree made this Quilt with Gretna's tutoring.

SERVICE to family, friends and neighbors, and to the Lord was just part of the life of Gretna and she found joy in that service. Some of her dearest friends are those she served with in Relief Society, Young Women, Primary and Scouting callings.



Rebecca Cardon, Jolan Jirsa, Carolyn Goodman, Gretna



Gretna, Carolyn Goodman, Carol Sorensen, Christine Jeffs



Gretna, Rebecca Zufelt, Diane Miller, Louise Hill



Gretna, Rebecca Cardon, Barbara Skinner

Each of these sweet sisters were truly sisters to Gretna and they loved her as such. They all enjoyed a sisterhood that continues to this day. One of those she served with in the Stake Primary sent the following note to Gretna:

June 15, 1989

Dear Gretna,

When you were called to be on the Primary board, I was a little intimidated by you. I have been fortunate to live in the same ward as Gus and Ruth and Mel and Adeline for whom I have great admiration and respect. They spoke of you and Tom so often with such pride, that your name was bigger than life. What I discovered was that you were unaware of the esteem in which you are held. You think that you are just an ordinary person! That meekness makes you very easy to be around. But I feel I must tell you that you are no ordinary person. You have a great capacity to love, a developed sense of humor, and a determination to do right that I regard as exceptional. I will miss our association together. I have enjoyed being around such remarkable women. But with you, I will especially miss your finding the humor in all our stress and discouragement.

Your friend,
Susan Turnbull

Gretna is truly “**no ordinary person**” and all who served with her quickly came to realize that her meekness, her selflessness, her capacity to love and work with others made her a critical part of every presidency she served in. To this day she still is unaware of the amazing daughter of God she is – that makes her an amazing mother, grandmother, wife, and daughter who continues to bless all around her with love, humor, and genuine friendship. She has retained the “angel love” and contagious sense of humor even through her difficult older years.

A fun experience she enjoyed with the Stake Primary Presidency followed a Ward Conference in Williams. As her presidency set off to return to Flagstaff they began visiting, laughing, and enjoying their time together. Until they arrived at Valley – almost to the Grand Canyon – they had no idea they had missed the turn to Flagstaff via I-40. They notified us that they would be a little late getting home – we all enjoyed a laugh that they were so bonded in their relationship that they had no idea what was happening in the world around them.

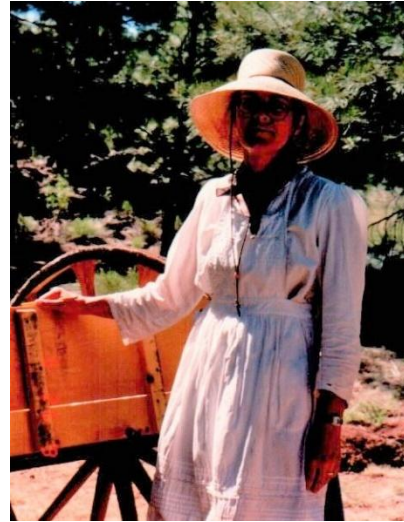
Girls' Camp



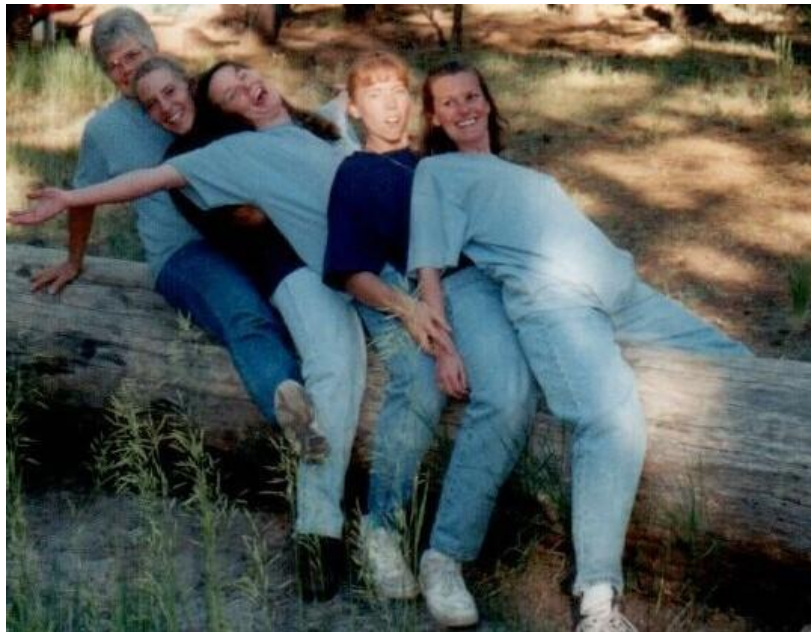
One of Gretna's great loves was the Young Women Summer Camps she served at for many years. Her love of these young women, her sense of humor, and her desire to follow the handbooks to bless the lives of all in the way the Lord wanted to bless them made her a wonderful and fun leader of young women.



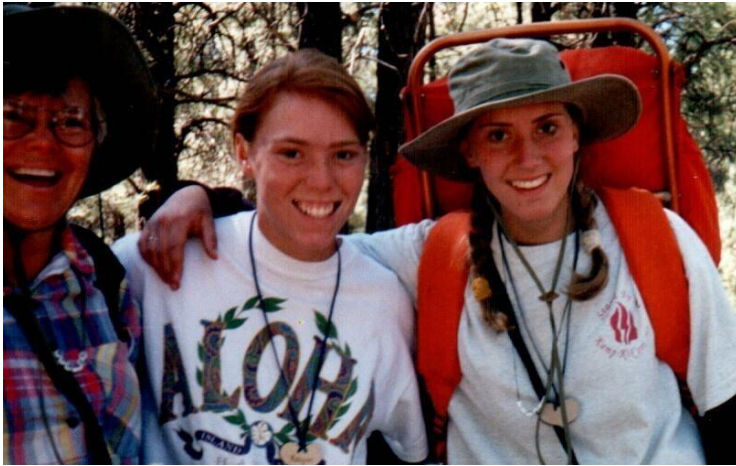
Camps were often at Dog Town Lake and Kaibab Lake



Carolyn Goodman was often with her at camp



Her fondest memories of her camp experiences was being there with daughters and daughters in law
Gretna with Pam, Colette, Kalynn, and Shannon



Gretna, Kalynn and Pam at Camp



Gretna with Steven at Camp

Gretna's family was there to help, support, transport, provide priesthood, and even provide hot showers 😊. One year Tom and Tom Goodman set up a hot water shower for the Young Women leaders. Tom brought the water truck (shown above) and Tom Goodman set up a hot water heater and a propane tank – they built a private shower with tarps and wooden pallets and a shower head and plumbing attached to the water heater which was filled with the water from the tank on the water truck.



Fun with leaders was a big part of Girls' Camp



Rest doesn't come often at Girls' Camp, but sure nice when it does come.

With seven sons, it was only natural that Gretna would be involved in Cub Scouts. She was a Den Leader for her sons and other young boys and active with leadership of Cub Scouting for the District. She helped with Cub Scout Day Camps and Cub Scout Leader training at the district level for many years. She also was there for each of her sons as they each became Eagle Scouts.



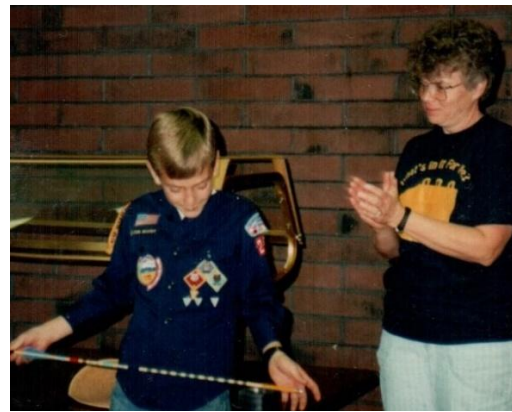
Kenneth, Michael, Steven



Gretna receiving Mother's Pin from Timmy



Ricky, Daniel, Michael, Timmy



Mark receiving "Arrow of Light", Gretna

Gretna's service to boys in the Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting organizations was recognized with awards at the District level and in 1989 she received the Grand Canyon Council recognition of Silver Beaver.



Gretna receiving Silver Beaver Award



**Thanks to Mom from Michael at his Eagle Night
Recognition from her sons was the only award that mattered to Gretna**

For 10+ years Gretna and Tom enjoyed a trip with family and friends to Lake Powell each summer – a special thanks to Tom and Carolyn Goodman who made it all happen with their houseboat and generosity.



Lake Powell was a fun time for Gretna and all of us as we enjoyed this time together



We celebrated Gretna's 50th on the Lake



Goodman's House Boat



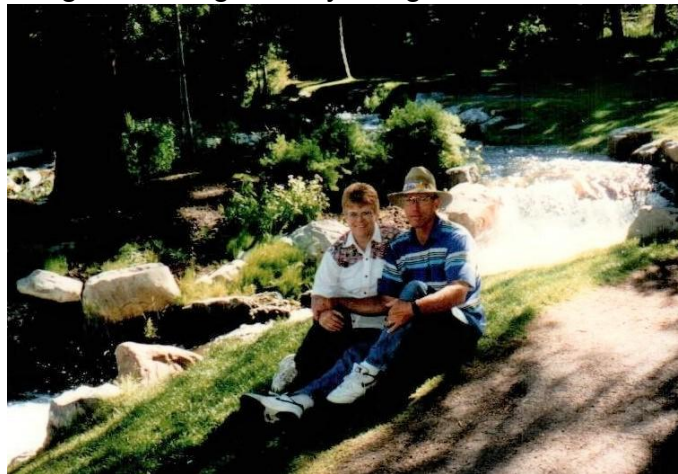
Lake Powell was a wonderful bonding experience with friends and family but especially for Tom and Gretna. This experience was a fun time we enjoyed together.

In 1990 we enjoyed our 25th wedding anniversary.



Celebrating 25 wonderful years together and eternity ahead of us – Nancy Westover made our cake

Many of our “Friday Night Date Nights” were supporting our children in their sports and other activities, but we did get some “get-aways” together.



We enjoyed a visit to Sundance Resort near Provo Canyon with Dave and Bobbi Beagley



“You are my Sunshine” is the way we feel about each other.

A Memorable Time in Gretna's Life

Though out her life Gretna prayed for the time her Father would accept the Gospel, be sealed to her mother and Gretna be sealed to them. Her prayers were answered – The miracle was described in the book written by Tom about her parents:

“The Savior promised, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet . . . And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers . . .” 3 Ne 25: 5-6

Gretna's father had a good heart, but it needed softening due to his childhood experiences of attending church in Georgia and his father's passing when he was only 12 years old. The Lord provided several “softening experiences”:

1. *Gretna's mother, with her Father's permission, received her own endowment in the Mesa Arizona Temple on February 24, 1988. One gift of the endowment is the power to do all that God wants us to do – she was endowed with priesthood power.*

2. *On October 19 and 20, 1990, several members of the family gathered at the Mesa Arizona Temple to do ordinance work for ancestors of her Father – the work for his parents, Paul and Gretna Phinizy was completed. These ancestors were now empowered to act as directed by the Holy Ghost to help with the gathering of Israel from the other side of the veil . . . including helping a heart to soften.*

3. *Grandsons of Gretna's parents prepared for and served missions for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and came home as men – empowered by their spirit and examples. Gretna's father noticed the difference between his grandsons and granddaughters and those of his friends and his heart softened knowing their love of God and willingness to serve him played a big part in their goodness.*

With Gretna's father's heart softening by these experiences he and her mother moved to Payson, Arizona, where a sweet couple in the Church, Brother and Sister Muir, visited them and became their dear friends. Bryant and Brother Muir often went fishing together (a captive audience when you are in a boat on the lake ☺) and in time Brother Muir had him reading the Book of Mormon. Other than Gretna's mother, none of the family was aware of this progress.

In December 1992, Gretna and her family visited her parents at their Payson home – this visit came after much preparation and a lot of faith by all of the family. They presented her father with a leather-bound larger print copy of the Book of Mormon with his name engraved on the cover. He looked at it and said to Gretna's mother, *“I can read this one!”* Gretna and her family didn't know what this meant at that time. They also gave him a large envelope with hand-written testimonies of his children and grandchildren expressing love for him and a desire to be a forever family. Gretna's father read every testimony with tears streaming down his face and then said, *“I could not have received a more beautiful gift.”* Bryant later told the family that he had recently had special feelings toward his own parents.

In January 1993, all of the family of Gretna's parents fasted and prayed for him. With the love and influence of his wonderful family on both sides of the veil and the love, faithfulness, and patience of Gretna's mother, her father was taught the Gospel and was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on February 6, 1993. His 7 returned-missionary grandsons participated in the baptismal service. The following day for the first time he presided and led in holding family prayer. He

expressed gratitude to the family for bringing him this far and humbly asked for help in catching up. The Lord worked through so many people on both sides of the veil to turn his heart.

Gretna's father received his own endowment in the Mesa Arizona Temple on February 19, 1994 and he and Gretna's mother were sealed and their four daughters were sealed to them. Bryant was also sealed to his parents with Tom and Gretna as proxies for his parents. Knowing the long wait her father had (since he was 12) to be close to his dad again, we all felt a very tender and special Spirit during this sealing.

Gretna's parents took a memorable trip with their four daughters and husbands to Salt Lake City to allow Gretna's parents to have their first experience attending General Conference for the Church in person.

The family group was invited to take a tour of the Salt Lake Temple by an engineer of the temple. While taking the tour Elder Lynn Mickelson of the Seventy approached the family and shared several kind words. Later as the family sat in the tabernacle awaiting the start of a conference session, Elder Mickelson saw Gretna's father sitting about half-way back in the tabernacle and came to greet him again.



Endowment & sealings in Mesa Temple

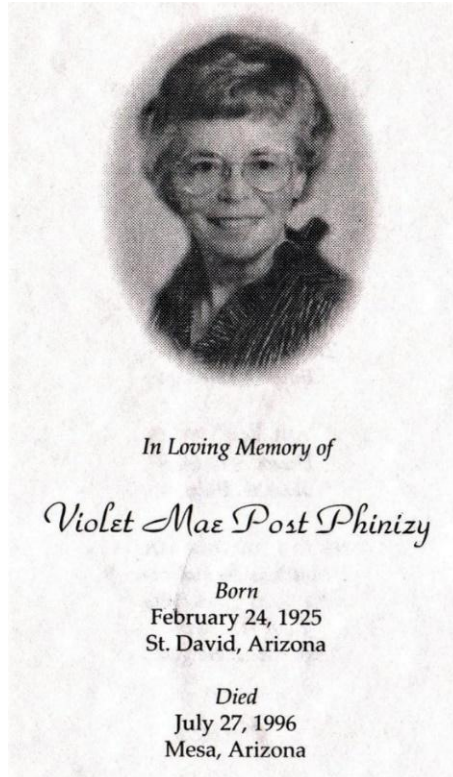


Attending General Conference



Helen & Glen, Gretna's parents, Kenny & Pam, Pauline and Dana, Gretna & Tom

The passing of Gretna's parents



Gretna's mother, Violet Phinizy, experienced poor health at times throughout her life. She passed away on July 27, 1996, following a difficult bout with a brain tumor and ovarian cancer. She was loved by all of her children and grandchildren and her patience and love brought Gretna's father, Bryant Phinizy, to the gospel so they could be sealed for all eternity before Violet's passing.

Gretna – as a tribute to her dear mother, “Violet”, - has raised violets continuously for over 55 years as of 2023 and still maintains very healthy violets, which she nourishes and cares for as she did her children and her testimony.



One of Gretna's violets in November 2023



*Violet & Paul
"Eternal Companions"*

PAUL BRYANT PHINIZY JR.

By Pauline Holgate

Born on June 15, 1920 in Lumpkin Georgia to Paul Bryant Phinizy Sr. and Nellie Gretna Helms. He is the first son with older sisters Marjorie and Dorothy and younger sister Virginia and brother Robert.

Bryant's father had a dairy where he learned hard work. Bryant helped milk cows, deliver milk, help in the garden, ride horses, and they took time to go fishing. Dad talked fondly of the delicious homemade ice cream they made which they had often.

Bryant's father became ill with TB. As he progressed with the illness it was recommended that he go out west to the dry climate to try and recover. Paul, Nellie and the baby Robert packed up and left for Arizona. The other children were sent to stay with various relatives until they were sent for. Bryant was about 9 at the time.

At age 12 Bryant was put on a train to travel west. It took 3 days with the train stopping at every town and village. He remembered vividly the train stopping at the Mississippi River. There the train was put on barges and moved across the river. This took most of the night. He was excited to be on the barge to watch the process. Once on the other side the train was reconnected and went on its way. Once it arrived in Wilcox he was met by his mom and dad. He was very excited to see them and also thought the mountains were quite a sight to behold.

His dad was quite sick and died not too long after Bryant arrived.

Bryant at age 12 worked at every job he could find; washing dishes, sweeping sidewalks in front of the bank, washing windows, cleaning the post office, and selling sodas on the golf course. The bank manager he worked for took the time to teach Bryant about finance. That's where he learned to save and always to pay his own way. Bryant opened his first savings account and what money didn't go to his mother to help support the family went into his savings account. Bryant continued to give his mother money until he married. When he married, his mother handed him a savings account book with the money he had been giving her.

At age 14 Bryant worked for the theatre driving the movies from town to town where he would set up the projectors and show the movies. Eventually he became the manager of the Benson theatre where he met Violet and Ella Post.

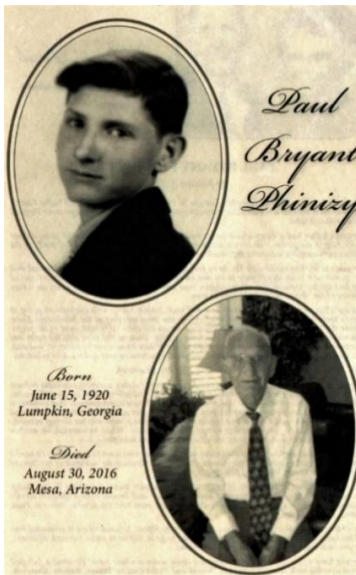
He married Violet in September of 1942. Bryant soon after went to work for Phelps Dodge in Morenci. They eventually bought a home in Clifton and Bryant started his own service business. During the years in Clifton 5 children were born into the family - Gretna, Pam, Helen, Paul and Pauline.

In 1946 they bought a beautiful piece of property in Alpine Arizona where it reminded him of his home in Georgia. Bryant and Violet loved to go to Alpine to relax, fish and, of course, Bryant was working on projects around the cabin.

Bryant lived to be 96 so you can imagine I could write a whole book. He lived a full and interesting life with many experiences. Bryant and Violet lived in Tucson, Payson, Roosevelt, Mesa and for brief times in Oxnard California and Lake Tahoe Nevada. Their children grew, left home, married and multiplied. At this date Bryant has 27 grandchildren, 110 great grandchildren, 5 great-great-grandchildren and, of course, more are on the way!

Violet passed on in 1996. It was very hard on Bryant to be without his sweetheart of 54 years. Not long after he married Ella, Violet's sister. He had a number of good years with her. They lived in Mesa and have many good friends.

The last 17 months of his life he lived in the home of his daughter Helen. He enjoyed living there, feeding horses, fish and dogs. It was there he left to be in his eternal home with his eternal companion.



Gretna's father, Bryant Phinizy, lived 20 years after her mother's passing. He married Violet's sister, Ella, and they lived in Mesa. Bryant had Alzheimer's and was cared for wonderfully by Helen and Glen Kennedy for a few years until his passing on August 30, 2016 at the age of 96.

Posterity of Paul Bryant Phinizy and Violet Post Phinizy

At Bryant's passing – increasing year by year since that time

The Posterity of Bryant and Violet Phinizy

Thomas & Gretna Phinizy Palmer

Kenneth & Deborah Winward Palmer

Colton & Panika Palmer

Thane & Amanda Palmer

Elena Laura Palmer

Trent; Lance; Damica Palmer

Steven & Colette Smith Palmer

Samuel; Colton; Tessalyn;

Jacob Palmer

Michael & Heather Darris Palmer

Darris; Torin; Amry; Kenzie;

Elyce Palmer

Daniel & Julie Richardson Palmer

KyMBER; Kaycee; Garrett; Braden;

Brylee Palmer

Michael & Kalynn Palmer Pospisil

Aria; Hyrum; Sarah; Trevor Pospisil

Richard & Shannon Smith Palmer

Kaitlyn; Bryant; Mason; Raely;

Addyson; Sofie; Lainey;

Brody Palmer

Timothy & Tia Noble Palmer

Carter; Eiley; Bree; Ty Gus Palmer

Mark & Celeste Reber Palmer

Hailey

Ronnie & Pamela Palmer Ludwig

Keegan; Brinlee; Tanna; Ryker;

Owens; Dillion; Katherine;

Hayden Ludwig

Kenny & Pamela Phinizy Crosby

Scott & Kendra Crosby Ramsey

Tyson & Kendyl Ramsey Perkes;

Audrey; Troy;

Kenlee, deceased; Jackson Perkes

Cadre & Shellby Ramsey Woodside;

Orrin; Morgen Ramsey

Bryant Kasey Crosby

Taylor; Bryant; Kennedy Crosby

Kevin & Tonya Palmer Crosby

Bryce & Cassidy Crosby

Kyler; Kadin; Kason; Kellie;

Kalynn Crosby

Kiley & Samantha Blair Crosby

Logan & McKenna Crosby Tinker

Devin; Emily; Logan Crosby

Eddie & Kami Crosby Avila

Kadee; Dawson; Kendra; Emma;

Dane; Rock Avila

Karson & Claryce Sherwood Crosby

Ren; Grant; Reese; Pammy Crosby

Paul Bryant & Ollie Little Phinizy

Dawn Phinizy

Baily; Cheyenne Willingham

Jesse Bry & Anne Phinizy

Bryce; baby girl on way in Oct.

Curtis & Tresta Morris Anderson

Twins-Jacob; Makenna Anderson

Brian & Cassandra Young Keydoszius

Morgan; Eli Pifer

Audie & Samantha Young Stribling

Noah; Audrianna Stribling

Dana & Pauline Phinizy Holgate

Matthew

Nicholas & Lorena Martinez Holgate

Niela; Shelby; Scarlett; Fallon;

Farrah Holgate

Paul & Sydney Heywood Holgate

Morgan; Asher; Grayson Holgate

Robert & Kelsey Coleman Holgate

Jackson; James; Brooklyn Holgate

Glen & Helen Phinizy Kennedy

Keith & Lindsey Worthen Kennedy

Kohl; Emma; Clay; Grace; Alice;

Calvin Kennedy

Brian & Holly Kennedy

Alexandra; Isabella; Tatiana;

Brianna Kennedy;

Kale; Ally Abbott

Derek & Summer Jackson Kennedy

Sage, Krew, Kash, Sailor Kennedy

Russell & Amber Buckmister Kennedy

Maggie; Lucas; Violet; Royal Kennedy

Clinton & Erin Turner Kennedy

Reece; Turner; Liam Kennedy

James & Elizabeth (Beth) Kennedy Hoopes

Kennedy; Boyce; June; Natalee Hoopes

Gretna always loved her time with family – her siblings and parents and Tom’s siblings and parents were her dearest friends.



Gretna's father, Aunt Dean, Gretna, Paul, Pam, Pauline, Helen at Paul & Ollie's wedding



Helen, Gretna, Pam, Pauline



Helen, Gretna's mother, Pauline, Pam, Gretna



Mary, Marena, Adeline, Gretna, Tom's Mom at Branson, Missouri



Don & Marena, Bob & Mary, Tom's Dad and Mom, Adeline & Mel, Gretna & Tom at Branson, Missouri

Gretna loves supporting her children and grandchildren in track and field, basketball, volleyball, football, soccer, music and dance – it is a joy to see them in action!



Kenneth and Steven – 1981



Raely and Addy – 2022



Kalynn – 1990



Pam - 1995

Full-time Missions

Gretna and Tom had discussed their timing for serving full-time missions following Tom's retirement from NAU in the summer of 2000. After much prayer and preparation Gretna and Tom decided to put in their papers to serve when their children were married or properly settled. Timmy returned home from his mission in November 2000 and was to be married in May 2001. Mark was in college so they felt it was time to serve a mission.

INDIA

Our mission call from the Lord came in the form of a letter from President Gordon B. Hinckley dated 27 February 2001 to each of us stating: *"You are hereby called to serve as a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Your assignment is to labor with Welfare Services International in New Delhi, India as a humanitarian services missionary. It is anticipated that you will serve for a period of 23 months. . . The Lord will reward you for the goodness of your life. Greater blessings and more happiness than you have yet experienced await you as you humbly and prayerfully serve the Lord in this labor of love among His children."*

They were both raised in rural settings and raised their family in rural settings with little opportunity to travel – with 9 children and a milk cow travel was simply impractical. To receive a call to serve a mission literally on the other side of the world invited some anxiety but Gretna's faith in the Lord helped her to welcome this opportunity to serve.

Their service began on June 5, 2001, with their Mission Training Center experience in Provo, Utah, which they both loved. Still waiting for their visas, the missionary department asked if they would like to be reassigned – both said they felt this is where the Lord wanted them to serve, and they would await their visas. They were given the option to return home to await their visas, but they had sold their home, their vehicles, and had put in storage their personal belongings. The Missionary Department asked if they would be willing to serve at the Church's Humanitarian Center while awaiting their visas – they responded that they would love to do so. Thanks to the charity and love of Dave and Bobbi Beagley they were provided a place to stay in their home while serving in the Humanitarian Center and their son-in-law, Nathan, provided transportation for them to and from the Humanitarian Center each day on his way to work. This experience was transformative for both Gretna and Tom as each of them had the opportunity to serve with our Father's children from remote parts of the world. Many of those they served were refugees from war-torn countries and were seeking skills – including learning English – so they could merge into society. Many were not members of the Church. Gretna shared the following in her letter home to the family in July 2001: *"I was asked to sub for a class on citizenship this last week. I had people from Venezuela, Bosnia, Mexico, Ukraine, and El Salvador. It was fun and interesting to hear how they felt about their country and ours – their new country. They have some very special feelings. I've had the opportunity to work with a sister from Cambodia, Navi, and she is a jewel of a person. She left her country several years ago when it was in a "great war" as she calls it. . . The other day Dad came up to get me for lunch and she said 'is this your Elder Honey?' [she had heard another sister missionary refer to her husband as "honey"]."* Gretna has a very special "gift of the Spirit" – a capacity to love each person she meets in a very personal way – each person feels that love and returns it overflowing. Gretna reflected this in one of her letters home, *"The humanitarian arm of the Church is really incredible. It is the gospel of love in action. We are so glad for the experiences we have been able to have and the friends we have made."*

Both Gretna and Tom felt that the delay in getting their visas to India was the Lord's way of providing a learning experience at the Humanitarian Center that will bless them in their future humanitarian service and bless them personally eternally. In early August 2001 they received word that they would be sent to Indonesia at the request of the Asia South Area Presidency to learn more about the "hands-on" humanitarian service being rendered in the Area. They were to remain in Indonesia until the visas to India arrived.

On August 13, 2001, they flew to Los Angeles, then to Hong Kong for a brief stop, then on to Singapore where they spent the night in the Airport, then on to Jakarta, Indonesia the following day. Gretna was not anxious to fly on an airplane – especially over the ocean, but she knew she was on a mission for the Lord – she expressed in a letter to our family, *"From Salt Lake to Hong Kong we had about 28 missionaries on board . . . I felt very secure and safe on the big ole airplane with all the Priesthood power on board with us."*



They were welcomed in Indonesia by Terry and Danni Morris, who were the Country Directors for Welfare Services and were just finishing up their mission in the next couple of months. Tom and Gretna were assigned to labor in Bogor and loved the opportunity to teach English at Pakuan University and help with other humanitarian projects. Gretna wrote, *"The Indonesian people are humble, friendly, kind and many are very very poor."* Indonesia is 90+ percent Muslim – they are a family-oriented people and have many organizations that Latter-day Saint Charities (the Church's humanitarian arm) partners with to address humanitarian needs throughout the country – orphanages, schools, providing help to the handicapped, providing clean water to villages, etc. Tom and Gretna lived in a quiet little area of the city and were able to go for walks, etc. and felt very safe. They enjoyed serving with the other humanitarian couples in Bogor – the Parrish's and the Morris', and loved going to church meetings with the Saints and feeling of their spirit and singing hymns with them – all meetings are in Indonesian so they received help from members who translated for them.

They wrote home to their family, *"We love teaching the English classes at Pakuan University. We use a lot of music to teach the students English – especially the proper pronunciation of English words. We sang songs such as "Old MacDonald", "You are my Sunshine", "When You're Happy and you know it", "Billy Boy", "She'll be coming around the Mountain", and Kalynn's all-time favorite "Brush your Teeth". We use stories, poems, games, tongue twisters, idioms, and anything to get them talking. They are so appreciative of anything we do for them."*

The mountains above Bogor get about 300 inches of rain per year and the beauty of the rain forests and terraced rice fields reflect that amount of moisture. Gretna recorded the following: *"We are having another good rain – almost daily. They call Bogor the city of rain for the island of Java. We had a thunder and lightning storm last evening while Dad was away teaching English to judge candidates that really had me frightened. It was hitting so hard and*

fast and close. There were 2 to 3 lightning strikes per minute for about 2 to 3 hours. It made our lightning storms in Arizona look puny. I have come to see why they call this the thunder and lightning center of the world.”

On the night of September 11, 2001, they were in bed and received a phone call from the Parrish couple telling them to turn on their TV (they didn't have one, but there was one in an extra bedroom of the apartment which they hooked up). They saw images of an airplane crashing into a skyscraper in a large city but didn't understand what the Indonesian news reporter was saying. They finally got a BBC channel and learned of the terrorist attacks in the U.S. Gretna recorded in a letter to the family, *“We went to bed sick to our stomachs, shocked and worried about our family and loved ones back home. We felt sick for how we knew all of you must have been feeling. We were so happy to learn that Marena was not piloting one of the planes. Those hijackers would have had their hands full if they had been on her plane.”* The following day they had several of their Muslim students from the English classes at the university come to their home and express their love and concern for their family in America – they were so sweet and genuine – they had become dear friends and family to Tom and Gretna.. On October 7, 2001, President Hinckley shared the Lord's feelings on the tragedy of September 11, *“We value our Muslim neighbors across the world and hope that those who live by the tenets of their faith will not suffer. I ask particularly that our own people do not become a party in any way to the persecution of the innocent. Rather, let us be friendly and helpful, protective and supportive.”* President Hinckley condemned the acts of terrorists but showed compassion to all who suffered loss because of their acts. Their dear Muslim students and friends at the University likewise condemned the acts of terrorists referring to them as “the wild ones”. The Muslims Tom and Gretna came to know and love are a faith-filled, family loving, sweet people.

Because the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta was closed by the U.S. government, plans were made to have all missionaries from America, Canada, and Australia transferred to other missions in the Asia Area. Tom and Gretna continued to teach English classes as these plans were made. They felt bad that they had to leave their students they had come to love and to leave their home in Bogor. They left Indonesia on September 29, 2001 for India – their visa for India was signed on September 11, 2001. In a letter home they shared, *“We found it very difficult to leave the wonderful people we came to know and love in Indonesia – the branch members, missionaries, other LDSC couples and those at the mission center who have been so helpful to us – President Tandiman (our mission president) and Elder Subandriyo, Area Seventy, – and our dear students at Pakuan University in Bogor. We will remember our service here with much fondness and much gratitude for the learning experience it has provided for us.”*

In their service in India Gretna assisted in eye camps for the poor, helping determine needs and secure projects through the Humanitarian Department of the Church for medical clinics, schools, assisted living homes, orphanages, a shelter for girls abandoned/abused, children and families in slums, residents in a major home for the handicapped, day-care programs for mothers who worked to provide for their families, and a home for special-needs children. Latter-day Saints Charities always partners with organizations that will likely continue to bless the lives of those in need. Latter-day Saint Charities partnered with local organizations, organizations of other faiths – Catholic Social Services, protestant Christian organizations, Muslim and Hindu organizations, government and non-government organizations dedicated to the care and well-being of those in need. They gained great respect for the many wonderful souls who give their lives to bless the lives of others.

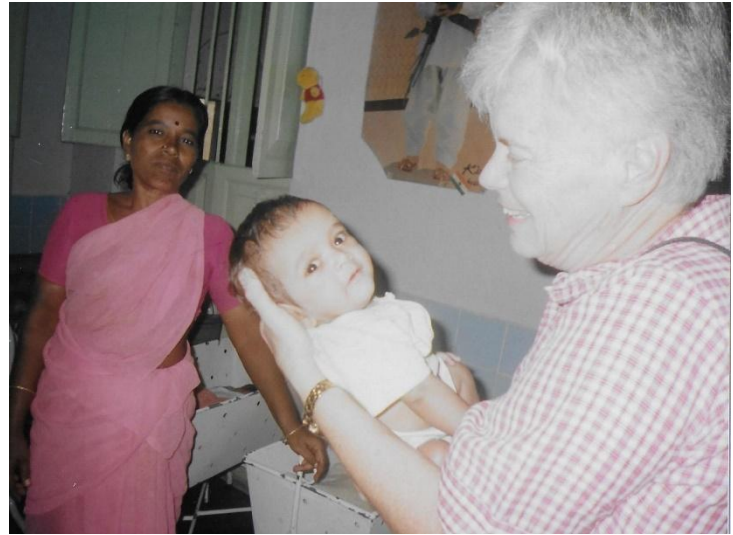
Our Father in Heaven has angels on earth to bless His children
In their times of need



Each of those in this photo mirror the selfless sacrifice of Mother Theresa – they each have literally given their lives for the care of others – they each have charity - the pure love of Jesus Christ!



Gretna loved all of our Father's children and they loved her.



**Gretna gives her garland to a young girl and comforts a child in an orphanage
It was never about her, but about each individual child.**



Gretna shared one of her experiences dilating eyes at an eye camp for the poor, *“There was a young girl, about 10, that had a pretty serious infection in her right eye. She was really afraid of the eye drops and started crying when I told her I needed to put the drops in. I gave her a hug and said, ‘it will be alright’. [She continued crying even after the pharmacist and another man tried to talk to her in Hindi.] She was still really crying, so I hugged her again and was just rocking back and forth with her stroking her on the head and saying, ‘it will be okay’. Next thing I know I’m crying with her, big ole tears are running down*

my face. I noticed it was very quiet in the room and everyone was looking at me – even the little girl. I was kind of embarrassed, but it became a very tender moment of communication without words between these people and myself. They knew I cared and wanted to help. There was a different atmosphere in the room. The little girl did let the pharmacist put the drops in her eye and then I was able to put the next drops in with no problem.” Gretna’s Christ-like compassion invited the Spirit into the room and into the heart of the little girl allowing her to receive the treatment she needed. We usually had at least one eye camp for the poor each week – there are usually 8 or 9 of us – 2 Christians, 3 Muslims, and 4 Hindus. The team went to outlying villages or poor villages in Old Delhi and the ophthalmologists check the eyes of those with infections and examine older ones for cataracts in the eyes. If cataract surgery is needed Doctors Arun and Reena Sethi – ophthalmologists - transport them and perform the needed surgery in the clinic and Latter-day Saint Charities pay for the lenses.

Tom and Gretna were in India on “humanitarian volunteer” visas sponsored by Arunodaya Charitable Trust (The Sethis) and thus they could not proselyte in anyway. They helped with leadership training for branch and district leaders and fellowshipping recent converts, but could not proselyte. Gretna has been a wonderful blessing to the leaders in the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary.

An example of the impact Gretna had as she worked with the sister auxiliaries is shown in her letter home to the family on 10 February 2002:

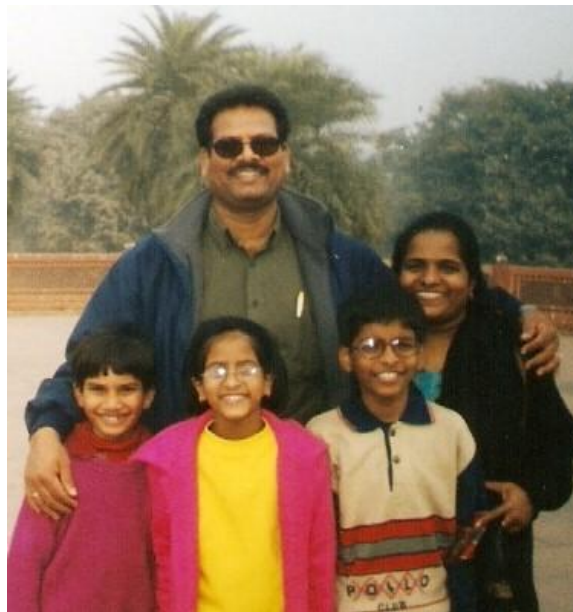
“Yeah!!! We had 9 sisters at our Enrichment meeting last evening. They had so much fun. We had the “Homemaking Skills” theme from the suggestions in the Ensign a while back. We did a section on nutrition. The Branch President had called a homemaking leader – I copied lesson suggestions for her and after a lot of encouragement over the last couple of weeks she said she would give it a try. She said she had never taught a lesson before – I told her how exciting to look forward to her first time!!! I said after the first time you will not have that first time to look forward to any more so make it the best! She is a 23-year-old young lady with limited English skill, but a very sweet person. When she got to the Enrichment meeting, I could tell she had put a lot of time into preparing because she had all kinds of notes with the papers I had given her, but bless her heart, she was literally shaking with fear. She said to me, “will you be there to help me”. I assured her that I would but that she would do very well. And she did!! I was the only one present that didn’t speak Hindi and there were a few times she reverted to Hindi which was easier for her. They would discuss things for a while and laugh and I would say, “Okay you have to share the fun with me now”!! They would be embarrassed and interpret for me – they have a cute sense of humor. Most of the sisters said this is the first time they’ve ever attended an enrichment meeting.” The love and “shadow leadership” Gretna showed in this example is exactly what we were trained to do – it was just natural for her. We had been told to “not do everything ourselves” but to empower them to fill their callings so when we leave, they stand on their own.

In December 2001 Tom and Gretna were asked by the mission president, President Karl Nelson, to provide a place in their apartment for two young college students from Iran who had become refugees while in India and could not return to their country. They were asked to help them work with the United Nations to get refugee status so they could go to America. They were taught the Gospel in Mumbai and joined the Church just before coming to New Delhi. They became like daughters to Tom and Gretna and lived with them for several weeks until they could find housing for them. They remain in contact with Shiva.



First Christmas ever for Shiva and Bitu – our two Iranian daughters

A couple mission is no “walk in the park” – couples stay busy all the time. The Country Director for Latter-day Saint Charities provided directions to couples. Gretna recorded the following: *“he advised us we are to spend 30 hours a week on humanitarian projects, have a ‘P-day’ each week and that is not to be Sunday, and have a 2-hour lunch break each day. We looked at each other and laughed and said, ‘okay – right!’ We are seldom even home for lunch, and we couldn’t get hardly anything done in a 30-hour week.”* The reason for the direction was that most senior couple missionaries are up in their years, and they are concerned about health. Tom and Gretna always had plenty “on their plate” and were healthy so they continued to stay very busy. They were blessed to have the Katuka family as dear friends (Suvarna Katuka was the district president) and they tried to get Tom and Gretna out for a few “P-days” on their mission. They remain very close to this family.

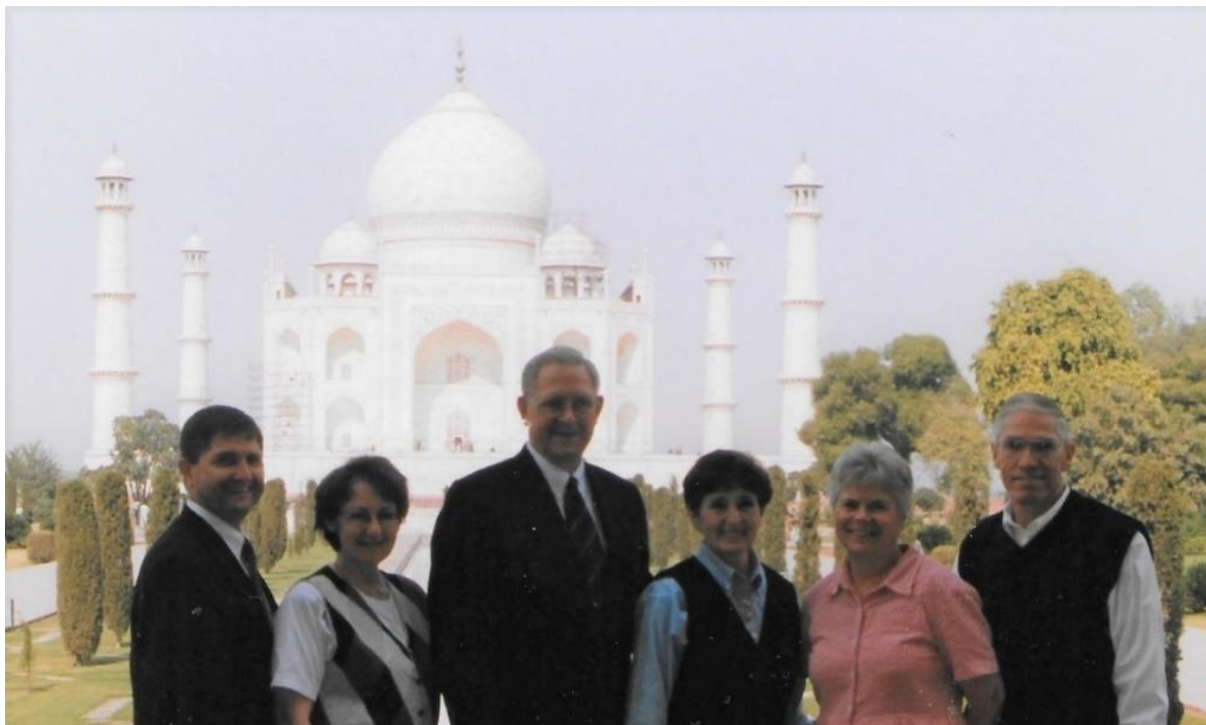


Suvarna and Swarupa Katuka with Swathi, Timna, and Joshua

Gretna has always had a unique ability to “take time to smell the roses”. Tom tends to be one who misses much because he is so destination driven. Gretna loved the beautiful flowering trees and bushes in India and the beautiful birds, including a beautiful peacock that

lived in the neighborhood. Gretna observed in one of her letters home: *“This is a beautiful time for flowering trees. I have never seen so many flowering trees in my life. Many of the streets in New Delhi are tree lined. The British planted a lot of trees when they occupied India and the people of India have continued the tradition. There are many trees with red, orange, yellow, purple or blue flowers on them. I love to walk in the morning and look at the trees that are full of many types of birds in the early morning hours.”* One day when she was waiting in the taxi for entry to a University, she watched a fun scene unfold. She recorded, *“There was a fruit stand on a sidewalk right by a very tall rock wall. On the wall there was a bunch of Monkeys. There was a very mischievous one that was pacing back and forth, jumping up on a limb of a tall tree nearby, then back on the wall. I watched him for a while, and he snatched a banana from off the man’s fruit cart. The monkey jumped back onto the wall and proceeded to peel the banana and stuff it in his mouth. The monkeys are just so fun to watch – they make me laugh.”* At one eye camp they had in a village far from New Delhi, they were both amazed at how “Old Testament like” the village was. Gretna observed, *“We are living in Old Testament times in many areas here. The dress, the traditions, customs and living conditions are so like what we imagine Old Testament times to be. In many ways I feel like we are on the dirt streets of Old Testament places.”*

In early February 2002, Tom received a call from President Nelson, mission president, informing them that they were to accompany President and Sister Nelson and Area President, Elder Richards of the Seventy, and Sister Richards, to the Taj Mahal. They all flew into New Delhi and Tom and Gretna joined them in a delightful day traveling 4 hours to the Taj Mahal – one of the seven wonders of the World. Gretna described her feelings: *“It was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to house the tomb of his favorite wife who died giving birth to one of their children. It took 22 years to build (1631 – 1653) – this is one thing that made it so impressive . . . the detail and workmanship and all done by hand. . . There is so much detail in carved ivory marble with inlaid precious and semi-precious stones forming a pattern of flowers all over the building. It is impressive!”*



President and Sister Nelson, President and Sister Richards, Gretna and Tom

Gretna was loved by everyone in the branch – she gained a lot of additional respect from the sisters and brothers in our branch because of something that happened one Sunday – Gretna describes the moment:

“As we walked into our Sunday School class there was quite a commotion going on – there was a squirrel in the room! The squirrel ran over my foot, turned around and ran up my right leg under my dress – guess it thought I was a tree 😊. I had a skirt on so it couldn’t get past my waist. It ran around my body a couple of times, half-way down my left leg, back up and across my upper thigh on my right leg. I could feel its heart pounding, all I could do was freeze. I kept thinking if I scare this thing it will bite me and I don’t want to have rabies in India!! Dad came in and asked me if it was still under my dress, I said yes and pointed to where it was – you could see the bump made under my skirt and see it breathing. Dad took his hand and hit down and knocked it out from under my dress – I got out of the room fast! My heart was pounding, I had little prints on my leg from its claws, but it didn’t bite me! They got the squirrel out a window in the classroom. The ladies all asked why I was so calm and not jumping around – one of the men told me I was a lady full of real grace and poise. I told them I just didn’t want to do anything to make that critter bite me.”

Gretna often declared her lack of love for computers! In one of our letters home in March 2002 she wrote: *“I will let Dad take over this ‘sweet’ machine before it tells me I am doing something illegal again!! 😊”*. Tom took over and noted, *“There are times when we think we still need a ‘padded cell’ when mom gets on this computer – it frustrates her a bit, but I think she does well.”* Her lack of “love” of computers continues to this day.

In March 2002 they were hosting the Country Director in New Delhi and took him and some of his family to a “train museum”. In the parking lot there was a snake charmer. Gretna can’t stand snakes (or computers) – especially cobras. Gretna recalls, *“The charmer had a big python and several other smaller snakes plus the cobra that he was charming. They all loved touching the snakes and having them around them. Guess where I was? You got it, I was still across the road in the parking lot. I was standing in an area where I could see the ground all around me and knew that if I saw anything slithering on the ground I could run in any direction. It made my skin crawl, and I was very jittery just watching.”* This reaction to snakes was passed on to all of her children.



Cobra Charmer in New Delhi

One of the most difficult challenges for senior missionaries is leaving their children and grandchildren behind for months while they serve. Gretna made this observation in one of her letters, *“We miss the birthdays with our grandchildren but still try to make it a special day*

here.” They reminded themselves often on each of their missions of the promises made in their setting apart for each of the missions and by apostles that as senior couples serve their family would have blessings poured out upon them.

Gretna’s “Girls’ Camp” experiences were a blessing to her in India. There was no electricity for at least one or two days each week – with no notice of the outages. She cooked on “camp equipment” cooking instruments.



Our New Delhi kitchen

Shopping took place at the local vegetable and fruit market and local “grocery store” and Gretna was creative in providing wonderful meals that kept them healthy throughout our missionary service.



Vegetable and Fruit market



Grocery store

Gretna’s “mother” feelings came out when they were asked to help settle some Elders into their new apartment. She wrote home, *“We helped the Elders get their new apartment cleaned this morning – spent about 4 hours. It will never cease to amaze me at the difference in the meaning of ‘clean’ here in India!!! We at least have things so they can use the kitchen and living area now. . . I just hope my sons never had to exist in the horrible conditions they have been living in for a week now.”*

Gretna’s cleaning and cooking skills blessed the lives of missionaries and saints wherever they served.

For many years there has been serious conflict between Pakistan and India over the Kashmir border. The conflict heightened in May 2002 and Pakistan was threatening nuclear war on India. On Friday morning, May 31, 2002, all of the missionaries serving in New Delhi

were asked by Elder Tom Perry of the Twelve to leave New Delhi (which was within Pakistan's missile range) and go to southern India that day. Missionaries were to take all of their belongings and pack as if they were returning home. Tom and Gretna arrived in Bangalore that evening. They had no idea what they were to do - whether they would return to America, or how long they would be out of New Delhi. Gretna summarized some of their feelings in her letter home on June 2, 2002:

"We really do hope to return to Delhi. One of the very hardest things was to leave Shiva and Bitu, our Iranian girls, behind. It just about broke my heart when I told Shiva we had to leave for a while. She just broke down and said, 'why is the Lord taking yet another family from me?' We are considered their third family now – Their natural family in Iran with whom they have had no contact for over a year, the Phadnis family in Mumbai who taught them the Gospel and have now returned to the U.S. We thought we had learned to 'live in limbo' well enough with two months at the Humanitarian Center and then 2 months in Indonesia – and now that unsettled feeling again. Guess there are still lessons to learn."

In Bangalore they initially lived with John and Betty Sprenger, Country Director for Humanitarian Services. Gretna described how quickly the 'lessons to learn' came. *"We visited the Morning Star orphanage with the Sprengers. We learned that John and Joy, the directors of the orphanage, find children who have been discarded due to major handicaps or because they were orphaned and left on the street and provide a home for them, educate them and feed them, and teach them life skills that will help them move into society and be productive. The directors are Catholic and teach the children beautiful songs and truths that help them know they have value."*



Gretna with John, Joy and the children at Morning Star Orphanage

Because they have had several missionary couples visit the Morning Star orphanage and help with humanitarian assistance, the children have learned many Primary songs in English even though they speak very little English." Gretna's love and empathy is shared in a letter to our family, "They also sing a song found on a Christian tape called 'Morning Star'. Let me

share with you some of the words, as you imagine these orphan children and their circumstances perhaps you can feel some of the emotions that were running through our hearts:

Morning Star

by Mary Rice Hopkins

***Like a potter who works the clay
God made me in His own special way
A morning star to shine through the day
And I'll be like my Father - I'll show 'em the love He made***

***God could have made me like a puppet on a string
But I wouldn't have choices and I wouldn't have wings
But I'm free to fly and soar with the wind
And be all that He made me – a bright and morning star***

Chorus:

***Like a morning, morning star
Oh Lord, help me to be like You
To show Your love through all that I do
Let others see Your light in me shine through
Like a morning, morning star***

Gretna continued in her letter, *"I knew once again how much our Father in Heaven loves all His children. How grateful I am that the Lord has allowed us to experience time and time again the feelings of His great love for us and all His children. I know in my heart that these children will be some of the first to recognize Him when He comes again. My prayers have been of late that the time will soon come when we will all be gathered into His arms and even these children who are so many in India and throughout the world will be able to feel and know that He is the Lord of this earth. They will be able to hold their little heads high and all the injustices that have been heaped upon them will be corrected and healed."*

In the following days they worked with the orphans and their directors to secure materials for and build a barbed wire fence around their 5-acre parcel where their new building is being built. The orphans were great workers and Gretna made it worth their while by bringing chocolate chip cookies and banana bread to keep Tom and the boys going. Gretna shares their feelings for these precious children, *"When we went out to Morning Star for the movie the Sprengers take to them each Friday our hearts were so full they almost burst. These children come running out to meet us and will hardly let us out of the car before they hug and kiss us. What choice sweet spirits these children are. All I can think is how valiant they must have been to endure the trials they have on this earth. They have been blessed to have been rescued by John and Joy and brought to a place where they can feel*

and give love and experience peace and joy. Slowly the gospel is becoming part of their lives.” Gretna’s capacity to love unconditionally is rewarded by the love received in return – she is clearly one of the Savior’s choice instruments in taking His love to all our Father’s children.

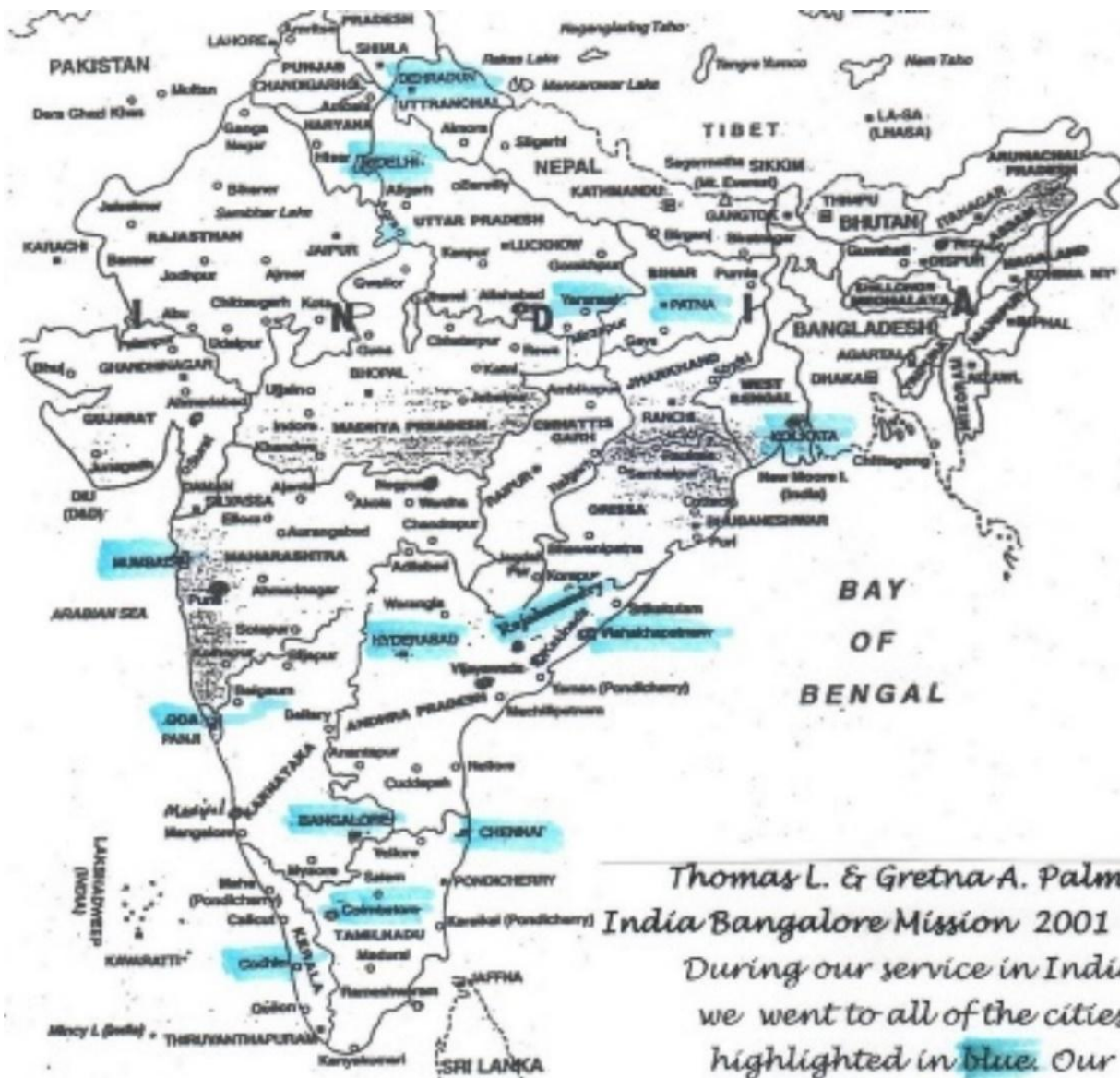
Tom writes, *“The week of July 1, 2002, we received a call from the Mission President, President Nelson, to go on a special mission. He told us he felt it would be several weeks before we could return to New Delhi. He wanted us to go to the branches of the Church in India and provide priesthood and auxiliary leadership training for their leaders as many of them had only been members of the Church for a very short time. He asked us to go into each city with a branch of the Church on Tuesday and work with the Branch President to visit in the home of as many members of the branch as possible before Sunday and help the Branch President issue callings to fill the primary callings in a branch and then to have them sustained and set apart on Sunday. We would then travel to the next branch and do the same.”*

The Wednesday before they left on this special assignment, they were asked to visit Morning Star because the children wanted to tell them goodbye and do something special for them. They sang, danced, and gave them a beautiful little card. They sang the Morning Star song and *I Am A Child of God*. Gretna captured their feelings in our letter home, *“Our Morning Star goodbye was hard. I told them I loved them and hoped to see them again. Joy (one of the directors) came to me as we got in the car and said, ‘Sister how beautiful when you said, ‘I love you’, people in India don’t say that and it was beautiful, thank you.’ Friday morning before we flew out we had a phone call from John, the director of Morning Star, and he said some of the children wanted to talk with us. They all said on the phone, ‘we love you’ It really pulled our heart strings greatly. The Lord loves all His children, and He really loves us to give us the opportunities and experiences we have been able to have.”*

Tom recorded, *“The morning we were to fly out for our first branch experience President Nelson came by and asked if he could give us a special blessing. This meant a lot to us, and we soon witnessed many of the blessings that were pronounced. President and Sister Nelson have become very dear friends and were a blessing to us in our service.”*

The next four months were some of the most memorable of their mission service as they visited branches in Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai), Goa, Cochin, Bangalore (Bengaluru), Coimbatore, Hyderabad, and Chennai (Madras). The government was changing many of the city names back to Hindu names – those in parenthesis. They saw the wonders of this beautiful country and the wonder of the Lord’s hand in the latter-day gathering of Israel.

Tom expressed, *“In each of the branches we visited we felt the Lord guiding us in our service – He led us to members and leaders in need of training and to many of our Father’s children in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because our visas were humanitarian, we were not able to proselyte, but we were able to love – we were blessed to establish relationships with many with whom we remain in contact to this day. It is clear that the Lord knows each one of our Father’s children and the needs in His kingdom and directs His servants in building the Kingdom of God on the earth.”* Gretna expressed it well, *“We have come to love these people here and find them to be very ready and anxious to learn whatever we can offer them.”*



Tom recorded a few of the special experiences they enjoyed on this “four month mini-mission” as follows:

- **Visakhapatnam.** With another senior missionary couple, we visited one of the cultural sites of India (that President Nelson specifically mentioned in his blessing before we left). As we took the train ride to the Araku Valley we fell in love with a beautiful family – the Ratnam family. The father and children spoke English and we became good friends – especially with their two children. At the conclusion of the day, we asked if we could visit them in their home, which we did the following day. The Condis and full-time Elders followed up and taught them the Gospel – he became the branch president and then the district president. We stay in touch with Pavani (then a 9-year-old girl) who is now a medical doctor and married to a returned missionary.



Us with the Ratnam family - Bobby and Pavani on front row

- **Rajahmundry.** We had some very positive training experiences, then visited the village of Pydipaka. A recent convert from there wanted us to visit his village and meet his family. In Pydipaka we came to know the family of Rama Rao (“Vivi”) and Gretna established a special bond with his mother when Gretna got right down on the dirt and helped cook chapati with her. We proposed a water project for their village, shared a message with his father’s congregation, and stayed in touch with Vivi until this date. Vivi and his brother served missions and Vivi studied in the United States. He called in 2019 and said his parents were in Provo and wanted to see us again. We arranged a visit in Kanab, Utah and took them to Church and shared a gospel message with them and renewed a special relationship – Gretna again bonded with Vivi’s mother.



Village of Pydipaka – 2002



Gretna and I with Vivi’s family – 2002



2019 Kanab visit with Vivi’s family

- **Calcutta**. We met with the Branch President, President Chatterjee, then met with several members of the Church. We met with Sister Kari who was the first member of the Church in Calcutta among those now living there. In 2002 there were 27 members in this city of 16,000,000. Gretna really bonded with Sister Kari and they learned they shared the same birthdate – July 15th. President Chatterjee called this sweet 80-year-old sister as the Relief Society President.



Sister Kari and Gretna

- **Mumbai**. We met with Stephen Kadam (who as a 26-year-old single man called as the branch president when he had been a member for only 3 weeks) and his family. It was a special experience to help President Kadam issue calls to every active member of his branch. It was powerful to feel the mantle of his calling as he pronounced beautiful blessings on each as he set them apart. The miracle of the Lord providing leadership for this branch is a sweet story. Stephen's father met missionaries on a visit in Boston and called Stephen telling him he needed to contact the branch president in Mumbai and provided him with the number. Stephen did so, was taught the gospel and joined the Church just 3 weeks before the current branch president, Nitin Phadnis, and his family returned to America. The branch only had 7 active members - the Phadnis family and one sister, Greta, and her 11-year-old son, Princeton. Meetings were then held in the Phadnis home. After the Phadnis family left for America the Kadam family remodeled their humble home to make it suitable for a meeting place for the branch. Stephen Kadam has now been married in the temple and lives in England and the branch in Mumbai is growing with family members continuing to provide much of the strength of the branch. After our Mumbai visit, Gretna noted, "It has been fun to watch the 'light of understanding' come on and see them step a little higher and reach out to the members of their branches in a loving, kind way. Many have now issued calls to members, sustained and set them apart. They have learned about home teaching and visiting teaching and are so excited to put this knowledge to the test."



The Mumbai branch members at the baptism of Stephen's brother-in-law, Robert

- **Goa.** Goa is a beautiful west seacoast city, settled by the Portuguese many years ago. We spent a lot of time finding and visiting with members of the branch and enjoyed visiting the branch president's family. We had met President Kalra and his family a few months ago in New Delhi when he baptized his daughter, Angel. They are a special family whom we quickly came to love. Archana, President Kalra's wife, teaches seminary and we got to visit her class – she's an excellent teacher. We came to love several other families as we made visits to their homes in Goa. We also became close to our young taxi driver and learned later that he was taught by the missionaries and joined the Church after we left. The Kalra family had us over for dinner the night before we left. We got a surprise in Washington State when President and Sister Kalra just happened to be visiting their daughters and attended Steven and Colette's ward the same day we were there – it was a sweet reunion!



Kalra family



Elder Ravi, Rupesh (our taxi driver) and Elder Dhaks

- **Cochin.** Cochin is in the state of Kerala – the state with the largest concentration of Christians – mostly Catholic. We got to meet with President Anthony and several other saints in their homes. On Sunday President Anthony was able to sustain and set apart two counselors, an Elders Quorum president, a Relief Society and Primary president and a YM president. We all felt the Lord's spirit creating a wonderful sense of optimism for the future of this branch. We were able to write a humanitarian project for the Don Bosco Girls' shelter while in Cochin – We met with these beautiful young girls and their caregivers and felt of their struggle to restore (or find) self-worth and witnessed their response to simple kindnesses and love – Gretna's loving and kind spirit was a blessing to them.



Gretna want to be “with” these abused girls, not over them and they felt her love for them.

President Anthony took us up to his plantation about 60 miles from Cochin and this was a real treat. Gretna, who loves the beauty of this wonderful world, described it well, “This plantation has been a part of his family for six generations, and it is beautiful. They have pineapple, nutmeg trees, coconut trees, cinnamon, vanilla, cocoa, tapioca, black pepper, lemon grass, banana, papaya and much more. They had a large rubber plantation as well. This was so amazing to me. When I saw all the things they grow here I was so overwhelmed with what a wonderful gift our Heavenly Father has given us allowing us to live on this earth. Besides all these things they grow exotic flowers. They had several different types of orchids, including a rare one called “Black Annie” – the most beautiful red with purple and yellow spots on it.”



Gretna with the Black Annie orchids

It was so hard to leave each of these branches and the sweet saints we came to love and care about – they had become family to us and we didn't know if we would ever see them again in mortality. I called President Nelson after each visit and begged to stay a little longer – he knew of our love for the saints and said we may be able to return at some future date. We were blessed to return to several of the branches and provide further training and love – a blessing to us!

- **Bangalore and Hyderabad.** *We returned to Bangalore and lived a time with President and Sister Nelson. We did some training with the branch leaders in the two Bangalore branches. Gretna did a lot of sewing for Sister Nelson and they enjoyed their time together. Tom traveled with President Nelson to Karimnagar above Hyderabad and spent time there with former leaders of a branch that had been dissolved and did some training with branch leaders in Hyderabad. Both Hyderabad and Bangalore districts are growing and should soon be ready to become stakes. (They are now [2023] stakes and preparing for the completion of a temple). After visiting one of the branches, Gretna observed, “We are seeing a miracle here in India as we see babies blessed*

and children growing up in the Church. This is the beginning of the cultural change that must take place so that the Church can blossom in this great land.” We enjoyed a reunion with our dear friends at Morning Star. Gretna wrote, “We had really missed these beautiful children and learned they had missed us as well. The reunion with them was sweet and we hope to spend more time with them while we are here in Bangalore. [On the five acres Tom and the orphan boys fenced] they have planted by hand and harvested several acres of cucumbers, green beans, tomatoes, potatoes, etc. They market some of it and some is used to supplement their food supply.”

We continued with training and training notebook preparation in Bangalore and prepared for our visit to branches in Chennai and Coimbatore.

- **Chennai and Coimbatore.** *We enjoyed visiting and providing training in both Chennai and Coimbatore and had the opportunity to visit the humanitarian projects of Elder and Sister Wildes in Chennai and the Elder and Sister Spears in Coimbatore. Gretna summarized it well, “We have met wonderful, beautiful people everywhere we go. They treat us like royalty and are so kind and good to us. We have come to know all the couples serving in India and they are all so very different but most wonderful!!*

We spent a couple of weeks in Bangalore working with President Nelson in preparing materials for a “couples resource book” to help them train saints and leaders in the districts and branches throughout the mission. Tom also met with our Country Director, John Sprenger, and learned about the Latter-day Saint Charities office and files as the Sprengers were finished with their mission and would be returning home. Tom will be the Interim Country Director until the one called receives his visa. In our final week in Bangalore before returning to New Delhi we visited a leprosy colony in Bangalore. Gretna described our visit, “One lady with her hands, feet, nose, and eyelids eaten away by leprosy sang for us. As we listened to her sing her song she sounded like an angel. Her voice was so sweet and pure, and she had the brightest smile you ever saw. She would have been so scary to look at if that was all we could do but to hear her and feel of her sweet spirit she was beautiful!!”



Lady who sang at the leprosy colony

RETURN TO NEW DELHI

After almost 5 months we had the blessing of returning to New Delhi. With Tom as the Interim Country Director for Humanitarian Services in India we only got to spend a few days in New Delhi. Gretna described their return to church in New Delhi, *"It was so fun to go to church yesterday and be able to see so many of these wonderful people we have come to love. They acted so happy to see us also so that made us feel really good also."*

Even though they would be going back and forth between New Delhi – managing projects there – and Bangalore – working in the India office for Latter-day Saint Charities, it was nice to be able to unpack and not live out of suitcases. They returned to Bangalore so Tom could get the office and files organized and ready for the new country director when their visas arrive. After a brief stay in Bangalore they returned to New Delhi with a plan to manage the LDSC work from New Delhi rather than from Bangalore. This allowed them to get caught up on the projects in New Delhi. On December 2, 2002 they took Shiva and Bitu – their Iranian girls – to the airport. They will go to Salt Lake City as UN approved refugees for a "new beginning" for them. Cheryl and Nitin Phadnis (who taught them the Gospel in Mumbai) are their sponsors and they will initially live with them.

In December 2022, Tom and Gretna attended a couples' conference at a resort in southern India – it was a very spiritual experience for all of to meet with President and Sister Nelson and Elder Dickson, our Area President, and his wife. They returned to New Delhi just in time to attend a baptismal service. Gretna's impact on the saints of India was evident in her letter to the family that week, *"One of these was a lady 88 years old. I first met Rosemary several weeks ago when she came to witness the baptism of her granddaughter. I have sat with her in Relief Society in the 2nd Branch for about 3 weeks now. When she came back into the chapel from her baptism I was by the door and put out my hand to congratulate her and give her a hug. She kissed me on the cheek and said, 'I love you' – I felt like I was being talked to by an angel!! She is so sweet and humble."*

In January 2003 Gretna recorded in a letter home some of her tender feelings, *"We had an eye camp Tuesday in Northeast Delhi in a leprosy village, called the 'Village of Hope.' It was a very cold day. The children were all smiling and wanting to touch me and talk with me – they were happy! My heart was crying for them because I knew they had to be cold! Then some of the older people came in who had leprosy – these children were theirs and not in school because they could not attend public schools because they are still the 'untouchables' in this society – they are shunned and ignored and not treated with kindness. Anyway, as the ones came in that had leprosy I really went on emotional overload! My heart cried, my eyes were fighting back tears, and some escaped down my cheeks. Many of these people could not wear shoes because their feet are stubs. They have no fingers and some hardly had hands. Many were bandaged and we could see the wounds oozing. One man whose eyes I was dilating had only a very small part of his nose left and I could see into his mouth through the hole on his face where his nose was. I knew they were cold and again I wanted to help them but did not know how. I said a silent prayer asking for help to do what I could and help in the way the Lord would want me to help. As I looked at them a sweet feeling came over me and I felt in many ways they were very blessed. They will be judged according to the laws they have. Where much is given, much is expected, and I have been given so much. They are so humble I know they will know the Savior for who He is when He comes again. They will accept Him and He will heal them and love them for the trials they have endured. They are happy and living the best they can in the circumstances they are in."*

At an eye camp for the poor in late January 2003, the youth of one of the branches of the Church came to help at the eye camp. After watching what we were doing and witnessing Gretna taking extra care for the older ladies seeking eye care, often putting her arms around them to assist them, one of the young women asked Gretna, 'how can you do that?' Gretna replied: 'she is my sister you know, and I love her.' This young girl is planning a mission and it opened her eyes to the reality of service with love – Gretna is a good teacher by her example of love.

The couple who was to come to India as Country Director for Welfare Services has now been reassigned to another mission. The Church processed visa paperwork for another couple in hopes that they could be in India in April in time to be trained. Tom and Gretna continued to monitor all the humanitarian projects throughout India and also continued to do humanitarian work in New Delhi. In the, no one came to India as the Country Director of Welfare Services who had received a visa by the time we were to leave. Tom trained Prince Selvaraj to be the interim Country Director – he lives in Bangalore and has worked in the Latter-day Saint Charities office for several years – he will be wonderful. Tom: *"Prince Selvaraj in Bangalore and Suvarna Katuka in New Delhi have been dedicated servants of the Lord in blessing us in our mission call – they are dear friends, and we love them dearly."*



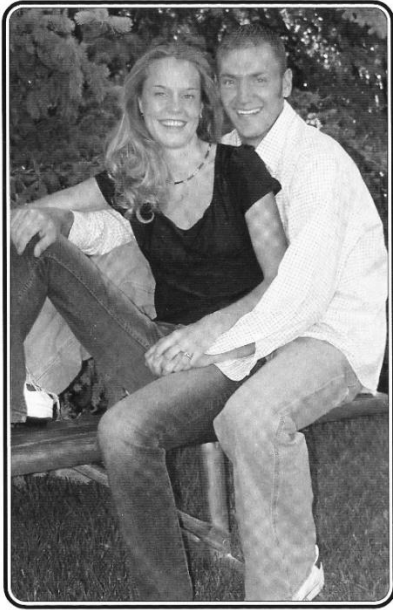
Prince and Suvarna

Tom recorded, *"Our humanitarian service in India has provided us the opportunity to be instruments in the Lord's hands to bless our Father's children in their time of need. Two wonderful Hindu friends who provide leadership for an orphanage in Delhi recently sent e-mails stating: **"How to say thanks for your wonderful intervention on behalf of all the . . . children! It only reiterates the belief that God looks after all work and effort dedicated to God's name. How can the children and I thank you for an association that is made in Heaven?"***

Tom: *"The New Delhi branches gave us a surprise farewell. Our friendship, brotherhood and sisterhood, and love for these sweet saints goes very deep – it was a difficult and emotion-filled evening. Oh, how we will miss the family we now have in India and oh, how excited we are to be with our family at home."*

Home Sweet Home

We enjoyed our reunion with family and especially with our pure, sweet grandchildren. The summer of 2003 was a busy one with preparations for the marriage of Mark and Celeste at Kenneth's home – a wonderful family reunion time for all of the family.



Celeste and Mark

Wedding announcement

*Mark and Celeste invite you to
join them for their wedding and luncheon
Saturday, 16 August, 2003
at 11:00 a.m.
At the home of
Bishop and Mrs. Kenneth Palmer
10280 E. Wapiti Trail (Off Cosnino Rd.)
Flagstaff, Arizona*

*in the year two thousand three
You are invited to attend a reception
to help them celebrate their joy
that evening from 6:30 to 9:00
LDS Church
2401 East Linda Vista
Flagstaff, Arizona*



Gretna made a wedding quilt.



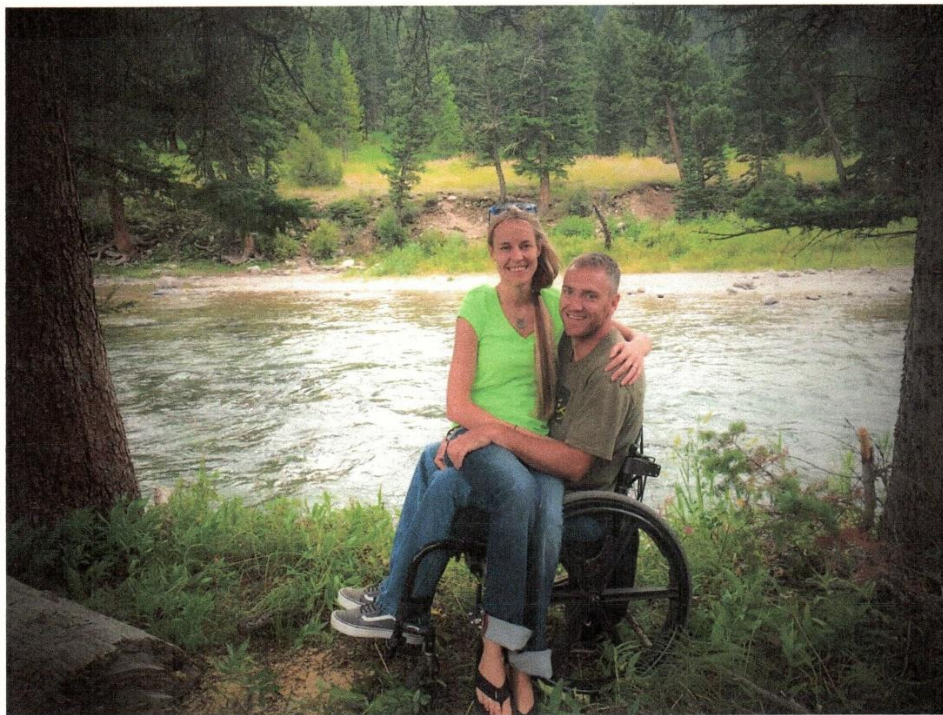
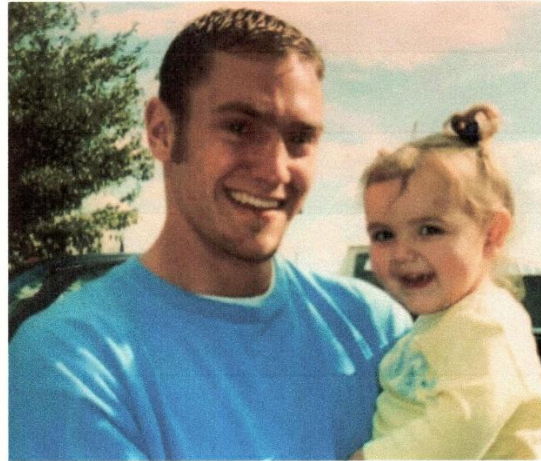
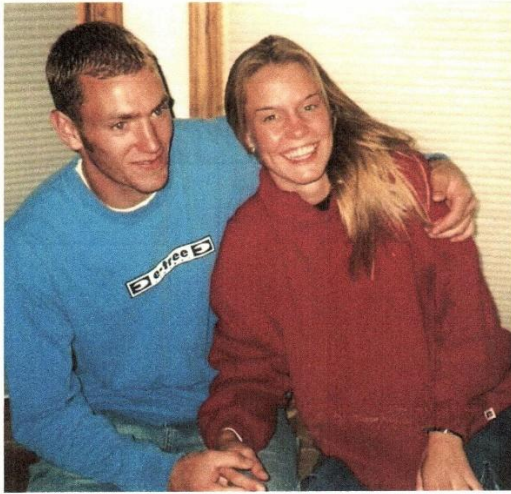
Mark and Celeste



Little Angels at their wedding

Three weeks after the marriage of Mark and Celeste, Mark was injured in a serious car wreck. His spinal cord was severed, and he was left paralyzed from the chest down, but with priesthood blessings and many miracles and the faith and prayers of family and many others Mark's life was preserved.

*Thanks to Celeste, who is truly an angel, and to Mark's determination,
and the love of the families of Celeste and Mark,
Mark has enjoyed an amazing and full life!*



In January 2004 we began service as temple workers in the Snowflake Arizona Temple and served there for several months. After ensuring that Mark and Celeste were doing well, we were again called to serve as full-time missionaries.

INDONESIA

The initial mission call was to Myanmar in the Thailand Bangkok Mission, but the call was changed in August 2004 to be the Country Director for Welfare Services in Indonesia. Having served briefly in Indonesia we were excited to be able to return and serve there. We began our service in Indonesia on September 22, 2004 and were greeted warmly by President and Sister Jensen.



Indonesia is a country of 17,000+ islands and the 4th largest country in the world by population, and the country with the largest population of Muslims

We enjoyed service in Indonesia with several couples who served in the humanitarian effort of the Church. In our first four months we helped close 4 major humanitarian projects – a water project, distribution of 1000 wheelchairs, neonatal resuscitation training, and a project for eye care equipment. It was a joy to serve with Elder Subandriyo once again – a tireless servant of the Lord and an Area Seventy. Elder Subandriyo helped us with each of the project closings and led us to other humanitarian project opportunities. We also taught English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at the chapel in Jakarta. We also served the two branches in South Jakarta – one an English-speaking branch and the other an Indonesian-speaking branch – Jakarta Selatan Branch. We got to go with the full-time Elders and Sisters to many appointments and help teach the Gospel. We got to participate in the introduction of the “Preach My Gospel” manual and teaching approach with the zone leaders and other mission leaders – it was amazing. We also enjoyed our opportunity to serve with President Tandiman and his wife – he was the mission president in Indonesia when we served briefly here before going to India.

One of our first opportunities to serve in the branches was to become the home and visiting teachers to the family of Melanie Bombasi – she was baptized about the time we arrived in Indonesia, and we got to help with teaching her three children – Brian, Princess and Ella. They became family to us and we continue to enjoy a special bond with them.

Gretna noted in a letter home, *“As I sat in our branches today my heart was so full of love for these people I have come to know and love. I am so thankful for the opportunity of knowing them. The Sisters – old and young – in the Indonesian branch must have an Indonesian hug each time I see them – this is touching their cheek with your cheek on both sides of the face. I love to feel the love they have for me and hope they feel the love I have for them.”*

On December 26, 2004, our lives were impacted in a way that we could never have imagined. We went to our meetings and then returned home in the afternoon. Sunday evening, we received a call from the Area office in Hong Kong asking us to report on the tsunami that hit Indonesia – a report on the wellbeing of the missionaries and the meetinghouses. We had heard nothing of the tsunami, so I called Elder Subandriyo and President Jensen and neither had heard of a tsunami. Elder Subandriyo called Alwi Shihab (the Coordinating Minister for Peoples' Welfare of Indonesia – the number 3 man in the government and a personal friend of Elder Subandriyo). Alwi confirmed that there was a major earthquake off the west coast of the province of Aceh near the northern tip of the island of Sumatra and that there was major property damage and many deaths – communication from Aceh was weak due to the destruction therefore we had received no notice. The next 15 months of our lives would be focused on tsunami relief for those who lost family members, livelihood, and property. We came to know in the months that followed that the losses were far greater than initially assumed. As now noted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in <http://www.noaa.gov/>:

“On 26 December 2004, a magnitude 9.1 earthquake (3.316 N, 95.854 E, depth 30 km) occurred off the coast of northern Sumatra, Indonesia. The tsunami generated by the earthquake was recorded nearly world-wide and killed more people than any other tsunami in recorded history, almost 230,000 missing and presumed dead. The estimated material losses are \$10 billion and insured losses are \$2 billion.”

Our mission and our lives changed dramatically because of this serious tragedy. Coordinating with Elder Subandriyo, the Area Presidency, the Humanitarian Department of the Church, the Presiding Bishopric and Elder Boyd K. Packer, we undertook a massive tsunami relief effort. Millions of dollars were donated to the relief effort in response to the invitation of President Gordon B. Hinckley to all the saints of the world. Due to an ongoing civil war in the province of Aceh and the living conditions affected by the tsunami, Gretna was not allowed to visit the province of Aceh for 8 months. My companion on my many visits to the affected area was usually Elder Subandriyo. We lived in Jakarta which was 1200 miles from the province of Aceh and a 2 ½ hour plane ride. With the help of a cargo plane full of emergency relief supplies from the Church's humanitarian center, we undertook efforts to get emergency supplies to areas affected by the tsunami. As directed by Elder Packer, we directed our efforts to needs requested by the government through Alwi Shihab. These needs included 50,000 body bags, restoring and providing equipment to 4 major medical facilities in the province of Aceh, construction of fishing boats to provide restoration of livelihood. For the first time ever, the Church provided long-term relief including schools, homes, medical clinics, clean water, library and computer facilities and equipment for a University, and major fishing boat construction. Specialists were sent by the Humanitarian Department of the Church to help with trauma training for medical professionals, physical therapy training and facilities, and hospital equipment and training for medical facilities. We witnessed the Lord open door after door and provide miracle after miracle. We felt the losses experienced by thousands and became personally acquainted with many of them. Our love for them and efforts in their behalf were clearly the Lord's way of expressing His love to them one by one.

We enjoyed the blessing of a special visit to Jakarta and later to Aceh in February 2004 by Elder Boyd K. Packer and Elder David A. Bednar along with Gerrit Gong, assistant to the President of BYU. They provided direction, inspiration, and evaluation of the tsunami relief efforts. They came to Aceh and visited several of the projects and helped evaluate some future ones. One of their visits was to an Islamic University where Elder Packer and

Elder Bednar met with the Rector (president) and then encouraged us to follow-up with a project, which we did.

In addition to the tsunami relief efforts our time was devoted to the support of our humanitarian couples and their projects and others we were developing as well as continuing with our teaching of English and working with the missionaries. We loved working with the saints in both branches. Gretna was instrumental in teaching and loving the young women and they loved her.



Young Women: Inta, Gugun, Riyanti, Gita, Nining, Yvonne, and Jaredita



Gretna and Riyanti



Elder Subandriyo and Jaredita in Aceh



Jaredita with Sister Jensen at Mesa Arizona Temple

Gretna was a special blessing to Jaredita Subandriyo – she taught her English, befriended her, and loved her and Jaredita loved Gretna. Jaredita was able to get accepted at BYU-Hawaii because of the quality of her English Gretna had helped her learn. A year later she was accepted at BYU – Provo and came to Provo in preparation for school. While waiting for school to start she made a trip to Arizona and stopped by to visit with Gretna in Flagstaff, then went on to Mesa to see President and Sister Jensen. While there she became ill and they recommended she return to BYU where she had medical coverage. She agreed but wanted to attend the Mesa Arizona Temple and do baptisms for the dead. She did so and then went to the airport. While at the airport she fainted and was rushed to the hospital where she died the following day.

Gretna wrote a tender letter to Jaredita's mother, Steffi Subandriyo, on August 22, 2007:

"My dear sweet friend and sister Steffi,

I have felt that I want to write and share some of my feelings and memories with you at this time. I know it is hard—for me it was the hardest and saddest emotions I have ever experienced—and I know it is much more so for you and your family. I want you to know I love Jaredita and Diandra just as I love my own two daughters. I would do anything in the world for them or you and the rest of your family.

I spent Tuesday evening, Aug 14, 2007 with Jaredita here in my home. It will be a sweet and tender memory for the rest of my life. She expressed her love for her family and Josie and her country. She wanted to meet some more of our grandchildren, so I called my son that lives just a short distance from us and he, his wife and 5 children came over for a short time. Dita was so cute and tender with them. She loved them, talked with them and enjoyed them and they her.

I have had the opportunity to talk with Dita often while she was in Hawaii and also after she arrived in Salt Lake, I miss those phone calls!!!

What a blessing the gospel is in our lives and especially at times like these. I know with no doubt that Dita is with our Father in Heaven, she is one of the valiant, faithful Sisters spoken of in Section 138 of the D&C. I know she is with many of her ancestors and loved ones who have passed on, I hope she will be a "missionary companion" for a time with my mother.

You have been in our prayers, morning, evening and at each meal, we have put your names on the prayer rolls of Mesa and Snowflake temples. Pam and her husband were in the Monticello Temple last week and put them on there. We know how much the Lord loves the Subandriyo family because you all love Him and are so faithful and obedient in your service to all you come in contact with.

We pray for the sweet Comforter to be with all of you. We love you with all our hearts and hope to see and be with you again someday.

Lotza love and prayers, Gretna Palmer"

This sweet young daughter of God was in the prime of her life. She had helped in Aceh with the tsunami relief effort, she had worked hard to learn English, and she loved the temple enough to insist that she attend only hours before her passing. We learned of Jaredita's passing about 5pm on August 18, 2007 – the day of her death. The weight of this knowledge was expressed in Tom's journal entry that evening:

"As I left in my pickup [for a church activity that I was in charge of] I felt to pray for my good friend, companion, teacher and mentor, Elder Subandriyo, and for Steffi, Luki, Ezra and Diandra, and for Jaredita, who will be so dearly missed here. I thought of Jaredita much like a butterfly – touching down here and then there . . . blessing those she encountered, seemingly knowing she wouldn't be here long, but wanting to take it all in. I hurt tonight for her family . . . I tried to call Elder Subandriyo but could not get through. As I prayed tonight I shed tears of hurt for Elder Subandriyo [and his family] – their hurt is my hurt – we have become very close." "As a father, I cannot even imagine the hurt of separation (even for a time) from one of my daughters. I have marveled at the strength of Elder Subandriyo and his family – a strength founded in a sure knowledge of Our Father's Plan." [Even while writing this history tears came to my eyes because of the love we have for this dear family.]



Subandriyo and Steffi with three of their children: Ezra, Diandra, and Jaredita

We are confident that Jaredita was needed in the gathering of Israel on the other side of the veil where she can teach and love in a very special way – perhaps even teaching the family members of those she served in the tsunami relief in Aceh who died in that tragedy.

We moved to a new apartment at the mission office location, and it was a blessing to be closer to the offices. The missionaries serving there were also grateful we were there as they loved the cinnamon rolls and other treats Gretna made and blessed them with.

In December 2005 we attended a Tsunami Strategy Meeting in Singapore with Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop, and his counselor Bishop Keith B. McMullin, along with Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Seventy and a counselor in the Area Presidency and Harold C. Brown, Managing Director of Welfare Services, Elder Subandriyo, along with others. We received wonderful direction from them and were amazed at how well they managed the funds of the Lord – they were aware of the details of every project and provided us with direction for new projects.

We were blessed to have time to go to the Orchid Gardens in Singapore – Gretna loved the flowers and the beauty and cleanliness of Singapore.

Gretna's love for our dear saints in Indonesia was expressed in one of her letters, *"In late February 2006 the Jakarta Selata Branch had a nice going away party for us last night. We will miss them, their smiles, their singing, and their kind and sweet personalities."*

We had a fun family home evening with Melanie and Pia and their families – they have truly become family to us.



Melanie with her children: Brian, Princess, and Ella Gretna and I with Brian, Melanie and Ella at Brian's wedding in the LA Tempe

We have also felt a close kinship with our Muslim friends and had a lunch visit just before the end of our mission with Dr. Nizar Shihab (Alwi's brother), Soraya, and Rifki – We have worked closely with them in our tsunami relief efforts.



Nizar, Soraya, Gretna, Tom, and Rifki

One of the great blessings of our service in Indonesia was to have Ari Winarto as our driver and translator – he became like a son to us.



Ari Winarto

One of the highlights of our service in Indonesia was the visit of Pam, Keegan and Brinlee. This came at a time when we needed it and they needed it – a lot of sweet memories were made during this visit.



Gretna, Brinlee, Pam, and Keegan in Indonesia

Just before we finished our mission we made a trip to the tsunami relief area in the province of Aceh. We needed to say goodbye to many there as well – especially to Zaldi, a young Muslim boy who had worked with us throughout the tsunami relief effort. We came to love he and his wife, Zikri.



Tom, Gretna, Zikri, and Zaldi in front of Grand Mosque in Aceh

In all of the missions we served as a couple Gretna continued her love of rocks – many came home with us 😊.



Gretna finding another rock at a garden in Bogor

One of the miracles of the tsunami relief effort in Indonesia was the unconditional love the saints of Indonesia showed to their Muslim brothers and sisters. In a response to a question from the Church News we expressed the following:

The saints provided “9,700 personal and hygiene kits and hours and hours of service to assist in the purchase, assembly, and distribution of supplies to those in need. Their prayers and faith have strengthened our faith. The love of the saints has been genuine, and we feel through the Church’s relief effort has been felt very personally by the victims of the tsunami.”

In a letter home to our family Gretna shared the following, *“I want you all to know how grateful I am for our Savior Jesus Christ. How thankful I am for the price He has paid for us. I do have hope through the atonement of Christ and in the power of His resurrection that we can all be raised up into eternal life. My faith in my Savior grows daily and I am so thankful for Him.”*

We felt the power of the promise of the Savior as expressed in the Doctrine and Covenants 84:88 – *“I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.”* We felt the reality of this promise as we strived to meet the needs of our Father’s children in Indonesia – even the Muslim beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to Him as emergency relief supplies arrived, saying: *“Jesus is bringing more to us”*.

Jesus did bring “more” to them – not just the emergency relief supplies that they received but much more! They felt of His love through the saints of Indonesia who left their families and their employment to respond to the tsunami relief effort. In our service to those in need because of the tsunami and in our service to those learning English and to the members of the two branches we served the Savior’s love was felt through Gretna. In a *Mothers’ Day* note to Gretna on May 13, 2005 Tom wrote, *“I have watched you in your relationship with saints, with the poor, with children and you are so Christ-like in your love. With one hug you say more than I can say in a lifetime. Your smiles and your hugs speak the language of love to people of all nationalities.”*

Leaving our Indonesia family behind was difficult, but the excitement of returning to our family in America was overwhelming.

Home Sweet Home . . . again!

After returning home from Indonesia in March 2006, we enjoyed a sweet time of reuniting with our wonderful family. We bought a home on Tellis Trail with Michael as a “fixer upper” and after moving in spent the next 2 years making major improvements.



Home on Tellis Trail

We enjoyed our Tellis Trail home and greenhouse garden and Gretna really enjoyed being able to walk with Carolyn Goodman – they lived just a quarter of a mile north of us. It put us close to Ricky’s family and that was a blessing to have family so close.

We had a special family reunion in the summer of 2006 in Alpine at the Phinizy family cabin. We attended church in Luna, New Mexico and added much to their Sacrament meeting attendance 😊



2006 Family Reunion Photo at Luna Chapel

We took a trip to Virginia and enjoyed a fun time with Pam’s family and a trip to Palmyra and the Sacred Grove and to Niagara Falls with them. We then returned home through Ohio and Illinois and enjoyed visiting the Church History sites there.

In the summer of 2007, we had another family reunion in Alpine and a wonderful Stake Handcart Trek that involved most of the family – a very special spiritual and physical experience. Our family reunion was in Flagstaff in 2008.



Us and our children – 2008



2008 family reunion

In 2008 we again served in the temple until late summer when we made preparations to serve another mission. Our timing for service worked out well for Michael's family as they were in a position to live in the Tellis Trail home while we served.



At Snowflake Arizona Temple in 2008

CARIBBEAN AREA & WEST INDIES MISSION

We served a mission in the Caribbean Area & West Indies Mission from October 27, 2008 to 27 April 2010. We served under the direction of the Area Presidency in training mission, district and branch leaders in record keeping and reports training. We lived in Trinidad and traveled to many countries to provide training and were able to serve in Port of Spain, Trinidad as teaching missionaries. We did training in Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname.



Places we visited in the Caribbean Area are circled

Serving missions take us away from our family at home and homesickness comes pretty naturally. In the 2nd week of our service in Trinidad Gretna expressed in a letter home, *"I have been very homesick this time around but it will be okay. I know we are supposed to be here at this time and the Lord will guide and sustain us as He will each of you as well. I love the gospel of Jesus Christ!! It is true and it is time to bring the world His truth - it is in great need of it !!!"* In spite of these feelings of homesickness Gretna rose above it because of her abiding love of the Savior and the knowledge that the call to serve came from Him.

Gretna always finds joy in her surroundings whether it be a beautiful sunset, a pretty flower, or the crazy traffic. She wrote the following, *"One of the things I really enjoy here is looking out the window when we are driving – it is really very entertaining, and a lot more fun than trying to put the brakes on when I have no brake pedal. There was a row of businesses with very interesting signs that made me smile. "The Sewist-repair your garment and lengthen it life." And next to it "Squeeze Pub" (they sold juice), and next to that a restaurant named "Cowheel Soup". I was laughing!!"*

Many of the leaders in these countries were very new to the Church but anxious to learn how to keep records and how to lead. Gretna mentioned in a letter home, *"Our trainings went very well. We had almost all the people present that were supposed to be there. They were very receptive and so full of gratitude that we would come and help them learn their duties. The Spirit was the teacher."*

In February 2009 we were reminded of the promise given to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon who were away from their families as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants section 100, "Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you, my friends Sidney and Joseph, your families are well; they are in mine hands, and I will do with them as seemeth me good; for in me there is all power." As we serve as missionaries, we have the same promise and we realized one of those special blessings as Mark and Celeste were endowed and sealed in the Mesa Arizona Temple with support from the entire family.



Their happiness was our happiness!



Family enjoyed this special day with Mark and Celeste!

Gretna expressed her joy for the temple experience of Mark and Celeste in her letter home, "*We are so thankful for the blessings of family, and the blessings of the temple. We*

are so thankful for the promises we have received both in our setting apart and in the MTC that the Lord would take better care of our family than we could."

One of the highlights of our mission to the Caribbean was the visit we received from Mark and Celeste at Christmas time 2009. Gretna expressed to the family, *"We are excited to have Mark and Celeste arrive this week. It will be so fun to have family around, especially for Christmas. We have many we want them to meet and some lovely places to show them here on this island paradise."*

President and Sister Gamiette and their family loved Mark and Celeste and welcomed them to all of our missionary Christmas gatherings and we were able to take them to several of the families we taught the Gospel to and that we have come to love. As Gretna expressed, *"As you can imagine, the children fell in love with Mark and Celeste."* Mark and Celeste felt love for them as well and out of their own pockets they donated paint and materials to help make a very humble home a happier home. The love Mark and Celeste showed to all they met was a mission of itself that blessed the lives of all they came in contact with. It was a blessing to us and to them that they came. They went with us to some of the families that were very special to us.



David and Anisha Duprey family with Gretna, Mark and Celeste



Duprey family at meetinghouse in Port of Spain



Gretna's love for Anisha opened the way for her testimony of the restored Gospel



David and Nadia Harideo family – the very humble home Mark and Celeste donated paint for

We often enjoyed being in the homes of the Duprey family and the Harideo family and Gretna's love for them was felt keenly by all of them. We wish we could have brought these two families home with us.

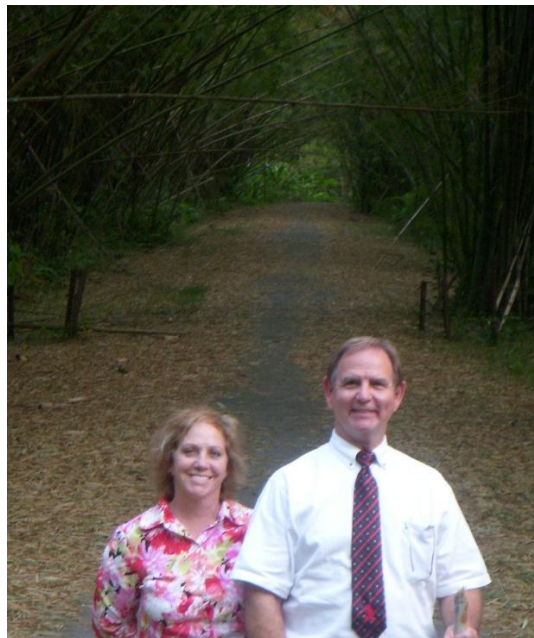


We took Celeste and Mark to the “Bamboo Cathedral” – it is only a few miles from the city Port of Spain and was a quiet refuge for us throughout our mission.



Don and Marena visited us in Trinidad the last weekend in February 2010

We were blessed to have Don and Marena visit us in Trinidad. We enjoyed several visits to fun places on the island and also some wonderful interaction with President and Sister Gamiette and other leaders of the Church in the Caribbean. The Gamiettes invited all of us to the mission home for a wonderful dinner and evening. When Don and Marena learned of the break-in and thefts at the Gamiette home, they responded quickly with their ever-present generosity and helped fund the replacement of many of the items lost. Their generosity continued as they transported back to the U.S. some of Gretna's "ever-growing" rock collection 😊.



Marena and Don at the Bamboo Cathedral

We taught many other families while serving in Trinidad and came to love each of them. We traveled to Suriname and Guyana and had sweet experiences with many of their leaders and saints there as well.



Us with President and Sister Linger in Suriname – He was the District President Gretna and I encouraged them go to the temple before their child was born – they later wrote and thanked us for that encouragement. Gretna had a special bond with her.



Phagwah family in Guyana – He was the district president and at least three of the girls served missions . . . an exemplary family for the Church in Guyana



Gamiette Family – President Gamiette was our mission president for most of our service in the West Indies Mission and we became very close to their family. Their trust in Gretna was evident in the fact that they asked us to watch their children when they went to their mission presidents’ seminar.

We traveled to Jamaica and Barbados to provide training for mission, district and branch leaders. Barbados was one of the most beautiful islands we visited on our mission and we got to go there twice – on one of these visits Tom and Gretna went to the Archives and found the entry for the birth of an ancestor of Tom’s in the 1600s.



This was the baptismal font in Barbados for many years – named “Shark’s Hole”

Gretna expressed in a letter to the family her feelings about this beautiful mission experience we enjoyed in the Caribbean Area, *“I am so thankful for the incredibly beautiful world we live in. How very much we are loved by a wonderful Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ. I know they know us and love us and want the very best for us. I want to live my very best to help those He has put in my path along the way in this mission. My prayer is for each of you to take time to feel and appreciate the love of our Father in Heaven and His Son. I know they are there for us.”*

Gretna is exemplary in expressing her gratitude for every blessing we receive including our family. In her final email to the family in April 2010 she expressed, *“I am so grateful for the opportunities we have had to come to know and love so many different cultures. I am so grateful for the knowledge that we are all truly brothers and sisters and that we will once again be able to see each other someday, some place. We have a beautiful world!!! I love the gospel that has opened the doors for us to have these wonderful growing, challenging, very rewarding experiences. We love you all and look forward to seeing you all soon.”*

Home to our eternal Family!

We returned home from our mission in late April 2010 and two days later Tom’s parents moved to Thatcher to a lower altitude that will help them with their health. We purchased their home and did a major “makeover” of the home and lot over the next few years.



Mountain Dell home – front view



Back Yard



Fruit trees



West side yard

In the summer of 2010, we had a wonderful family reunion in Mesa so we could all be at Gretna's dad's 80th birthday celebration.



2010 family photo



2010 family temple trip – a dream come true with all of our family in the Mesa Arizona Temple in September 2010



Our happy children at the Mesa Arizona Temple – September 2010

In the summer of 2009 while we were serving on our mission in the Caribbean Area, the Palmer family received special recognition by winning a contest – the “Nth Degree Contest” at NAU. The Palmer family has had more family members – 47 – attend NAU through the years than any other family. NAU identified a large spruce tree in front of OLD MAIN on NAU Campus as the Palmer family tree.



Tom's parents, Ruth Westover Palmer and Elwyn Gus Palmer, passing

Gretna was very close to Tom's parents and she was loved as their daughter in a special way and she loved them as well.

Ruth Westover Palmer



Born

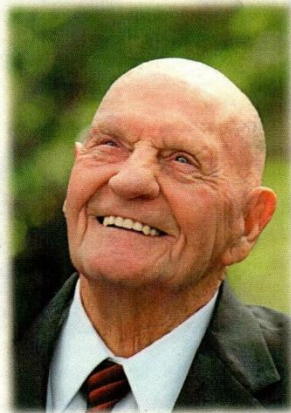
*January 3, 1919
Joseph City, Arizona*

Passed Away

*January 28, 2011
Thatcher, Arizona*

Ruth Westover Palmer passed away on January 28, 2011 under the loving care of Mel and Adeline and Gus until her passing.

Elwyn Gus Palmer



Born

*March 23, 1919
Taylor Arizona*

Passed Away

*September 28, 2013
Tucson, Arizona*

Elwyn Gus Palmer passed away on September 28, 2013 having served in The Gila Valley Arizona Temple until 2 weeks before his passing. The family of Mel and Adeline provided watchful care for him after Ruth's passing.

Posterity of Elwyn Gus Palmer and Ruth Westover Palmer

At Gus' passing – growing year after year since that time

Bob and Mary

Nelson and Michelle

*Spencer and Taylor, Robert, Samuel, Sarah, Laura,
Maria and Ken Ophikens*

Katrynn

Patti and Thom Cluff

Rachel and Chris Mitchell

Lucy, Emily

Katie, Sean, Kenneth

John and Rosemary

Loretta, Hannah, Ellika, Hyrum, Rebecca

Samuel (Deceased)

Bruce and Debbie

Lea and Matthew Pope, Robert, David, Cato

Jim and Angie

Mason, Brayden, Talon, Ellie

Andy and Dana

Megan, Joseph, Emma, Sarah

Evaline (Deceased)

Billie Sue and Ted Bright

Merie, Jace, Jovana, Evinley, Morgan, Larissa, Isaiah

Eldon and Shannon

Joseph, Daniel, Isaac, Nathan, Jacob, Cheryl

Rebecca (Deceased)

Julie and Chris Bryson

Kyle, Alan, Anna, Kara

Sharon and Canneton Howard

Jayda

Tom and Gretna

Kenneth and Deborah

Colton and Panika, Thane, Trent, Danica, Lance

Steven and Colette

Samuel, Colton and Tessalyn, Jacob

Mike and Heather

Darris, Torin, Amry, Kenzie, Elyce

Daniel and Julie

KyMBER, Kaycee, Garret, Braden, Brylee

Kalynn and Mike Pospisil

Aria, Hyrum, Sarah

Rick and Shannon

Kaitlyn, Bryant, Mason, Raely, Addison, Sofie, Lainey

Tim and Tia

Carter, Eiley, Bree, Ty

Mark and Celeste

Hailey

Pam

Keegan, Brinlee, Tanna, Ryker

Mel and Adeline

Alan and Vicky

Bryson, Kaylee, Blake, Kaci

Tonya and Kevin Crosby

Bryce, Kyler, Kadin, Kason, Kellie, Kalynn

Tom and Suzanna

Keslee, Kemilee, Jackson, Lincoln, Kadi, Gray

David and Tia

McKay, Matthew, Tanner, Addie

Phillip and Kristy

Samantha, Jadin, Daniel, Timothy, Jevin

Mary Ann and Wayne Layton

Haylee, Hanna, Maci, Nash

Deanne and Alan Wahl

JoAnn, Jay, Savanna, Sara, Nicole, Ryan

Steven and Kami

Aubrey (Deceased), Jake, Emily, Levi Max

Levi and JayAnn

Easton

Travis

Marena and Don Hales

David and Lisa Bennett

Talon, KadyN

Sasha Hales

Steve and Desiree Hales

Calon, Peyton

Erin and Rocky Francom

Allie Ray

Shannon and Chris Revels

Aria

Lainey and Chris

Jacob and Kenny

Josh and Rene

Alec

Carrie and Blaine Adams

2011 Family Reunion @ Heaton's Lodge (Glendale, Utah)



We returned to service in the Snowflake Arizona Temple as ordinance workers and then on May 1, 2011. Tom received the sealing power and thereafter Gretna and Tom served in sealings in the temple. In October 2011 Gretna began service as an assistant to the Matron and Tom a counselor in the Temple Presidency and the Temple Recorder in the Snowflake Arizona Temple. We served in these capacities until October 2014 with Norris Baldwin and Fawnette Baldwin as President and Matron and R. Wayne and Leslie Johnson as a counselor and assistant to the Matron. This was a sacred and marvelous experience for us to serve together in the House of the Lord.

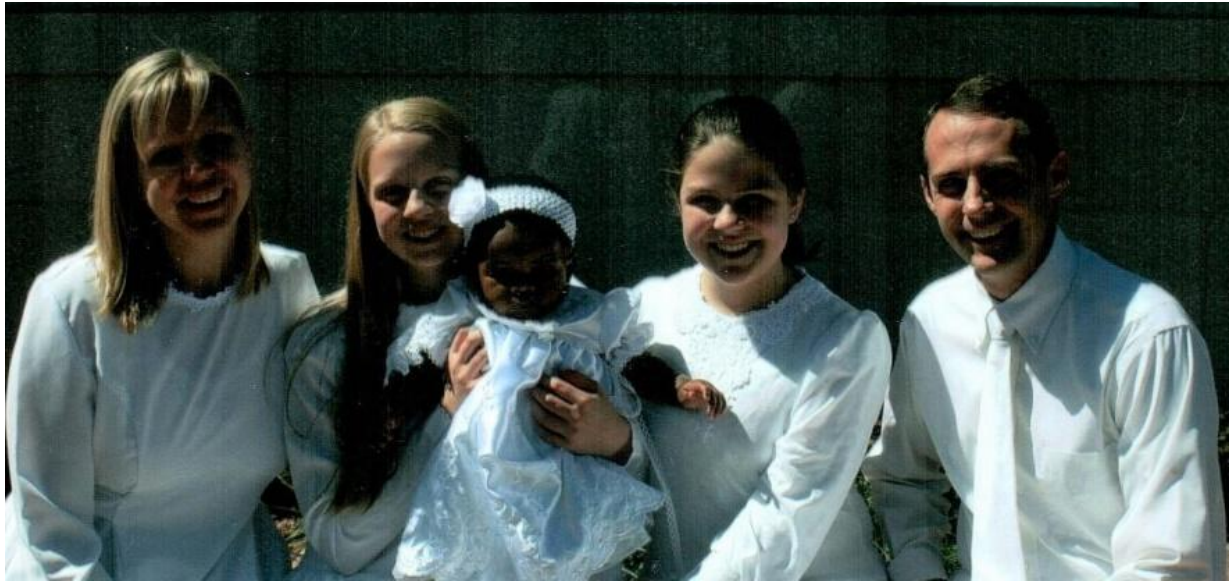


Tom and Gretna, Fawnette and Norris Baldwin, Leslie and R. Wayne Johnson

Gretna recalls that her most sacred and memorable opportunities were welcoming the youth in the baptistry and giving instruction to sisters receiving their own endowment. Gretna was mindful of all who served as workers in the temple – office volunteers, cleaners, and laundry volunteers. She was often in the laundry to provide help when there was a need and to express gratitude to these workers every shift she worked – they were so appreciative of such gratitude from an Assistant to the Matron.

It was a joy for us to visit stake conferences throughout the temple district which included the following stakes: Chinle, Eagar, Flagstaff, Holbrook, Pinetop-Lakeside, Show Low, Snowflake, St. Johns, Taylor, Tuba City and Winslow stakes. We enjoyed a very special relationship with the saints from the Chinle and Tuba City stakes who were so faithful in organizing and coming to the temple in regular temple excursions. We also enjoyed a special relationship with our young temple workers – some preparing to serve missions – they were an inspiration to all of the workers and patrons.

We enjoyed a very special experience on 21 March 2015. Isabelle London Goodman was sealed to Paul Dayton Goodman and Mari Marie Norman Goodman with daughters Christina and Sarah observing. Gretna had served as a Young Women leader, and they have become family to us. To this day we feel a special bond with Isabelle and the rest of the family.



Goodman family: Mari, Christina, Isabelle, Sarah, Paul

On March 28, 2015 we enjoyed another very tender and sweet experience. In the Vernal Utah Temple Tom performed the sealing of Trevor Lee Pospisil to our daughter, Kalynn, and her husband, Michael Dean Pospisil. Aria, Hyrum and Sarah attended as observers. The focus of Trevor on Tom as a sealer was filled with joy and a big smile as if to say – “I have a forever family and they love me!”

We enjoyed together many sealings of children to parents and young couples beginning their eternal journey together with a temple marriage – including many of their grandchildren.

On April 17, 2017 Gretna and Tom received special calls from the Lord. Tom recorded the following in his journal:

“Gretna and I had a wonderful live video interview with President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency. He issued a call to me to serve as the President of the Snowflake Arizona Temple and Gretna as the Matron. He said we would get detailed instruction from the temple department but counseled us to provide in the temple the feeling the Savior would provide for all who enter therein. He told us that the matron and assistants to the matron would be key in providing that feeling.” Gretna was instrumental in providing in the temple the feeling the Savior would provide for our Father’s children in His Holy Temple.

In October 2017 we enjoyed a special week in Salt Lake City at the new Temple Presidents and Matrons training. On October 10, 2017 Gretna and Tom were set apart as Matron and President of the Snowflake Arizona Temple by Elder Gary E. Stevenson of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Gretna and Tom enjoyed the sweet Spirit of the training sessions in the Salt Lake Temple and the association with others who had been called to serve in temples around the world. At one of the training sessions, all the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve were present (President Monson virtually) except one of the Twelve who had just undergone surgery. We were truly taught from “on high”.

The next three years of service in the Snowflake Arizona Temple was a spiritually refining experience for both of us and for those who served with them.



Gretna and Tom with Steve and Trisha Reidhead on the left and Rick and LaPriel Brimhall on the right



When the Brimhalls were released for health reasons, Alma and Nikki Yates joined us in the temple presidency on May 20, 2020.

We feel blessed with the opportunity of serving with all who served in the temple presidency and as assistants to the matron – they are to this day dear friends. To have beloved brothers and sisters - 650+ temple workers and volunteers – as dear eternal friends is one of our greatest blessings.

During our temple service we continued to enjoy wonderful family reunions.

2012 Family Reunion @ Heaton's Lodge



2013 Family Reunion in Colorado



2014 Family Reunion at lodge in La Sal Mountains



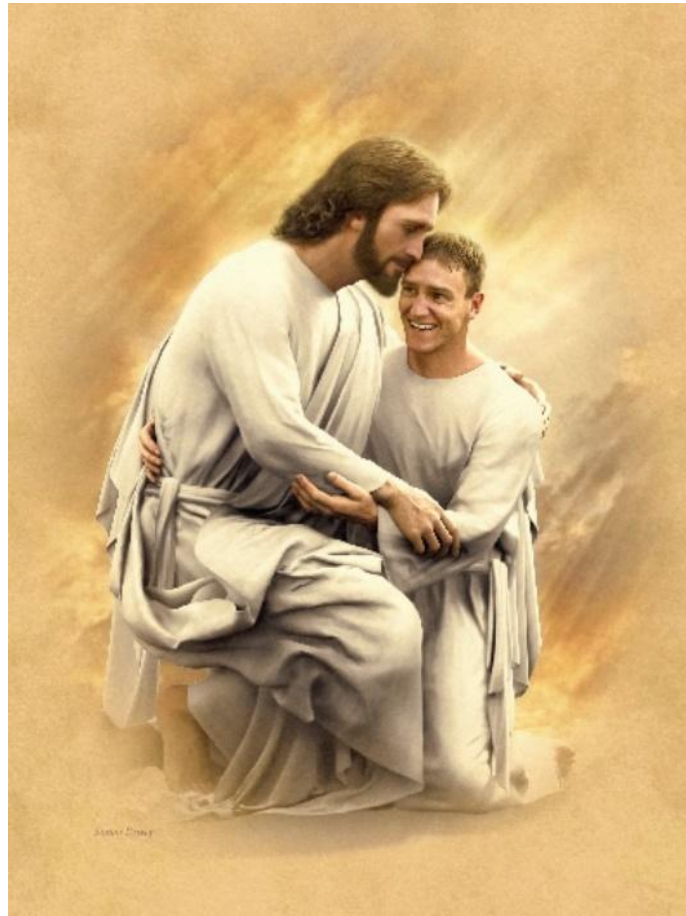
2015 Family Reunion (couples) in Hawaii



2018 Family Reunion at Timmy's and Tia's



On December 16, 2019 Mark Russell Palmer passed away. No parent wants to send their children home before they are there to greet them, but both Gretna and Tom knew that Jesus Christ, our Savior, would embrace and love Mark as he came home.



Mark's funeral was attended by more than 1,000 family, friends, youth he had coached, teachers, principal, coaches, and many whose lives he had touched in a special way. Mark was a favorite uncle to his and Celeste's nieces and nephews and was an inspiration to all who knew him. One of those nieces who was struggling (as we all were at his passing), knelt and prayed to her Father in Heaven for understanding and received a clear witness that everything will be ok – she was at peace the next morning and strengthened others in the process. It sometimes takes a pure vessel like this 12-year-old angel to receive such an assurance. Gretna and Tom have received that assurance knowing of the love only the Savior can provide. Mark had a special bond with his mother and had expressed his love for her – *“that she was always there for him”*. Gretna and Tom hurt most for Mark's angel wife, Celeste, who has been a perfect example of love for her eternal companion, and for Mark's daughter, Hailey, whom they have come to love so dearly. Additional assurances of Mark's wellbeing on the other side of the veil have come in the temple of the Lord. It was a blessing to Gretna and Tom to be serving in the House of the Lord during this difficult time. We miss him – oh, how we miss him! – but we know he is progressing on the other side of the veil and we will be reunited with him. We are thrilled that he and Celeste will welcome twins – a boy and a girl – in October 2023. What a blessing to them and to all of our family!



Snowflake Arizona Temple

Service in the House of the Lord was a blessing to both of us – the peace we have felt there, the love we have felt for those we served with in the presidencies and for the wonderful temple workers and the sweet patrons who came to the temple to worship the Lord and perform ordinances. We gained love and respect for priesthood and other leaders in the stakes of Zion within the temple district. We continued to enjoy the pure spirit of the youth who came to the temple and those who came to receive their own ordinances.

Gretna's loving charitable spirit was felt by all who were in her presence. She shared the following experience as a testimony of the love of our Father in Heaven for His children: *"I felt impressed to attend an endowment session rather than the sealing we were going to attend. As I entered the ordinance room, I sat by a young Navajo sister. Shortly this sister leaned over and said, 'I am so glad you came today, would you be willing to help me as needed – this is the first time in 5 or 6 years I have been to the temple.' I assured her that I would be there for her. A Navajo sister sitting behind them (a close friend of mine) touched the shoulder of the young sister I was to help and assured her they would all help. The young sister felt blessed to be in the presence of those who cared for her. The Lord knows the needs of our Father's children and places angels next to us to bless us in our time of need."* Gretna was this day one of those angels as she often was in and out of the temple.

On another occasion a sister temple worker came to me in wonder to report that she had observed Gretna kneeling on the floor in the dressing room to help an older sister put on her temple shoes. The worker was amazed at Gretna's willingness to do anything to help a patron. That's just how loving and caring Gretna was in her service to the Lord.

Gretna was a model Matron of the Temple – fulfilling President Eyring's request that we provide in the temple the feeling the Savior would want in His Holy Temple. Those who attended the temple felt the Savior's love through Gretna's smile, kindness, sense of humor, and genuine love for all our Father's children.

Gretna found beauty in the Lord's creations

Gretna viewed all of the Lord's creations as a testimony of Him and she had a unique love for His creations – His flowers, trees, birds, rocks, sunrises, sunsets, clouds, mountains and so much more – and took time to appreciate their beauty and found joy in knowing that each creation has a spirit - she often talked with them 😊

"The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof" (Psalms 24:1)



Hanging flowers



Roses



Lilacs



Orchids in Singapore



Flowering trees in India



Blue birds



Scarlet Ibis and White Egrets in Trinidad



Rocks from around the world



Rainbows



Sunrises



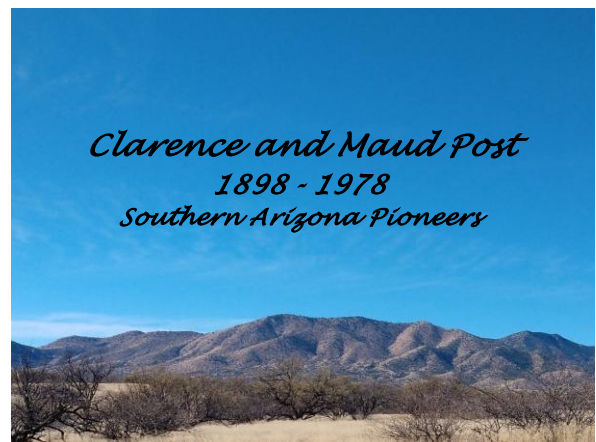
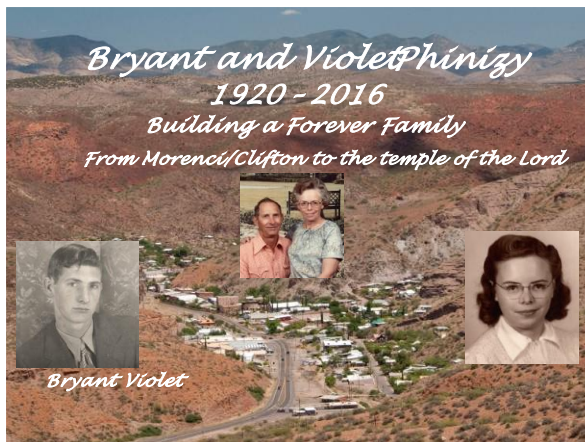
Sunsets



The “smile” on Mt. Humphreys (as seen from Cosnino) has been a favorite of Gretna since 1990

Ancestry and Posterity

Gretna was blessed with ancestors who taught by their lives a love for God and country and a love for their families. Gretna is a composite of the strengths, talents, spirituality, faith, and character of these dear souls. The lives of her ancestors and the blessing they are to their posterity is contained in books written by Tom with Gretna as his primary resource: *Bryant & Violet Phinizy* (2021); *Clarence & Maud Post* (2020).



Completed Ordinances:

- B Baptized
- E Endowed
- P Sealed to parents
- S Sealed to spouse
- C Children's ordinances

2 Paul Bryant PHINIZY

B: 15 Jun 1920 BEPS
 P: Lumpkin,,GA.
 M: 12 Sep 1942
 P: Benson,Cochise,AZ
 D:
 P:

4 Paul Bryant PHINIZY

B: 1 Jan 1892 BEPS
 P: Cedartown,,GA.,
 M: 28 Oct 1915
 P: Palmetto,,FL,
 D: 4 Sep 1934
 P: Willcox,,Cochise,,AZ,

8 John William PHINIZY

B: 4 Aug 1855
 P: near Rome,,GA.,
 M: 22 Mar 1882
 P: Cedartown,,Polk,GA,
 D:
 P:

9 Laura Alice JOHNSON

B: Abt 1862
 P: Colombia,S.C.,
 D: 8 Feb 1939
 P: Americus,Sumter,GA

10 James Robert HELMS

B: 22 Dec 1866
 P: Lowndes,,Wayne,,MO.,
 M:
 P:
 D: 1941
 P: Orlando,,FL.,

5 Nellie Gretna HELMS

B: 16 Jul 1896 BEPS
 P: Bonne Terre,,MO.
 D: 27 Nov 1977
 P: Willcox,Cochise,Arizona

11 Olive Missouri Murphy

B: 14 Oct 1873
 P: East Bonne Terre,,MO
 D: 1 Mar 1963
 P: Orlando,,FL.,

1 Gretna Ann PHINIZY

B: 15 Jul 1943 BEPS
 P: Morenci,Greenlee,AZ.
 M: 3 Jun 1965
 P: Mesa,Maricopa,Arizona
 D:
 P:

12 Howard Orville POST

B: 30 Jun 1875
 P: Wichita,Sedgwick,KS
 M: 14 Mar 1897
 P: Halstead,Harvey,KS
 D: 21 Nov 1932
 P: Ash Fork,Yavapai,AZ

Thomas Lee Palmer
 (Spouse of no. 1)

6 Clarence Evans POST

B: 14 Feb 1898 BEPS
 P: Mt. Hope,,Sedgwick,,KS,
 M: 20 Sep 1920
 P: St. David,,Cochise,,AZ.,
 D: 7 Oct 1978
 P: Tucson,,Pima,,AZ.,

13 Tressie May Evans

B: 11 Sep 1877
 P: Near Rose Hill,Mahaska,IA
 D: 14 Feb 1949
 P: Tucson,Pima,AZ

3 Violet Mae POST

B: 24 Feb 1925 BEPS
 P: St. David,,Cochise
 D: 27 Jul 1996
 P: Mesa,,Maricopa,,AZ,

14 Jesse Eugene BILLINGSLEY

B:
 P:
 M: 31 May 1888 (Div)
 P: St. David,Cochise,Arizona,USA
 D:
 P:

7 Maud BILLINGSLEY

B: 11 Oct 1900 BEPS
 P: St. David,,Cochise,,AZ.,
 D: 27 Feb 1972
 P: Tucson,,Pima,,AZ.,

15 Violet Marie Busby

B: 11 Nov 1870
 P:
 D: 29 May 1949
 P: St. David,Cochise,Arizona,USA

Our posterity is one of our most precious gifts from Father in Heaven for which we will be eternally grateful for.

Posterity

Ever growing 😊 – as of November 2023

9 children + 9 spouses, 42 grandchildren + 13 spouses, 16 great grandchildren

Kenneth & Deborah Palmer

Colton & Panika Palmer

Parker

Weston

Thane & Amanda Palmer

Elena

Katie

Jemma

Trent & Alexandra Palmer

Henry

Josephine

Danica & Alex Davila

Allison Davila

Lance Palmer

Steven & Colette Palmer

Sam Palmer

Colton Palmer

Tessalyn Palmer

Jacob Palmer

Michael & Heather Palmer

Darris & Amandalyn Palmer

Harvey

Huck

Torin & Sara Palmer

Elaine

Charlotte

Amry and Cisco Nixon

Kenzie & Cedrick Freer

Elyce Palmer

Daniel & Julie Palmer

Kymber & Miclaine Bendell

Brynn

Taylee

Kaycee Palmer

Garrett & Regan Palmer

Braden Palmer

Brylee Palmer

Kalynn & Mike Pospisil

Aria & Cal Christensen

Roman

Finnick

Hyrum Pospisil

Sarah Pospisil

Trevor Pospisil

Ricky & Shannon Palmer

Kaitlyn & Chase Moore

Bryant Palmer

Mason Palmer

Raely Palmer

Addy Palmer

Sofie Palmer

Lainey Palmer

Brody Palmer

Timmy & Shannon Palmer

Carter Palmer

Eiley Palmer

Bree Palmer

Ty Palmer

Mark & Celeste Palmer

Hailey Swalve

Jaxxon Mark

Quinn Tiffany

Pamela and Ronnie Ludwig

Keegan and Addi Owens

Brinlee Owens

Tanna Owens

Ryker Owens

KENNETH'S FAMILY



2021 Family photo - *Kenneth, Deborah, Colton (Panika, Parker, Weston), Thane (Amanda, Elena, Katie), Trent (Alexandra, Henry), Danica (Alex)*



Colton, Panika, Parker, Weston



Thane, Amanda, Elena, Katie, Jemma



Trent, Alexandra, Henry, Josephine



Danica, Alex, Allison Davila

STEVEN'S FAMILY



Steven, Colette, Sam, Colton, Tessalyn, Jacob - 2022



Santa and Mrs. Santa can get a smile out of anyone 😊

MICHAEL'S FAMILY



August 2023 family photo

Michael, Heather, Darris (Amandalyn, Harvey, Huck), Torin (Sara, Elaine, Charlotte), Amry (Cisco Nixon), Kenzie (Cedric) Freer, Elyce



*Darris, Amandalyn,
Harvey, Huck*



*Torin, Sara,
Elaine, Charlotte*



*Elyce in Alaska
Anchorage Mission*

DANIEL'S FAMILY



2022 family photo

Daniel, Julie, Kymber, Kaycee, Garrett, Braden, Brylee



Kymber, Miclaine, Brynn, Taylee Bendell



Braden in Germany Berlin Mission

KALYNN'S FAMILY



Kalynn, Mike, Aria (Cal, Roman, Finnick), Hyrum, Sarah, Trevor



Aria, Cal, Roman, Finnick Christensen

RICKY'S FAMILY



Ricky, Shannon, Kaitlyn and Chase Moore, Bryant, Mason, Raely, Addy, Sofie, Lainey, and Brody



Kaitlyn and Chase Moore



Mason in Washington Tacoma Mission

TIMMY'S FAMILY



2023 family photo - *Timmy, Tía, Carter, Eiley, Bree, Ty*



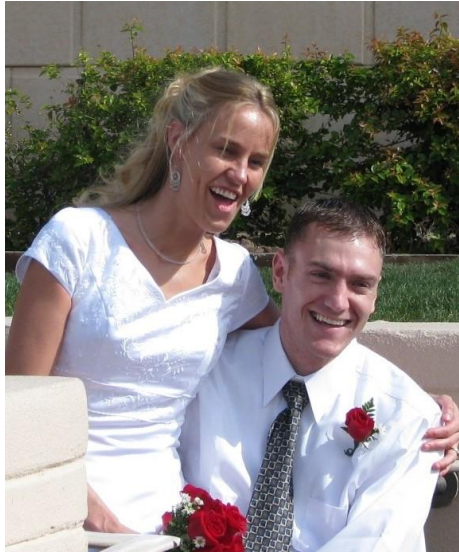
Carter gathering Israel in Idaho Falls Mission



And gathering other things as well

MARK'S FAMILY

Mark, Celeste, Hailey, Jaxxon and Quinn



Mark & Celeste



Live for the Reunion



Celeste & Hailey



Celeste, Mark, Jaxxon, Quinn



Celeste, Jaxxon, Quinn

"A wife and a husband + God's blessing = a new baby or two 😊!"



Pam and Hailey

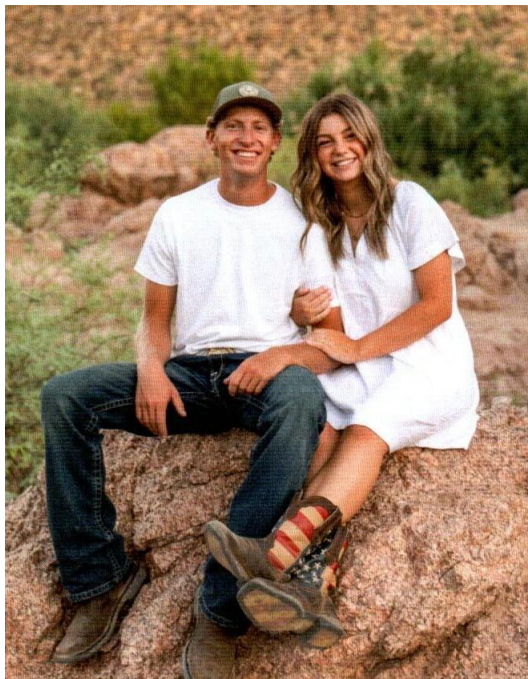


Quinn & Jaxxon

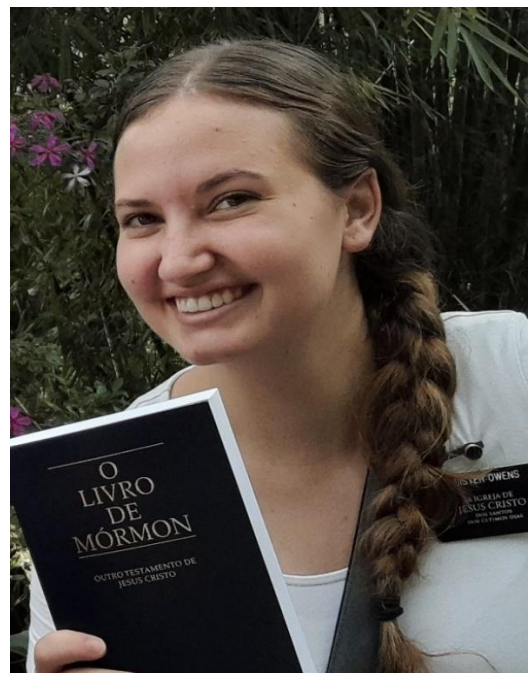
PAM'S FAMILY



Pam, Ronnie, Ryker, Tanna, Brinlee, Keegan



Keegan and Addi Owens



Brinlee in Brazil Sao Paulo Mission

Memories of Mom - Kenneth

A lesson learned with butter!

"I have fond memories from the year or so we lived in the little white house out at Winona. I was about 12 at the time and was feeling my oats. One day I came in the house while mom was making butter in the Kitchen. She asked me to do something, and I smarted off as I continued past her into the bathroom at the back of the house. Mom had been working the butter and had one hand covered with butter, but she grabbed a belt with her other hand and followed me to the bathroom door. I laughed at her and grabbed her hand that held the belt. It must have been in partial fun because I remember both of us laughing. As I held her hand to prevent her from spanking me, I remember I felt pretty tough. This did not last long though as mom quickly took the handful of butter and rubbed it in my face. I was completely shocked and taken off guard. I let go of Mom's hand and took a step back as mom began to giggle and then to laugh until she cried!"

Showing love through service!

"During the summer after I turned 15, Steven and I were trying to finish our Eagle Scout projects at the Church property in Doney Park. Dad was tied up most of this summer preparing for the High on A Mountain Top encampment, so Mom stepped up to help us with our Eagle projects. I remember how grateful I felt to have a mom who would get her hands dirty and despite her many, many duties as a mom (with 9 young children) she took time to work along our side on our Eagle projects."

Showing Love by Being There and Sharing my Pain

"I remember vividly the love mom showed me following my last high school basketball game without even saying a word. Our team made it to the state tournament and Mom came down to watch with Sister Carolyn Raley. As the game progressed and our team was losing, I realized this was going to be my last high school basketball game. I desperately wanted to get in and have some playing time but as often was the case, the coach did not put me in until the last 1:30. I played my heart out in that minute and ½ but we ended up losing by 7 points to Nogales. As the game ended, I remember meeting Mom and Steven at the bottom of the bleachers, and I saw tears of understanding in Mom's eyes. She hugged me and without her saying a word I felt how much she loved me and that she somehow felt my disappointment."

Cooking and Reading

"I have so many fond memories of coming home from school and other activities to find Mom working pleasantly in the kitchen. She always had something good for us to eat and I always felt so loved and welcomed into her space in the kitchen. I remember how creative she was with using leftovers, making sure that nothing went to waste. For example, I remember many times when she added the leftover breakfast cereal into the batch of cookies she was making. Looking back, I am in awe how she cared for all of us and kept us fed so well. I also remember many nights sitting on the couch as Mom would read to us. I remember particularly well when she read to us "Where the Red Fern Grows". I remember sitting on the couch as she read the part about the dog dying and all of us cried together!"

Memories of Mom - Steven

"Mom is the purest person I know. I have never had a single experience when I questioned her love for me or felt judged by her. She doesn't care what anyone thinks of her and isn't worried about how her children's actions might reflect on her. She sees the best in everyone and never met a stranger. I can't think of a single time when she put her wants or needs above those of another. She is the most trusting person I know. Unfortunately for her, she has a lot of kids who like to make up tall tales and pull pranks on her.

I remember her talking to crows, dogs, horses, the mountains, or pretty much any other animal or inanimate object. She was so sincere about it, there were times I felt they might actually understand her.

I used to love watching movies with her because she got so into the movie that she reacted to everything. If something was scary or startling, she would scream and jump. She wasn't shy about loudly warning the characters in the movie if something bad was going to happen or offer advice out loud if she believed they were making a mistake. It didn't matter if she was at home or in a movie theater.

Mom could be very intimidating to people if she felt they were mistreating her kids. She says whatever she thinks without sugarcoating it.

When Jake was born, Mom traveled to Virginia, where we lived, to help take care of my other kids (Sam, Colton, and Tess) so I could be with Colette at the hospital. She stayed over a week to help. Me, Sam, Colton, and Tess were able to spend a lot of time with her. We went to some of the Smithsonian Institute museums and the monuments on the National Mall. We did everything at her pace. I loved to see the excitement on her face as she saw things she had never seen before. She read every inscription at the monuments and spoke out loud as she mused about what the incidents or people represented by the monuments were thinking, experiencing, or doing. I have never, before or since, spent as much time at each location as I did when she was with us, but her excitement and curiosity were infectious.

Even though we have lived far away from Mom for the last several years, and we don't get to see her very often, when we do see Mom, it's like we haven't been apart at all. She makes each one of my kids feel like they're the most important and loved person in the world.

She is deathly afraid of snakes. Once I put a rattlesnake I had killed on the front door step and rang the doorbell. When she saw the snake, she screamed and jumped back in the house so quickly and violently that I thought she might have a heart attack. I felt really bad and didn't pull anything like that again."

Colette: *"I remember Mom dressing up in the kids Scooby doo costume and pretending to be Scooby doo. Sam was probably 4 and Colton 2. We all got a kick out of that."*

Colette continued. . .

“Always taking the time to help when a new baby was born and working and cleaning all the time.

She taught me to iron and make bread. She helped us get our first Bosch, which we still use today.

She makes the best sugar cookies.

Listening to her workout with her loud breathing drills.

Her loud happy birthday song.

She taught me to make candied almonds for a relief Society white elephant gift exchange. She did everything she could to win those almonds like they were the best thing ever. She made me feel special.”

Jake:

“Grandma always notices noses first and she said that I have a cute nose.”

Tessalyn:

“Once when I was sick grandma took me to the store to buy material to make me a quilt. When we came home we watched TV together and she liked to make comments on the different scenes. I also know that grandma likes to people watch.”

Sam:

“I got to hike with grandma at walnut Canyon and I enjoyed listening to her stories.”

Colton:

“When we played ladder ball and every time she got one hooked she would squeal in delight.”

Memories of Mom - Michael

“It’s hard to pick out one or two special memories of Mom. It’s easy to pick out what she taught me. I remember as a little kid when we lived on Lindsay Road (we lived there when I was 4 to 8 years old I think). We had some ponies, and I would get them caught and then Mom would help me saddle and tighten the cinch. When I got big enough, she taught me how to squat under the cinch with the strap over my shoulder and then stand up to tighten it. She would bring all the little brothers and sisters to my high school ball games and after having kids that wouldn’t be easy. She taught me how to serve as I have observed her serve behind the scenes her entire life. As I meet people that find out I am her son they ALWAYS respond with some story as to how she has blessed their lives. She taught me tough love, she would discipline when I did wrong but followed up with love, I never thought that because she whooped me that she didn’t love me (even though I surely never did anything wrong). Most recently I have loved taking her with me in my piece of junk Toyota and bounce around on the rough roads as we go and check the cows on the ranch – looking for newborn calves, checking gates and fences. She recalls stories of her childhood with Grandpa Post on his ranch when she was a little girl, I love to hear those stories. I’ve always known my Mom had us kids’ back, she could put us in our place, but she was a fierce Momma bear. One time Rick Stokes was at a ball game that his son and Timmy were playing against each other, Rick made a remark about Timmy, and she about ripped his head off – to this day he is afraid of her! I love my mom and I KNOW she loves me.



Memories of Mom - Daniel

"I would say that one of my favorite memories is being called "Gretna's Boy". I remember when we moved back to Flagstaff from the valley and me and Julie went to the Snowflake Temple one day. Aunt Pam was there and was introducing us around and would say to someone, "here is someone I want you to meet, this is Gretna's boy." Their faces would light up as if to say "if you are Gretna's boy you must be pretty special". I always took pride in being told as a kid that I looked more like mom than the other kids and sure hope that when my time comes and I'm on the other side that someone will say, "oh, you are Gretna's boy, come on in!"."

Julie: *A lot of the "homemaking" skills I have, I learned from Gretna. A lot of the delicious recipes I have come from Gretna. Daniel would bring me to the house and I would always see Gretna busy making something in the kitchen, working on a sewing project or working at the house just to keep it all running smoothly and clean as ever! There were always quilts on the quilting rack ready to have hands to tie it or the Bosch running with something delicious to eat. Gretna never sat down! She was always busy! My most favorite thing about Gretna though, is that she calls me Jewels (Jules) :). I love her Muchos and am so grateful for her example in my life. I'm a different person having had her in my life! Jewels (aka Julie)"*

KyMBER: *"When I was probably 5 or 6, grandma came to visit us in Merced. I don't remember how it came up, but grandma made the comment that we have spirits flying all around us. You can imagine her alarm when I started bawling my eyes out. Quickly she asked me what was wrong and I told her I couldn't see the ghosts and didn't want them to bump into me and knock me down. I was VERY freaked out by the idea of flying spirits! Grandma promptly explained to me that spirits are angels and that they are just near by to watch over us and share God's love. That little lesson has stuck with me my entire life. Ever since then I have been very aware of how thin the veil is. I've been blessed on more than one occasion to feel angels support me in times of need and I attribute that blessing to the early exposure to the idea of angels all around us. Thank you for teaching me about angels, grandma!*

Kaycee: *"One memory that I have that makes me chuckle is when Grandma was watching us one time at the Mesa house. She made us Celestial Delight and us kids wanted a BIG slice. Well she gave us a BIG slice alright! She made us finish it though because "there are kids starving in Africa" 😊.*

Memories of Mom - Kalynn

"Mom is one of the most faithful women I know! I have never heard mom complain about the many hours of service she gives to her family and others. Many of her years have been spent in service and often doing it while supporting dad in his demanding callings that kept him from home for long hours. She serves without complaining and with a smile on her face. Every morning, without fail, you could find mom at the kitchen table after everyone had left, studying her scriptures. Mom led by example and never asked us to do anything she didn't do herself. Mom taught me how to go forward, trusting that the Savior would lead and guide, even when the outcome was unknown. Mom faces challenges head on without hesitation no matter how hard. Mom can accomplish more in one day than 10 women combined! Mom taught me how to always look for things that need done and to do them. She is always aware of others and does all she can to ease their burdens!

Memories of Mom - Kalynn continued . . .

I had the privilege of spending a lot of my youth with mom as my young women's leader. She always brought so much fun and laughter with her ability to be silly and let down her guard when it was appropriate. She makes the best donkey sounds and can sing a killer happy birthday song - actions and all! She would sing "peanut butter and jelly song" like no other. She was known as sister wash your hands since she always made sure everyone washed their hands, usually multiple times 😊. Mom is a great organizer of spiritual uplifting activities with a balance of fun. She was amazingly patient in teaching us how to plan and carry out activities. She allowed failure and turned it into a learning opportunity and a time to grow. She also helped ensure success with gentle loving advice and guidance.

I learned so much about how to be a wife, mother, and a woman of God from Mom! She helped shape me to be the woman I am today. She let me be myself and never made me feel like I was anything but a daughter of God. Mom always makes me feel like the most important person to her and I always feel so loved by her.

I remember on family trips, or wherever we go mom is always making new friends. She treats everyone like she has known them forever and can strike up a conversation with anyone anywhere, even at a red light 😊."

Mike: *"Gretna, I have thought about the time you spent with Kalynn in making those plaster of molds of the Savior and different events of His life. I've thought about the etching and painting of the clear coat. You both put immense detail into the making of those. They have always been placed in our home to remind us of the role of our Savior."*

Aria: *"Grandma instilled my love of sewing - without her that foundation wouldn't be as Strong. I am forever grateful that she gave me an old sewing machine that used to be hers and my Mom's to learn on."*

Hyrum: *"Grandma has taught me to love and learn so much! She has a green thumb and can make anything grow. Her love for plants is infectious and has taught me so much about different types of flowers and plants. Grandma also has a special love for dogs and animals, and her kindness towards them has always amazed me. She can even remember almost every one of my cousin's dogs' names which is pretty impressive! Grandma has a kind spirit and makes friends everywhere she goes. She has taught me so much about life and love, and I'm grateful for her!"*

Sarah: *"Sarah has always had a special bond with Grandma. She loves to tickle and tease her. Grandma always takes time to talk to Sarah and do things with her on her level. I still remember the time that she came to help with the kids when I got my tonsils out and she went on a walk with Sarah around the block. It took over an hour because they had to stop and look at the ants up close laying on the ground. Sarah loves Grandma and is always so excited to see her."*

Trevor: *"Trevor loves to do puzzles with Grandma and watch the train go by outside the windows with her. Trevor loves you both deeply and always gets so excited to go to grandma and grandpa's house."*

Memories of Mom - Ricky

“Mom loves to watch people and pick out the funny noses. I remember riding with her in the car and she would start laughing for no apparent reason. When she would get control of herself, she would ask, ‘did you see the nose on that person?’

I remember when Mom and Dad finished their mission to India and Mom talked about the people that you met and helped on the mission. You could feel the love that she had for them. She was not fond of the cleanliness of the country, but she loved the people.

My senior year of high school I told my basketball coach that I was done playing for him. He called the house to ask why I wasn’t playing, and Mom let him have it. He was crying by the time mom was done. Don’t mess with Momma Bear!! She is sure is proud of her children and grandchildren. After all we put her through, she still believes that we can do no wrong!”

Shannon: *“When Bryant was just a new baby, I made a visit to Gretna. While I was nursing Bryant, Gretna asked if I would like some popcorn – I told her that would be great. She did a nice pan of popcorn and sat it between us on the couch. When I finished nursing Bryant, I reached for some popcorn only to find the pan empty 😊. Gretna loves popcorn and just got a bit carried away – we both laughed about it and she made another pan of popcorn, which we shared!*

Kaitlyn & Chase: *“We love you so much and are grateful for your example. Thank you for all the support you’ve shown us over the years. We love you.”*

Bryant: *“I’ve always looked up to you and your example. Thank you for all of your love! I appreciate you coming to all of my sporting events – it means a lot! Love ya.”*

Raely: *“I love you so much! You are the best example to everyone. You light up any room you go into. Thank you for creating this beautiful family. I love all the craziness that comes with it. Thank you for all your support and coming to all my sporting events – couldn’t have done it without you. Love you so much.”*

Addy: *“I love you guys endlessly. You always put a smile on my face. I’m so grateful that I am your granddaughter. I love this family so much and I’m grateful to be a part of it. Thank you for always supporting me in everything I do – for coming to my games and always cheering me on. I love you guys so much!”*

Sofie: *“You guys are always the best to be around – always fun! I love how you go to my games and support me. Our family reunions are the best! I love you guys.”*

Lainey: *“Thanks for coming to my activities. I love you.”*

Brody: *“I love you so much!”*

Memories of Mom - Timmy

“My Favorite memories of Mom start at the Winona house - her reading Ranger Rick to Mark and I then sending us off for nap time with the promise of a handful of plain M&Ms that she kept in the freezer. Mark and I shared the southeast corner bedroom as long as I can remember and she would always come in and hush us up (because we rarely took naps) but she would always give us our M&M's anyway. Another of my favorite childhood memories is that of walking home from school and always knowing that upon walking through the house there would be a great smell of something fresh baked and my favorite was always her peanut butter cookies and banana nut bread. Another memory was when I was at mutual one night and broke my arm good in the gym doing something stupid. When she came in she yelled at the Young Men leaders, “what the heck were you two doing while this happened.” She then drove me to the hospital on very slick snowy roads. I could go on and on but the only memory and thought that matters is that I could not have had a better mother in the whole world who gave the best love and home and to do that with 9 children is nothing short of godly.”

Tia: *“Gretna you are a blessing to our lives and to my children’s lives. You absolutely exude light and happiness. My favorite memories are watching you play with my kids. Picking up a basketball and shooting hoops with Ty, kicking the ball with him - whatever they are doing in the moment you get in there and engage with them and they couldn't be luckier to have you. You have given them the best memories that will last a lifetime. Bree has been blessed by getting to hear your stories and spend time with you and she will always remember the times she has gotten to share with you. We are so grateful for you. Love you.”*

Eiley: *“I am so thankful for you. I am so thankful for this wonderful family you guys have created. Grandpa, thank you for your always very uplifting text messages – they always helped me! I constantly look up to you guys.”*

Bree: *“I remember making a quilt with grandma a few years ago – it took a while to pick out the fabric because I didn’t really know what kind of design I wanted. I remember going up every day – usually in the afternoon – for a few hours and we would pick up where we left off the day before. Grandma would tell me stories from her childhood about her friends, her family, and a lot of memories she had – sometimes the same ones but it was ok because I could usually just do the same facial expressions and sounds, and they would go with whatever she was saying. I listened to her because I love hearing her talk and she’s so calming and tells her stories very well. It took us awhile to do the quilt because we couldn’t decide on a design but we ended up putting in a bunch of different fabrics on the quilt squares so there was a bit of everything. We made the back of the quilt yellow because that’s my favorite color. If I went up before lunch I would have a pickle, mustard and cheese sandwich. Grandma would always have a peanut butter and honey sandwich. It was usually just the two of us because grandpa would be working on fences or doing something outside. After some time, we finished the quilt and right when I got home I showed it to my parents, then put it on my bed. I have so many memories with grandma, and I love all of them. I learned a lot from her, and I got a quilt. Love you grandma.”*

Ty: *“Thanks for coming to my games – love you!”*

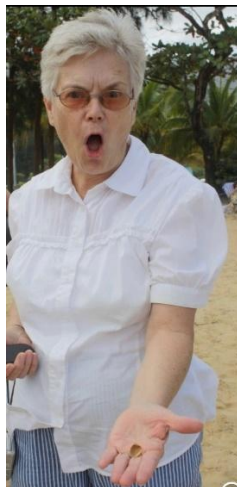
Memories of Mom - Mark

Before Mark's passing, he wrote the following to his Mom: *"Mom, I want to thank you for always being there for me and never judging me."* He was grateful for her ever-present love for him.



Mark loved her homemade bread and her peanut brittle - "Momma" was how he addressed her. He made her the happiest by finding and marrying Celeste.

Celeste: *"I have many fond and amazing memories of Gretna, but one of my favorite memories of her was when we went to visit them in Trinidad while they were on their mission. We went to the beach for the day, and it must have been a beach that did not have many seashells. I had gone into the water and when I came back Gretna was so excited about the seashell she had found and had already put in her pocket so she could take it home! I asked if I could see it and as she pulled it out and opened her hand, I laughed but my heart also broke a little as I was going to have to break the news to her! I looked at her and I said, 'Gretna that's a pistachio shell!' Of course, she was appalled that she had just put this pistachio shell in her pocket, but we all got a good laugh about it. She was a good sport and even let me take a picture of her to document her 'seashell'."*



A sea shell !



Well, it was worth a fun laugh 😊

Memories of Mom - Pam

"I remember sitting on the counter while mom made bread or cookies and wanting to grow up to be just like her. I would always sneak raw dough or brown sugar and she never got mad at me! 😊

I remember watching her sew so magically and wanting to be that way as well. I remember my first quilt that I sewed, and she made me do it all myself. If I did a seam that wasn't right, I had to pick it out and re sew it. She would tell me that the back of the quilt needed to look as good as the front even if nobody was going to see it. I can't tell you how many times in my life I have heard her say those words in my head and caused me to change how I was doing something.

As a teenager, I would get so embarrassed when she would talk to random people. Now I strive to make someone's day by talking to them the way she used to.

I really loved her cravings for bon bons and how she and I could have the whole thing gone by the time we got home! She would always do her very distinct giggle and it made my heart so happy!

I am so grateful for the advice and example she has been to teach me how to be a mother. I feel so extremely blessed to have been born into the home I was in and to be raised by the most incredible mother. Being a mother myself has been my greatest joy and I owe that to the example and love she had for all of us. She made our house a home and taught me to be patient and love unconditionally."



All of Gretna's children have a special love for her and fond memories of her love for them!

One of Gretna's (and Tom's) favorite songs is the chorus of "You Are My Sunshine" (originally sung by Gene Autry – a cowboy from days past).

Chorus

***"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy when skies are grey
You'll never know dear, how much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away"***

Her favorite hymn is "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"

1. *I know that my Redeemer lives. What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead. He lives, me ever-living Head.
He lives to bless me with his love. He lives to plead for me above.
He lives my hungry soul to feed. He lives to bless in time of need.*
2. *He lives to grant me rich supply. He lives to guide me with his eye.
He lives to comfort me when faint. He lives to hear my soul's complaint.
He lives to silence all my fears. He lives to wipe away my tears.
He lives to calm my troubled heart. He lives all blessings to impart.*
3. *He lives, my kind, wise heav'nly Friend. He lives and loves me to the end.
He lives, and while he lives, I'll sing. He lives, my Prophet, Priest, and King.
He lives and grants me daily breath. He lives, and I shall conquer death.
He lives my mansion to prepare. He lives to bring me safely there.*
4. *He lives! All glory to his name! He lives, my Savior, still the same.
Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives: "I know that my Redeemer lives!"
He lives! All glory to his name! He lives, my Savior, still the same.
Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives: "I know that my Redeemer lives"*

Years ago, in her personal history, Gretna shared her personal commitment to the Savior: ***"I love my Savior and want to be with Him but even more so I want to become like Him!!!"***

The Savior said: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me . . ." Matt 11:29 - Gretna has become yoked with Jesus Christ



Jesus Christ

Gretna

Gretna memorized “The Living Christ” as her testimony of Jesus Christ

THE LIVING CHRIST

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice. None other has had so profound an influence upon all who have lived and will yet live upon the earth.

He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38), yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.

He instituted the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary’s cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.

We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

He rose from the grave to “become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His “other sheep” (John 10:16) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised “dispensation of the fulness of times” (Ephesians 1:10).

Of the Living Christ, the Prophet Joseph wrote: “His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:3–4).

Of Him the Prophet also declared: “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:22–24).

We declare in words of solemnity that His priesthood and His Church have been restored upon the earth—“built upon the foundation of . . . apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

We testify that He will someday return to earth. “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (Isaiah 40:5). He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts.

We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

James A. Hinckley
Thomas M. Monson
James E. Faust

January 1, 2000

THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE

Boyd K. Packer
J. Gordon Bower
Donald W. Hanks
Neal A. Maxwell
Russell M. Nelson
Dallin H. Oaks

M. Russell Ballard
Joseph B. Wirthlin
Richard G. Scott
Robert D. Hales
Jeffrey R. Holland
Henry A. Eyring

Gretna walked with Him and her commitment to become more like Jesus Christ is reflected in her life's work.

Like the Savior . . .

- She has strived to know the will of Heavenly Father for her and then do her best to do that will – In Gethsemane the Savior declared, *“Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”* Luke 22:42
- The Savior invited all of us *“Love one another; as I have loved you”*. John 13:34. Gretna has shown love to her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, to lepers, to orphans, to fellow missionaries, to investigators she was teaching, to her husband, and to every one of our Father's children whom He placed in her pathway.
- The Savior never did anything for Himself – his life was spent in selfless service to all of our Father's children. Gretna's every thought, every desire, was to reach out to bless all who were in need – her needs were never considered in her outreach to and love of others.
- The Savior loved and cleansed the temple. Gretna too loved the temple and did her best as a temple worker to ensure its cleanliness.
- The Savior instructed, *“hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up – that which ye have seen me do.”* 3 Ne 18:24. Gretna strived throughout her life to treat others as she felt the Savior would do and to love and serve as he did. Gretna was filled with charity.

“. . . charity never faileth. . . charity is the pure love of Christ”

Moroni 7:46-47



Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles stated in October 2008 General Conference, *“From the beginning down through the dispensations, God has used angels as His emissaries in conveying love and concern for His children. “. . . when we speak of those who are instruments in the hand of God, we are reminded that not all angels are from the other side of the veil. . . Indeed, heaven never seems closer than when we see the love of God manifested in the kindness and devotion of people so good and so pure that angelic is the only word that comes to mind.”*

“Angelic” is the word that describes Gretna’s life of service and love.

As we finished our service in Indonesia, Elder Subandriyo (Area Seventy) told me one day, *“Elder Palmer you’re all right, but Sister Palmer, she is an Angel”*. In February 2023, Sister Gililand (a sister worker and former matron of the Phoenix Arizona Temple) said to me, *“You need to know that your wife is an Angel”*.

How blessed I am to be an eternal companion to an Angel!

Gretna’s faith and willingness to do all that her Father in Heaven would have her do is a reflection of the words of the following Hymn – from her willingness to move to cold and snowy Flagstaff, Arizona, to her acceptance of church callings, to her service to those in need, to her willingness to bring into mortality 9 wonderful children, to her commitment to nurture and bless each of their lives, to her acceptance of mission calls all over the world.

I’ll Go Where You Want Me To Go, Dear Lord By Mary Brown

Chorus

**I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
over mountain or plain or sea;
I’ll say what you want me to say, dear Lord;
I’ll be what you want me to be.**

She has truly become what He would want her to be – an example to all of us!

She has “become as a little child” – pure, clean, humble and submissive to the will of her Father in Heaven

Postscript

Dementia can steal memory, but it cannot steal one’s sense of humor, love of God and His Son and their creations, sincere gratitude for all blessings and love of family. Even with mortal challenges she is truly an ANGEL.