

MIRTH MEYER

It is hard to know where to start telling your story when so much time has passed. In my case that's 78 years.

I was born in San Francisco, California in 1936 during the Great Depression, the building of the Golden Gate Bridge and the plans for the San Francisco World's Fair.

While still an infant, my mother and father took me to Alabama to live with his large family: 12 brothers and sisters. My mother didn't like the overwhelming environment of so many relatives. So, she packed me up and left for the familiar shores of San Francisco and her sister, brothers and parents. I mention this because no one ever told me. It was the times.

Eventually, with a stepfather and two baby brothers we moved to southern California where I have lived all of my life to date. My grandmother and grandfather also moved south with us.

Shortly after that, World War II broke out. As a kid, the war effort gave me something to do. I stood in lines to buy rationed items or to turn in balls of string or jars of grease that we had collected. Everyone helped. My mother took her nylon stockings to be mended. My stepfather patrolled the neighborhood during blackouts. My grandfather worked at a shipyard. Sadly, he died of a heart attack at the young age of 51.

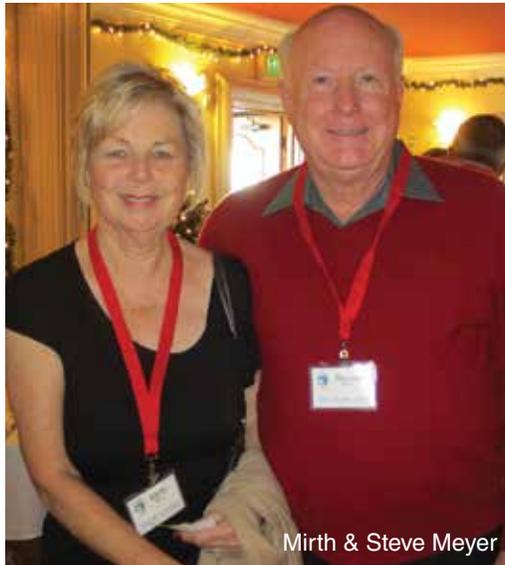
School was my joy. I played marbles with other girls at recess and did well in my classes; so, the day went quickly. Looking back, I realize kids had a lot of time and freedom. We walked everywhere. There was only one rule: be home before dark. On weekends, I liked to explore. I would take my oldest brother up into the foothills, carrying our lunch of crackers and cantaloupes. It was a wonderful time.

We moved to a different city when I was in 6th grade. All sorts of things changed for me during that time, some good like having a great teacher when I entered junior high school and some hard when my mom and stepfather parted.

I attended Monrovia-Arcadia-Duarte high school called M A D. I was editor of the school newspaper which won

national recognition two years in a row. Leaving for UCLA on a scholarship was a milestone for me. I still came home for summers where I worked selling corn on the cob at a farm stand. It was "the" job to have!

But the most important thing of my college days was that my father found me! All those years of separation melted away when I heard his voice on the phone. Shortly after that he arrived in Westwood with my newfound sister and brother. Later, I would meet my stepmother and 21 first cousins. What a joy!



Mirth & Steve Meyer



Part two of my life began when I married a college sweetheart and relocated in Arizona where his family lived. Soon we all moved back to Southern California; and in the next five years, we had four children: three boys and one girl. I enjoyed the children and the social network of other moms. Little did I know that all this would end in the not too far future.

My first adult job as a single mom of four children was with a Bioscience and Medical Products company as secretary to management. In this position I once traveled to Moscow to present a paper at an international conference for a doctor who was too valuable to go to Russia. Several years later when this company relocated out of state, I was hired by JCPenney at the regional office in Buena Park, California. The “Complex ,” as it was called, was a remarkable assignment. I saw the wheels of warehousing, the credit department, clothing specialists and new store construction. In my job in women’s fashions, I visited stores to learn about their needs.

My first store assignment was Laguna Hills, California, a new store. Before opening, I was stocking merchandise with one of my young sons helping me to fill end caps in the men’s department. I was impressed with his neatness; and I thought, “If only my boys kept their room at home that neat!”

JCPenney became my career. I valued their principles, leadership and growth opportunities, culminating in my 28 years of service. My retirement lunch was on St. Patrick’s Day, 1998. My assignments were:

- Fashion Advisor, August, 1970, Los Angeles, California
- District Merchandiser, August, 1971, Los Angeles, California
- Senior Merchandise Manager, October, 1974, Newport Beach, California
- Senior Merchandiser, August, 1975, Laguna Hills, California
- General Merchandise Manager, November, 1977, Newport Beach, California
- Personnel Manager-in-Training, September, 1981, Buena Park, California
- Personnel Manager, October, 1981, Buena Park, California
- Complex Personnel Manager, January, 1988, Buena Park, California
- Administrative Services Manager, June, 1989, Buena Park, California

The actual beginning and ending of my career at the Buena Park Complex was a bittersweet experience because the Complex closed the same year I retired.





On leaving JCPenney, I visited the corporate offices in Dallas, Texas. When the reins had been turned over, I boarded a plane to Oaxaca, Mexico to help at a mission. My four children were now adults and doing well. At the mission I helped support a family of three children. This family was only at the mission for two years, but it was a blessing for me to have known them. Much of my early retirement years were in traveling to help where there was a need: planting vegetable gardens in Swaziland, Africa; encouraging teenage children of missionary parents serving in Mongolia; and not knowing to bring JCPenney white cotton men's socks to missionaries in eastern Russia. It was an amazing retirement!

But the best was yet to come. After traveling almost half the world, I found my life mate and sweetheart at home. My husband, Steve and I met at the Crystal Cathedral. We were married surrounded by friends and our combined families of three girls and three boys.

Steve and I have traveled also, touring Montreal and Quebec City in Canada, Thailand, Ireland, Alaska and Mexico for pleasure. We enjoy the H.C.S.C. events during the year, getting to know old and new JCPenney friends. We

also attend a monthly breakfast get together in Buena Park for past associates of the Complex.

On a less frequent basis I meet for lunch with two women from the Bioscience Company where I was first employed. Friends are forever. When I thank God for his blessings to me, my children and all those I hold dear, I am reminded of a great truth: God is love.

