

Ken Newton

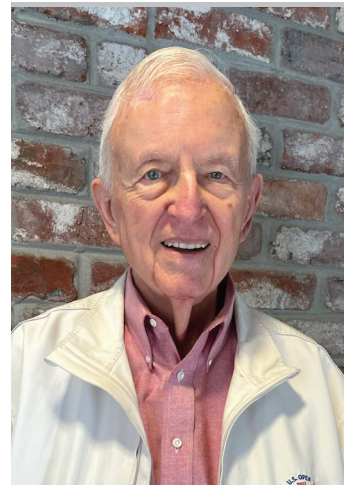
I was born in 1939 in Dallas, TX. In my early years I lived in Dallas, Tucson, AZ, Gilmer, TX, and from 2nd grade on in Midland, TX. Personal trivia: one of my Sunday School teachers at the First Presbyterian Church was George H. W. Bush.

After high school I went to Rice University and majored in Mechanical Engineering. Although a private university, at that time it was tuition free. There were 4 men's "colleges" (dorms) and 1 women's college so the male/female ratio was 4:1. I met my future wife (62 years now and counting), Cynthia, by crashing another college's meet-and-greet dance for freshman girls and cutting in on her high school friend.

Thinking ahead about my future, the Viet Nam War was heading up so I knew I would probably lose my student deferment and get drafted when I graduated. So I signed up for Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, R.I. I served for 3 years on the first all-missile ship in the Navy, a guided cruiser and on a WWII fleet oiler in the Caribbean, Atlantic, and Mediterranean including the Cuban Missile Crisis.

After my Navy service I went to Harvard Business School to get an MBA. In my business career I worked at Hewlet-Packard in Palo Alto, Santa Rosa, and Cupertino in various manufacturing operations jobs, and at Texas Instruments in Dallas where I served as VP Worldwide Procurement & Logistics.

In retirement I have actively enjoyed SIR (Sons In Retirement), a totally social men's club, and our lives at LAUMC. Cynthia and I are blessed to have 3 children (2 sons and a daughter), all living within 2 miles of our house, and 7 grandchildren (ages 13 to 26).



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Wisdom Generation *Our Stories*

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Jana Powell



I grew up on a beautiful lake in rural West Virginia, in a log cabin. We were a church-going family of five from a conservative home. My father's family actually founded the local Baptist Church so we worshiped there when I was a kid.

My mother's dad was a Methodist minister who died when she was four. Her mother died when she was six. My mom was the youngest of eight kids. Our family believed in honesty and we were all expected to pull our own weight.

My dad planted a big garden every summer and we all helped with the planting, picking, and weeding. He was an authoritarian dad and my mother was very loving. We were a close family. Even though our family attended the Baptist church, my dad only attended with us on Christmas and Easter. My mom took the three children every Sunday and we were involved in the youth ministry and Sunday school. I was baptized by immersion in the sixth grade in the baptismal font at the front of the church. My best friend's dad was the pastor and it comforted me that he would hold me as he immersed me.

When I was in high school, we had a funny, outgoing pastor nicknamed "Rev." We made dinner on Sunday evening at the church and all the teens participated. Our service project was visiting the elderly once a

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Sandy McConnell

I was born in Upper Lake, Lake County, CA in 1942. We lived there near my grandparents for a few years before my parents moved north to Yreka at the end of the war. My father built a house overlooking Highway 99. I started school in a one-room schoolhouse for 1st through 5th grades.

I started attending a small brick United Methodist church when I was 7. My mother would drop me off and go shopping. In 1951 we moved to Santa Clara to live with an aunt and I attended the Community Church just down the block where I received my Bible for perfect attendance.

After two more moves we bought a house in Willow Glen. There I attended a Scandinavian church around the corner. I attended Woodrow Wilson Jr. High and Willow Glen High School.

I married my first husband in 1959 and we lived in a tiny one-bedroom house in Los Gatos. We attended the Baptist church there.

I immediately went to work at an insurance company where I stayed until our first son was born in 1962. We then bought a new house in Cambrian Park for \$17,000. We lived there until 1969 and had three more sons. Then we bought a bigger 4-bedroom house off Blossom Hill Road for \$35,000.



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Jana Powell, continued

week and I got paired with a tiny arthritic woman. She was darling, funny, and laughed a lot! I loved our times together and she was one reason I went into nursing. I felt closest to God in high school during the summer. Singing around the campfire, watching the night sky, and meeting new friends were all part of the joy of being out in nature and learning about God. Church was rarely a part of my college years.

Nursing was very demanding and for an outlet I swam on a synchronized swim team for five years. After graduating from West Virginia University's School of Nursing, I went home to make some money. I got a job in my local hospital in a cardiac care unit. It was fast-paced and exciting, but also an intense place to work. Because I was a new graduate, I was placed on evenings and night shifts very often. I had no friends and my parents both worked during the day. I was confronted with death and sadness on a daily basis and grew very lonely and isolated.

My younger sister came home from college one weekend, took one look at me and said, "You have to get out of here!" Looking back, she probably saved my life. I moved to North Carolina in August 1978, at age 24, and got a job in a large medical center. As part of the pre-employment physical I had to get a chest x-ray and blood work done. The lab values showed anemia and the chest x-ray revealed a mass in my chest the size of a lemon. I had no family or friends in North Carolina, but decided to stay at my new university hospital for treatment. Five days later, I had my chest opened and the tumor removed.

It became very clear to me that God had something to do with this move and the new job to find and diagnose this fast-growing lymphoma before I had symptoms. My sister has always been and still is one of my best friends. A year later, after graduating

from college, she moved down to North Carolina to be with me. The day before my surgery, we went to a very small Southern Baptist Church. The church was packed and the three of us had to sit in the front pew. The small choir sang the most beautiful version of "Jesus Loves Me" we had ever heard! After the service, many church members came to meet us, listen to our story, and get my phone number. That little church supported me in so many ways over the next few years with visits, calls, and food.

Between surgeries, I returned home to West Virginia where my dad was seriously ill. He died in early December. Thanksgiving was our last holiday together, but he still had purchased a Christmas gift for each of us. My mom traveled back and forth so many times between medical centers to take care of my dad and me. She was our rock and our strength to get through those rough days. I continued to work if I was not too sick between chemotherapy treatments. I lost all my hair, then it grew back, then I changed drugs, and lost it all again! Throughout all of my infusions, clinic visits, and surgeries, the nursing and oncology departments were so kind to me. When I was finally in remission, my college roommate and I took off for Europe. I needed a change of scenery and decided to spread my wings!

We landed outside of Frankfurt, Germany. I taught grade school in a Department of Defense elementary school and I eventually found a job on an Army base in the Emergency Department in the largest American hospital in Europe. After one year of traveling all over Europe, we came home. I ran into many old friends back in Chapel Hill. One was Peter, and we started dating. He was preparing to move to New York City. After eight months, he proposed and off we went to Manhattan! New York City was so different from the rural south, but we loved the energy, the theater, the bright lights in a city that never sleeps. After three years, we left for Chicago and lived on the South Side in Obama's neighborhood. Peter worked at the University of Chicago and I worked as a visiting nurse.

We were ready to begin our family. After four years of trying, one surgery, plus hormone treatments, we were unsuccessful. We decided to stop all treatments and the next month, got pregnant! Sam was born in November 1987. We knew we wanted two children and getting pregnant the second time was not as difficult. Because I was over 35, my doctor felt I needed an amniocentesis to ensure a healthy baby. My mother had a baby girl with spina bifida, so I was at risk. I had the procedure and it failed due to a tear in the amniotic sack. It was the night before Thanksgiving and I had 13 family members coming into town for the holiday. They wanted to hospitalize me due to the risk of infection saying, "This complication never happens." I was told I was probably going to lose this baby.

I was ordered to begin strict bedrest, flat on my back, and to take my temperature five times a day. Everyone we knew started praying hard for the life of this tiny baby. It was scary and every day in the afternoon we thought we would lose him. I was able to stand up and go to the doctor's office. I was monitored very closely during the entire pregnancy and Philip was born on my birthday at 8 pounds, 7 ounces. We have always had a very special bond and I always felt that God was taking care of that baby long before he was born! Through all of my ups and downs, the surgeries, radiation, appointments, I always knew that I was going to make it!

Dear Reader,

We would love to hear your story in our newsletter. Please let us know if you would write a story (300-400 words) about yourself or agree to be interviewed for a future issue. Contact John Lehman, jwalleh@gmail.com, or call 408-480-2592 if we can include your story. Thank you and happy reading.

Sandy McConnell, continued

We were active in an antique car club in Redwood City and spent many weekends touring back roads all over the Bay Area and up to the snow every February.

Our second son Tommy died in 1971 and the next year I went through a divorce. I went back to work after 10 years at home.

My second husband, Bob, belonged to the antique car club and we had known each other for 6 years. He stepped right up when he found out I was getting a divorce, and we started dating. We were married six months later.

We found our permanent home in Los Altos and moved in 1975. Bob immediately tore the roof off and started adding a second story and attic to make it into a New England Saltbox. It took us more than 20 years to almost finish it. When finished, we bought property at Donner Lake and built a 4.5 story cabin.

We joined LAUMC in 1978 just when John Dodson had arrived. Our three boys went to Sunday School, Starfire and confirmation before going off to college. During my years at LAUMC John asked me to take over Worship Commission after I complained about things not being taken care of. Worship Commission was charged with handling all the physical preparations for worship: stewards, ushers, greeters, pew stuffers (my name for the group), paraments, and we started the acolyte program.

While at LAUMC we made many friends with whom we went camping, skiing and spent holidays together.

When Mark & Bonnie Bollwinkel came to LAUMC, Bonnie worked to raise money for the Alzheimer's Association. She and I got the idea of having a fundraiser tea party. Little did I know what that would turn into. We ended up serving 150 in 2 seatings and earned quite a lot for the charity.

Bob passed away in 2019, so now here I am, retired from Worship, but still loving to do tea parties!