

Wisdom Generation *Our Stories*

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Valarie Arnesen



I was born in the Army hospital at Ft. Lewis, WA and raised in San Jose, CA. My earliest memory is my grandmother holding my hand tightly while my eyebrow was stitched up in the local ER after a fall.

Grandmother Milly lived

to 104½. My beloved Grandfather Lee claimed that God and golf were for old people! He taught us grandkids to downhill ski and play chess.

I was introduced to organized religion when I was in 5th grade and my parents found the Almaden Hills Methodist Church in San Jose. I was delighted to find a Sunday School teacher who talked about communism and world events as well as Bible lessons. I was the smarty pants in my communion class who quizzed our pastor whether God created man or man created God. His response: “Does it really matter as long as we treat our fellow humans with love and kindness?”

My parents were very active in that church: my father was the Lay Leader and my mother was president of the UMW. Some of their closest church friends acted as “servers” at Rick’s and my 1976 wedding.

I met Rick during my senior year of college on a ski trip to Utah. We count ourselves very lucky to still be skiing together and loving each other “even though”

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Rick Arnesen



I was born in 1951 at Oakland (CA) Hospital, the eldest of three siblings. One early memory is of riding in our family car, a late 40’s Nash. One day a friend and I were playing fire truck, with him behind the wheel and me on the

rear bumper. When the parking brake got released it rolled down the drive, crossed the street and crashed into a telephone pole. The end of the Nash.

My stay-at-home mother handled Cub Scout den mother, Boy Scout organizer, Campfire Girls, church camp, cabin trip planner etc. My father was a salesman for C&H Sugar Co, working in San Francisco for 35 years. His father was a sea captain on ships transporting sugar cane from Maui to the C&H Refinery in the Bay Area.

Our family attended High Street Presbyterian Church in Oakland and later Hayward Pres. In high school, I joined Young Life and attended a camp in Canada. My Christian beliefs were instilled in me by my parents’ example.

When I was 12, my parents bought property in Dorrington in the Sierras. They had a cabin “shell” built and finished the interior on their own. This DIY project allowed me to learn essential construction skills. I fell in love with the Sierras, spending much

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Valarie Arnesen, continued

and “after all these years” – phrases which are inside jokes from our first year of marriage.

I graduated from law school in 1978 and worked at the Fenwick & West firm in Palo Alto as their first woman attorney. I did a stint as general counsel of a software firm in the early years of the Silicon Valley computer industry. I worked with Steve Jobs and other founders of Apple and was involved years later in the formation of Pixar. I ended my legal career at the Chicago firm of McDermott Will & Emery, working in the international tax planning group. While I enjoyed practicing law, the hours were long and demanding and often extremely stressful, especially in the mergers and acquisitions work that I loved. After CJ was born, I transitioned to a part-time partner status at my law firm.

Rick and I both grew up in families who were very active in their church. Rick was raised Presbyterian. When we married, we scouted local churches but didn't find a home. Fast forward to our son CJ joining Boy Scouts Troop 33 so we would all get used to LAUMC. Rev. John Dodson led a year-long class where CJ earned his God and Country award. Parents also attended and we learned so much.

CJ became part of Starfire and launched a tech ministry at church. He was super involved, went on more than 20 Starfire tours as a student and then chaperone. We were dragged along by his enthusiasm. CJ is the one who nudged us to become members of LAUMC.

Now that I am retired, I amuse myself making quilts. 65 so far. And we spend 50% of our time up at our cabin in Dorrington, California. When we aren't at church services we are worshipping out in nature. One of our local lakes has a gorgeous lily pad section that I literally view as a sanctuary. Everyone hushes to silence when they enter this area of the lake via canoe or kayak.



Years ago we joined a Small Group that is still meeting at least twice per month and has so many loving and thoughtful friends who are the hands and feet of Jesus in our community and the world.

Rick Arnesen, continued

time outdoors with my dog Lassie and my buddies.

At 16, I took a summer job as a cook for 400 Boy Scouts at Camp Diamond “O” near Yosemite. I worked very hard for \$30 a week, and returned the next summer as 2nd cook and baker at \$40 a week.

I had an aptitude for architectural drawing and took courses through college leading to a Certificate in Building Inspection and a General Contractors license. My career evolved but was always related to construction. I spent the last 14 years of my career managing high-profile buildings at Stanford.

Valarie and I met on a college ski trip in 1975. More ski club events, dating, and hikes led to married in 1976. Val loved my section of the Sierras and we bought land in the 1980s, and drew the plans for our cabin. We did all the interior work ourselves. Our cabin provides us with four season pleasure.

Retired for 11 years, I fill my time with hobbies: home & cabin projects, skiing, fly fishing and volunteering. I was on the LAUMC Board of Trustees for 6 years. I was involved in the design and construction of Hope's Corner commercial kitchen, Trinity Sanctuary fire sprinkler installation, and replacement of the restroom. I have enjoyed many years of working on Habitat projects and Compassion Week projects.

Valarie and I cherish our many years with our small group, sharing our faith, prayers, projects, fun, and community has truly been a gift.

Photo: Valarie & Rick Arnesen

Julie Stanley



I was born in Benkelman, Nebraska, in 1948, the oldest of four children. Our parents were the best parents any kid could have. Although we had no running water or electricity on our farm (20 miles from town) we lacked nothing really. Mom was a great

cook, Dad worked hard in the fields. Mornings and evenings were spent together around the table with a kerosene lantern, sharing a meal, laughing and enjoying our time together.

An early memory is sitting on Dad's lap listening to stories he told or read to us. Mom canned most of our food and I was responsible for washing the glass quart jars because my hands were small enough to fit inside.

The closest school was a one-room schoolhouse with an outside water pump and no electricity. There were 7-10 students, and I was the youngest. Sometimes I had to sit on a stool in the corner for talking. Looking out the window as the strong winds blew the dirt horizontally, I thought I was actually seeing the wind. I remember sledding down the hills in the winter, then coming inside to warm up by the potbelly stove.

We didn't attend church regularly since we were so far from town. After we moved to Paso Robles, CA in 1956 we joined the Methodist church. I really enjoyed Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, and summer camps.

Our home in Paso Robles was another idyllic setting with an open field across the street and lots of families in the neighborhood. Summer evenings were long and warm, and we played outside until our parents called us in.

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Shirley Stallcop



I was born in Cleveland, Ohio and lived there until I was nine. My parents were both in Japanese internment camps in WW2. My mom was a nurse who helped people in the camp.

My father was an auto mechanic. He had 8 siblings and wanted to be near them. I went with my mother and sister to California to visit a sickly relative. Once back home in Ohio, I helped convince my father to move to California.

I had a terrifying experience at a local park at age eight. I was threatened with a gun, ran home and chain locked the door until the babysitter came with my sister.

We attended a Japanese Methodist church. After moving to California we attended many different churches following an aunt and uncle. I met my first husband at a church retreat during high school.

After high school, I was in the USAF for 3 ½ years during Vietnam, and was posted to several locations. I graduated from San Jose State in business administration.

I have two beautiful daughters, Lesley Ann and Ashley Ann. Lesley is married, earned her PhD, and teaches in a suburb of Chicago. Ashley suffered from special speech and language problems. In the 5th grade she played Yentl, the matchmaker in "Fiddler on the Roof," and brought tears to our eyes. Ashley graduated from UC Santa Cruz and now works for her father.

I met my second husband, Mark, in college. We married in 1990. We attended First UMC in Sunnyvale, then were attracted by a visit from John Dodson and moved to LAUMC. We enjoyed John's

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Julie Stanley, continued

I was a good student, received a scholarship to attend Cal Poly. My dream was not academics, but to be a flight attendant. And I did that for two years, traveling internationally, including military flights to Vietnam. My only domestic flight was a bunch of Boy Scouts traveling from the East Coast to Idaho – we even ran out of milk!

My longest career was as a Subcontracts Manager for Space Systems/Loral. We built and launched commercial satellites. I managed the departments that purchased many of the satellite systems and was fortunate to attend two launches in Russia and one in Florida.

Randy and I met on a softball field and were friends for a few years before we married. Two children, three grandkids, and 45 years later, we enjoy every day of retirement.

I have attended LAUMC for about thirty years; I have served in many committees and groups. I am blessed to partner with so many loving people. I am also blessed by spending time with family.

Shirley Stallcop, continued

sermons, the music, Roy Damonte's advice, and Merle Boxill's influence. I was an active member in UMW, and was a lay reader for eight years.

My husband Mark is now my caregiver and driver to my medical appointments.

EXPERIENCED EDITOR NEEDED for our gen2gen bi-monthly newsletter. Ruth Evans, our current editor, has failing eyesight and would like to resign when a qualified person is found. Please contact John Lehman, jwalleh@gmail.com.

Dear LAUMC

We are expanding these issues to include stories from the entire congregation. To share your story in 300-400 words, please email John Lehman, jwalleh@gmail.com.

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