

# **Bob Griffin's Story**

## **My Parents**

My parents were both born and raised in Ogden, Utah, and attended Ogden High School and Weber College.

## **Dad's Story**

My father, John Smith Griffin, played center on the Ogden High football team and played the trombone in the high school band. He traveled with his band to Chicago to play at the World's Fair. Dad also worked in and around Yellowstone National Park during the summer months while in high school. John served a full-time mission in Southern France in the late 1920s, followed by a year studying at the Sorbonne in Paris, providing him with sufficient academic credits to apply to law school after returning home. Mother taught school. Shortly after dad returned home from his mission, the nationwide depression destroyed nearly all job opportunities for young men in Utah. Dad moved to Washington D.C. to find work. My mother, Dorothy Israelson, moved from Ogden to Washington to be with him in 1933. Dad had sent mother all of the money he had saved for a wedding ring so that she could travel from Utah to Washington D.C. On the drive from Washington to Virginia to get married, dad stopped in front of a Woolworth five and dime store and told mother to go in and buy a ring. Mother thought he was joking but bought the ring anyway. To her surprise, that was the ring she received when they were married by a justice of the peace in Falls Church, Virginia. She wore it for decades, replacing it with a diamond ring only after living in La Cañada for many years. Several years after their

marriage, during a trip to Utah, they were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple. After returning to Washington D.C., my father attended George Washington Law School at night, working for the federal government during the day, while mother worked full-time to provide them with sufficient funds to live in the Washington D.C. area. Although they always declared themselves politically Independent, they were in actual fact closet Roosevelt Democrats. My parents became good friends with many Church members who lived in Washington, D.C. during the depression and remained lifelong friends with many of them, especially those who moved to Utah and Southern California. I was born in Washington, D.C. the year my father graduated from law school in 1937.

### **Mother's Story**

Mother grew up in Ogden on Adams Street, just several blocks away from my father's home on Madison Avenue. Mother was very popular at school. She was very proud of her hair and it always looked beautiful. She had many girlfriends as a child and was always active in school. She participated in plays and other performances at high school. One of her classmates, seemingly jealous of mother's accomplishments, wrote in mother's yearbook: "Dorothy always gets what she goes after!" She and my father were close in high school and remained so thereafter, until dad left for France to serve a mission. Although they wrote to each other, mother dated other men while dad served his mission, particularly after dad announced that he was staying in Paris for an extra year to attend the Sorbonne for college credit. Mother taught school and was thinking of going to

California to complete her education, even after dad had proposed to her.

When I was a young adult, my mother told me that many of her associates at work had criticized her for getting pregnant and having a child when she did. They took the position that 1937 was a terrible time to bring a child into the world, with tyrants ruling Russia and Europe, with the depression hammering the U.S. again in 1937 and with what looked like an abysmal future with a world war on the horizon. But mother told me how dearly she wanted to have a child and how much she and my father loved me. Of course, I loved to hear her tell that story of having a baby they both wanted and loved!

## **Early Moves**

My parents moved to Alhambra in Southern California in the early 1940s, but returned to Arlington, Virginia in 1943, and lived in a rented two story home on Washington Blvd. until 1947, when my mother, brother and I moved first to Packanack Lake, N.J., to live with my Uncle Ben and Aunt Marion, then to Berkeley, CA, for a year. My father was offered a position as an attorney with the Department of Agriculture after he graduated from law school. While mother, Paul and I lived in N.J. with my uncle and his family, my father moved to San Francisco to work as an assistant to Jess Farr, preparing for a similar job in Southern California. Once my dad received an offer to become the Solicitor (lawyer) for the Department of Agriculture in Los Angeles, our family moved to Burbank, CA, while the family waited for their new 3 bedroom, 2 bath home to be constructed in

La Cañada, CA. We moved to La Cañada when I was in 5th grade. La Cañada was a small foothill community north of Glendale and Pasadena. The Angeles Crest Highway, a mountain road that led up into the Angeles National Forest and to Mount Wilson, had its start in La Cañada. I attended La Cañada Elementary school, then spent a year being bussed to Marshall Junior High School in Pasadena, CA for 7th grade, where I participated in the Pasadena Boy Choir. I entered La Cañada Junior High School when it first opened for grades 8-10.

My last two years of public school were spent at John Muir High School (and Junior College) in Pasadena, since the La Cañada High School was yet to be built.

## **Other Features of La Cañada**

### **Mt. Wilson's Hubbel Observatory**

At the top of Mt. Wilson was the Hubbel Observatory, where Dr. Edwin Hubbel did his mind-expanding research in astronomy. His focus was on nebulae, faint smudges of light in the heavens which until the Wilson Observatory was built, could not be resolved further. With the power of the Wilson Telescope, Hubbel was able to demonstrate that nebulae were in actual fact collections of billions of stars clustered together in what Hubbel termed galaxies. Hubbel identified numerous types of galaxies and expanded our understanding of the universe to the point where we can understand the scripture in the Pearl of Great Price in which God says “worlds without number have I created.”

## **Jet Propulsion Lab**

Also, just to the east of my home town of La Cañada lies the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where the Mars missions and other fantastic space adventures were planned and directed. But growing up, I know only a little about Hubbel or the workings of the NASA laboratory.

## **Acceptance to Stanford**

Twelve students from John Muir High School were accepted to Stanford University during my senior year, I among them. At that time, Stanford was a very good regional university and over half of the freshmen class was from California. Very different than now, when in most cases, a single student from a California high school would be lucky to be offered admission (Palo Alto HS and Gunn HS being the exceptions). In 2018, Stanford became the most difficult university in which to gain admission of any college in the country (more than 34,000 high school seniors applied and just 1,850 were accepted). In part, this was because Stanford began to accept more students from India and Europe, reducing the availability for U.S. students.

## **Swimming**

I spent a lot of time on various swim teams as I grew up, including the Glendale YMCA and the Glendale Swim Club. Buzz Thayer was my swim coach at Glendale YMCA. He later became the swim coach at Long Beach High School, which had two indoor competitive swimming pools and was regarded as one of the best high school swim programs in the United States. As a

young teenager, I used to hitchhike to Glendale, saving the bus money (from La Cañada to Glendale) given to me by my mother which I used to buy a candy bar for the bus ride home from Glendale to La Cañada. I loved to swim but I never became even a regionally recognized swimmer. At Stanford, I won the individual medley in a swim meet the coach at Stanford held in the fall, looking for additional swimmers for the freshman team, and the coach insisted that I join the team. I knew that I would be a disappointment to him, but still I came in third in the individual medley in Stanford's swim meet with UC Berkeley, which qualified me for a freshman letter in swimming. I still have the skinny little letterman's sweater emblazoned with the letter S to prove it!

Even more than swimming, I loved to body surf, when I got the chance to go to the beach in the summer. My dad always arranged to rent a cottage on the beach at Oceanside, CA, each summer for a week. When I was younger, I would go to the beach with them but after I turned 14, I had to work during the summer and was lucky to spend a Saturday at Oceanside.

### **My Brother Paul**

Paul was born in Washington D.C. in 1941, my only brother. I have to confess that I was not kind to Paul when we were young and treated him quite poorly. We shared a small bedroom in the back of the house in La Cañada. Initially, we shared a bunk bed, with Paul on top. I commonly kicked the mattress on the top bunk to irritate Paul. Sometimes, I would call Paul's name and he would reply, "What?" My response was "You're a nut, that's

what, that's what nut."

He would then respond in kind and that unpleasant banter would continue for 15-20 minutes. Paul was a collector and his drawers were filled with rocks, and other items that attracted him. I always thought that was a strange hobby, but Paul continued to collect gemstones and other things throughout his life. Paul was not athletic; instead, he played in the bands at junior and senior high school. He loved scouting and was a scout when my dad was appointed scoutmaster of our ward. He and dad went on a lot of scout trips and hikes together. Paul was very smart, especially in mathematics, although he was otherwise a B student in school. My mother always thought that Paul was disabled, especially socially. My dad also realized that Paul needed a bit more help than Marian and I and he became close to Paul and would get angry at me when I teased him or berated him. Both deep sea fishing and scouting brought them together.

Paul became very interested in weather forecasting and kept weather charts and records in high school. He continued this interest at BYU and worked at the BYU weather station/department. The interest continued throughout his life and he was thrilled when internet weather sites began to appear. I always thought that he should have sought work at a scientific weather facility - it would have been a constant source of satisfaction for him.

## **My Sister Marian**

Marian was also born in Washington D.C. in 1946, my only sister, eight years younger than I. She was just 10 years old when

I left home to attend Stanford. She lived in the back bedroom on the west side of the house and when my Grandmother Israelson began to live with us, Marian had to share her bedroom with her grandmother. Marian was a very pretty blond girl who had many friends at school and church. I confess that I didn't relate much with Marian because of our age and sex differences. She was quite close with mother, who was delighted to have a daughter. Marian attended BYU, where she met Stephen Shipley. They were married in the Logan Temple on December 27, 1968. Marian has six children, including Scott, who, like our Mark, practices otolaryngology. Holly, her oldest, is married to a physician and their daughter is attending medical school.

## **Yard Construction**

Once we moved to La Cañada, my dad began to work on our yard. We had a sloping back yard, with the northernmost rear part of our yard the highest. It inclined down to the patio area next to our house. Initially, dad leveled the highest area, had asphalt poured there to create a badminton court. At the west end of the court, he built a wooden basketball standard for me to shoot baskets. He had neighbors and friends over to the house to play badminton, which he loved. He did not shoot baskets with me but I was grateful to him for putting up the standard and I did use it, although when I was 11-12 years-old, the 10 foot basket hoop seemed quite high and it was difficult at times to make baskets. Dad then built two 3-foot tall retaining walls between the volleyball/basketball court and the patio, mixing the cement for the blocks in a flat bin and then carrying it to the area he was laying the concrete blocks. He asked me to help him carry the



buckets of cement for him, but he did the mixing and the laying of blocks. He then placed flatter, 4-inch tall red concrete blocks along the top of each wall. In addition, he built concrete block steps leading from the patio to the volleyball court on each end of the yard, through each wall and in the flat area between the walls. The intermediate area of the back yard was planted with orange trees and ivy.

## **Working with Dad**

Next, he built a 10-foot tall concrete-block wall along the west side of our property. The neighbors contributed a little bit of the funds, but dad did all the work and paid the lion's share of the cost. At this point, he obtained a used cement mixer to help with this much bigger project. My job was to shovel sand into the cement mixer. Dad lifted one of many bags of cement he purchased up to the opening in the mixer and poured in about a third of the bag of cement. Once mixed, the wet cement was poured into the flat bin and my job was to carry the cement to the location of the wall dad was working on.

Initially, dad poured a concrete foundation for the wall, with 10-foot tall re-bar extending vertically from the foundation, enough rebar so that almost every concrete block was threaded through the re-bar. Needless to say, this was a major undertaking and it took dad almost a year to construct the wall. During this time, it was clear that all of this work was taking its toll on dad's back. On some Saturdays, he quit early, changed out of his working clothes, and lay flat on his back on the living room floor to relieve the pain. He did the same on Sunday afternoon, between

Sunday School and Sacramento Meeting. By the time he finished this project, his back hurt almost continually. But the back pain he suffered is a story for another time.

I was not very happy at having to work on these projects, but dad occasionally rewarded me by taking me down to the tennis courts at the newly constructed junior high school (7-10<sup>th</sup> grade) and playing tennis with me. He gave me my first tennis lessons. I learned later that dad loved to play tennis when he lived in Washington D.C. during the 1930s.

Dad also repaired our car. I remember many days when his head was under the hood, fixing something. My job was to hand him the tools he wanted and hold a light under the hood, illuminating what he was working on. I also traveled with him to Pasadena to buy the parts he needed for the car at Pep Boys. We initially had an old 1939 Pontiac during and after the war. Then, in 1949, dad bought a Ford sedan. I remember that he was forced by the dealer to purchase plastic “wings” for the rear fenders for several hundred dollars in order to buy the car. All automobiles were in huge demand at that time, shortly after WWII. Finally, in 1954, dad bought a yellow Buick! Again, he took the only color available - bright yellow - but it was a wonderful car and everyone in our family loved it. I remember taking my friends for a drive in the car and they were very impressed as we raced down Descanso Boulevard towards Descanso Gardens!

## **Deep Sea Fishing**

Dad used to go deep sea fishing off the coast of Southern California. He would leave home just before midnight, drive to Long Beach (I believe, or someplace near), board the fishing boat after paying the skipper, along with about 30-40 other men (rarely a woman), and they would begin chugging out into the sea and head south, often towards the Channel Islands but occasionally down to islands near the border between California and Mexico. They liked to arrive at the fishing site around 5 a.m. The skipper had a device he trailed in the water that alerted him to schools of fish. White sea bass was a common catch and one of the most satisfying. Barracuda was a very exciting, demanding catch which not uncommonly met with failure. Yellow tail tuna were rare but a cause for celebration when caught. Occasionally, bottom trawlers would hook a halibut, salmon or mackerel. One in a great while, the trip was a bust and nothing was caught by anyone. On other days, the fisherman had a bonanza. Anyway, dad remained interested. He took me on several trips but frankly, except for catching a small sea bass once, I found it boring, dark, and cold. I hated traveling through the night from home to the boat and then to the off-island areas where the fishing was best. But I was distinctly in the minority. Everyone else on the boat loved the experience and many were regulars, including my dad, who tried to go 3 or 4 times a year.

In contrast to me, my brother, Paul, loved deep sea fishing even more than my dad, and this common love bonded my dad and Paul together more than any other activity. Paul would go with dad whenever he was invited. He loved his catches and they were

a common subject of conversation between them. Long after dad stopped fishing because of back trouble and Parkinson's Disease, Paul continued to go out on fishing boats. He and Marilyn first lived in a small apartment at Seal Beach so that he was close to both shore fishing and the deep sea boats. Later, they moved to Huntington Beach and bought a tiny home there two blocks from the beach, for the same reason. Paul liked the beach, but he liked fishing even more. He had his own poles, tackle, and other gear and continued to enjoy the sport even in Oregon. But that interest pretty much came to an end for him when a job opportunity took him to Albuquerque.

### **La Cañada Ward Chapel Construction**

After La Cañada Ward was split off from Glendale East Ward, we met in the Thursday Club, a women's club in La Cañada that had its own building. Joe Rich was our Bishop. Dad and I would often arrive about 30 minutes early to clean up the mess in the club left by the Saturday night revelers and arrange the chairs for church.

A search for a new church building site culminated in the purchase of a large piece of property on the south side of Foothill Blvd., which included a huge house, previously owned by a movie star, set on a hill behind the area where we would build the church. I remember walking through that three story house, with over a dozen bedrooms, multiple bathrooms, a beautiful view south looking down on Montrose and beyond. The house was eventually sold by the ward, with the funds received largely paying for the remaining property.

At the time, wards were required to pay for 50% of the cost of a new church building. In addition to asking ward members to contribute large sums of money for the church (mother told me that they often contributed up to 25% of their income annually to the Church during the construction of our ward chapel and easily 15-20% in other years (including ward budget, stake budget, missionary fund, and money to pay for the church cannery, in addition to tithing and fast offerings). Also, our ward constructed a home just two blocks north of our home, selling it to raise money for the new building.

Members of the ward were asked to help build the church and I still remember going with dad on most evenings during the spring, summer, and fall over to the church site and helping with construction. We did everything! Pour and level concrete for the junior chapel, raise the walls, construct the roof of the main building. Several non-member husbands spent hundreds of hours helping to build the church, along with dozens of members. With all of that work, only one serious injury occurred, when a member (who spend his days building homes) cut himself seriously with a Skil Saw. Initially, the ward had a slogan: "Let's Get It Done in '51." When 1951 came and went, we changed the slogan to "We'll get it through in '52." Which the ward did.

My Bishop during the construction of the new building was George Sant, owner of a large construction company that built homes in Orange County, particularly in the Huntington Beach area. George and his wife had a son, Rick, whom we all called "Poncho" through high school, and a daughter, Sharon. Poncho was my age and Sharon a couple of years younger. I dated Sharon

once or twice, but neither of us had any interest in dating each other further. Sharon went to U.C. Berkeley and she was amazed when she discovered that I was engaged to Shirley, who also went to Berkeley to earn her Master's degree. I'm sure that she thought that I was no match for this brilliant girl, whom everyone thought would marry David Bennion. But I fooled everyone, including Sharon. George Sant was very kind to me and starting in the summer after my sophomore year at Stanford, he offered me a job as a nailer (nailing sheeting on the roofs of the numerous homes he was building in Huntington Beach), a union job which paid three times what I had earned the previous summer. I had to pay union dues and drive 90 minutes from our home to the work site and back each day, but the drive was well worth it, since gas cost just \$0.30/gallon at the time.

The ward erected a large plaque in the foyer of the church on which they listed all of the Eagle Scouts in the Ward. My name was first - actually, I had earned my Eagle before the building was constructed, but I was the first Eagle Scout in La Cañada Ward. Later, my brother, Paul, earned his Eagle and his name was placed first in the second column of names, next to mine. I don't know whether the plaque still exists, but I was very proud that my name was first.

## **Stanford University**

In 1955, I left home to attend Stanford University. At the time, there was a very large, active group of LDS undergraduate and graduate students at Stanford, nearly 100 in all. Stanford students attended the Palo Alto Ward and many of us became good

friends. A Deseret Club met weekly at Stanford, often with talks by Conway Sonne. Only after I returned from my mission was an Institute Building and Ward Chapel built for Stanford students and other young adults. By then, the Palo Alto Ward chapel on Addison and Guinda had been sold. The Palo Alto First Ward (yes, the ward had been divided while I served my mission in Germany) met in the Menlo Park Stake Center.

Elder David Haight was my Stake President when I was at Stanford. He was also a member of the Palo Alto Ward, and was once counselor in the Bishopric when my father-in-law, Richard Sonne, was Bishop. He and his wife, Ruby, were gracious hosts to many Stanford students during our years there, but particularly to George A. Smith.

Shirley's father, Richard Sonne, was David Haight's counselor in the Stake Presidency when I was an undergraduate student at Stanford. He later followed David Haight as Stake President, then became a Regional Representative in the Sacramento area and finally was set apart by President Spencer W. Kimball as President of the Oakland Temple.

Ron Poelman, later a member of the Seventy, was my Bishop after the Stanford Ward was organized and later served as a counselor in the Stake Presidency to my father-in-law. I felt very close to Ron Poelman and his wife, Claire, when I attended Stanford. However, they told me on my return from Germany that Shirley Sonne was "taken." That proved to be not true a year later.

Elder Henry Eyring was a professor in the Business School at Stanford and used to give talks to us students at evening firesides, before returning to Harvard to teach at the Business School. Of course, he is now a member of the First Presidency of the Church. I had the interesting experience of dating Henry Eyring's future wife, Kathy Johnson, off and on for a year or two before she became engaged to Henry Eyring while attending summer school at Harvard. Kathy and I were good friends in those years, but nothing ever clicked romantically between us.

During the second quarter of my third year as an undergraduate at Stanford, I had the unpleasant experience of having to take (1) inorganic chemistry laboratory, the most difficult chemistry laboratory at Stanford, and (2) vertebrate anatomy laboratory, the most difficult biology laboratory at the school. Every pre-med student at Stanford had to take both the lecture and laboratory courses in vertebrate anatomy as necessary pre-requisites to medical school, so the class of about 130 students was 80% pre-med students. At that time, Stanford still had the infamous and outrageous "Stanford Curve" grading system: 15% As, 35% Bs, 35% Cs and 15% Ds. Recognize that EVERY student at Stanford was an A student in high school and only 15% of them would qualify for an A in each course they took and only half would receive an A or a B. I had a B+ average at Stanford, meaning that I was in the top 30% of graduating students by grade point average. But graduate schools unfamiliar with Stanford's grading system might think that I was no better than a student at the University of Colorado with a B+ average.



So only 15% of students taking vertebrate anatomy lab would receive an A in the course and everyone was determined to be one of those 15%, believing that an A was necessary to be accepted to one of the best medical schools. The chemistry majors were all determined to get an A in inorganic chemistry laboratory, as well. So most of those taking the inorganic chemistry lab spent 2 or 3 extra hours on their three laboratory days/week trying to determine to the nearest tenth of a percent how much potassium, sodium, and chloride was in a particular sample (weighed to the nearest 0.1 gram), by repeating their studies 3 or 4 times and taking the average of their results. The vertebrate anatomy lab students, particularly the pre-med students, spent 4-6 extra hours a week labeling every muscle, tendon, nerve, including all of the cranial nerves; every organ, major blood vessel, and cutaneous structure on their dissected rabbit, going over and over the dissection to be certain that they had labeled everything correctly. In my case, I had to divide my time between the two laboratories, meaning that I had only half the time of my pre-med competitors and my chemistry major competitors to complete the lab work.

Remarkably, I received an A in each course! My chemistry lab instructor was convinced that I had cheated, somehow, since the other students had spent so much more time determining the proper percentages of each element, but he could not prove that I had cheated, even though he asked me point blank if I had done so.

In addition, I had a similar experience in my vertebrate anatomy lecture class during spring quarter. The same 130 or so pre-med students were taking that class with me and only 15% of them

would receive an A. We each had a partner in the class: one would take notes on the lecture itself and the other would copy the anatomy drawings the professor drew on the three blackboards in the front of the classroom. We would then make a hand copy of our partner's notes/drawings (copy machines had not been invented at that time) and we would then memorize both the notes and the drawings for the final exam. The final exam was the ONLY exam in the class. I spent days memorizing the material and it paid off: I was one of the 15% of the As! The professor promised to write a glowing letter of recommendation for any medical student who received an A and this may have helped me get into Stanford Medical School.

### Mission in Germany

Months before I was called to serve a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I was interviewed in Palo Alto while attending my third year at Stanford, first by my Bishop at the Stanford Ward and then by President Sonne. About a month later, a visiting member of the Quorum of the Twelve interviewed me at the Stake Center in Menlo Park to determine worthiness and desire. Shortly thereafter, I received a letter from David O. MacKay formally calling me to serve as a full-time missionary in the West German Mission. I remember adding to my missionary application that I had taken two years of German at Stanford. I hoped that this information would encourage them to call me to an area that spoke German. So I was thrilled to be called to a German-speaking mission.

After receiving my call, I told my Bishop (Hank Taylor) that I would like to formally leave from my home ward in La Cañada,

California following completion of my third year at Stanford. At that time, male missionaries were required to be 20 years of age. I decided that it would be best if I completed three years at Stanford before serving my mission. At that time it was possible to apply to medical school after three years of college, although most medical schools advised applicants to complete their undergraduate training before entering medical school. I thought I could apply, get accepted, with the understanding that I would complete two quarters of undergraduate courses from January to June, 1960, before entering medical school in the fall. I hoped that most medical schools would regard that as sufficient undergraduate education, even without a formal degree.

There is an interesting story about my interviews to attend Stanford Medical School near the end of my third undergraduate year at Stanford, but I'll save that for later, when I talk about my applications to attend Stanford and Northwestern Medical Schools.

My missionary farewell was held in La Cañada. Yes, the Church permitted full-blown missionary farewells, then. After all, there were only about 7,000 missionaries serving in the field, so serving a mission was still a big deal. Many of my friends chose not to serve missions. At that time, screws were not applied tightly to the minds and hearts of young men approaching missionary age as they are now - it was more like gentle persuasion with no threat that one would lead a less than perfect life if one chose to forego missionary service. I asked a good, albeit older friend who was attending Stanford Law School to speak at my farewell. I'm afraid that a lot of what he said went

over the head of the members in my Southern California ward, many of whom were carpenters, plumbers, electricians or contractors - not Stanford graduates by any stretch. Still, I was congratulated by the bishop and my family and friends in La Cañada and felt good about the experience.

After saying goodbye to my family in La Cañada, I travelled to Utah by train. A few days later, I entered the Salt Lake City Missionary Training Center (MTC), a large, old home on State Street, subsequently torn down to make place for the beautiful gardens surrounding the Church Office Buildings (old and new) and replaced by the much larger MTCs in Provo and elsewhere. We were greeted at the mission home and then groups of us were assigned to LDS families willing to house "newbie" missionaries. Their job was not only to provide housing but to set examples for Elders who had not previously experienced family morning and evening prayer, prayer at meals, family home evening, and an outpouring of love, affection and faith from their parents. They were very kind and did their best to show appreciation for our commitment to serve a mission.

Most of our group training took place in the Tabernacle, where several hundred newly-called missionaries gathered once or twice a day to hear talks by a variety of people: apostles, seventies, Relief Society Leaders, and a number of LDS men and woman who brought special skills in teaching us how to be better young men and better missionaries. Some of the talks were very practical. An LDS doctor spoke to us and acknowledged that many of us had allergies to food or extreme distaste of certain foods. He had a simple solution for this. He told those of us

present that if we were ever given a food item that was distasteful to us or to which we were allergic, we should very kindly explain that "our Doctor" (the physician speaker at the Tabernacle) told us that we should not eat that food and then offer our thanks for their thoughtfulness and the effort they made to prepare the food. This was advice that I used several times throughout my mission and beyond!

We began our journey to Germany with a train ride across the U.S., first to Niagra Falls and from there to New York City, where we boarded the USS America for a trip across the Atlantic, which eventually landed in Bremerhaven after stops at La Havre, France, and England. We then took an overnight train to Frankfurt, Germany, where we were picked up by an Elder from the Mission Home and driven there to meet the Mission President, Theodore M. Burton, a retired chemistry professor from Utah State, who later became a member of the Quorum of the Seventy.

President Burton was a stern, no-nonsense man who welcomed us briefly and then reviewed the mission rules, particularly the don'ts among those rules.

After three years at Stanford, I served 30 months as a missionary in the West and South German Missions. Blaine Symons was one of the leaders of my mission when I arrived there and was just as responsible and as hard working then as he has ever been.

We spent just one night in Frankfurt and were then given our city and companion assignments and taken back to the train station. I

was assigned to Karlsruhe-Durlach, a medieval town about 6 km east of the city of Karlsruhe. I was met by Elder Berry, who took me to our "home," a rather large second floor room in a two story home about a mile west of the old town of Durlach. Later that day, we went to old-town Durlach to do some shopping. On our way back to our apartment, we noticed that clouds were rapidly gathering and moving towards Durlach. We ran hard to reach our apartment. The rain began to fall about 100 meters from our destination. I have never before or since experienced a storm as ferocious as that one. We had windows on three sides of our apartment and we could see lightning strikes several times a second on each side of the building. The thunder was ear-splitting and the rain was like a waterfall! We did not go out after the storm ended, because by then it was dark, but the next morning we walked into Durlach and discovered that the storm had knocked down 200+ year-old trees on the outskirts of the old town and caused damage to several buildings, as well. Durlach is a medieval town surrounded by a five meter tall wall with intermittent towers. The streets inside the town are only four meters wide - essentially one-way streets. We saw no damage to any structure inside Durlach.

Several days after my arrival, our landlord knocked on our door and announced that we would have to find another place to live. He discovered that we were Mormon missionaries and he and his family were staunch Catholics. He said that he and his wife simply couldn't be housing missionaries from the Mormon Church. He gave us just three days to find another place. It proved to be difficult and after two days, we found a VERY small second floor room with two small beds in old town Durlach,

across from the bath house! It was a big step down from the spacious room we had outside of the town, but we couldn't find anything better.

Durlach had its own branch, despite its size. The second day after I arrived, a very nice widow member invited us to lunch. Actually, it was "mittagessen," which in Germany was the largest meal of the day, with salad, a main course, and dessert. It was a wonderful meal, the best I had enjoyed since arriving in Germany. Several days after we moved to our small apartment in old town Durlach, another family invited us to their main course meal just after noon. When we went to the small branch meeting in Durlach, there were about 20 members in attendance, with an older branch president and men to bless the sacrament.

I discovered that dinner or "abendessen" was usually a piece of cheese, a slice of meat, and some bread, along with apple juice. Breakfast or "fruestueck [The "e" represents an umlaut (¨) over the u. I can't type it that way.]

Missionary work in Germany was as challenging then as it remains now, but I did see about eight people join the Church, touched by the Spirit, at least in part as the result of my labors. I served in first in Karlsruhe-Durlach, then Karlsruhe itself, followed by Münster-Westfalen, Krefeld, Volklingen-Saar, Saarbrücken, Ludwigsburg and Stuttgart-Feuerbach. All of the letters I sent to my parents while I was serving my mission are in our library, on the shelf near the organ, so many details of my mission experience can be found in those letters.

Karl Clayson, a vascular surgeon and good friend here in Sacramento, remembers that when he arrived in Germany to begin his mission in the South German Mission, I met him at the airport and drove him to the mission home. That was just before our Mission's Christmas Conference in Berchtesgaden (a beautiful mountain retreat in Bavaria near the Austrian border). I'm happy that we were able to share those experiences.

### **Choosing My Profession**

When I was young, my mother, Dorothy, would tell all of her friends that I would become a doctor when I grew up. Essentially, she would say "This is my son, a future doctor!" I was really too young to have an opinion or to even think about my life as an adult at that time. As I grew older, my mother would have conversations with me about the reasons I should become a doctor. Doctors make good money. Medicine is not a cyclic profession like construction or engineering – physicians do not get laid off during bad times. Doctors are widely respected. And the best area in medicine, in her opinion, was surgery. Surgeons were the most highly regarded physicians. At every opportunity, she would drill me with her opinion that medicine was the profession I should choose, and I should become a surgeon.

Our neighbor, across the street, Dr. Purdy, was a general practitioner. His office was on Foothill Blvd., just west of La Canada Elementary School. When I or one of my siblings was sick with a respiratory infection, he would make a home visit and often give us a shot of penicillin (although most of the time we were suffering from a viral infection which would not respond to



any antibiotic). Dr. Purdy was a Seventh Day Adventist and he trained at the Adventist Medical School in Southern California. After I had been accepted to Stanford and told him that I was interested in medicine, he invited me several times to visit his office and explained to me what he did as a GP. I remember once he showed me a bed, invited me to lie down on it, and then activated it. It was a massaging bed and rollers within the bed would move up and down across my back. It was quite soothing. He explained that many of his patients would pay for a session on this massaging bed. Personally, I felt that it was too much like chiropractic care for a physician, but I kept my opinions to myself. I think he was hoping that if I became a physician, I would return to La Canada and possibly join his practice in the years before his retirement.

Although I always liked the idea of becoming a doctor, probably influenced by my mother, I also considered engineering as a profession. I loved math and physics.

Another neighbor across the street was a Stanford graduate and held a very responsible position at Lockheed Aircraft Corporation – I've always wondered if he worked for the Skunk Works (a very secret part of Lockheed that developed advanced military aircraft). He never hinted at what he did. Anyway, he encouraged me to consider engineering. He believed that good engineers would never be laid off, contrary to my mother's opinion, and that work in engineering was both interesting and important. So when I went to Stanford, engineering was also on my list of possibilities. However, I quickly concluded that I did not want to be burdened with both high level math and physics as were

several of the young men in my freshman dorm at Stanford (Trancos 3) who worked late into the evening every night on math problems followed by engineering problems that meshed with the math they were studying. I just wasn't that interested in engineering to subject myself to that. So even in my first quarter at Stanford, I decided to major in chemistry and complete pre-med requirements. There was a time while I was at Stanford when I seriously considered chemistry as a profession (not chemical engineering, which was probably the toughest undergraduate major at Stanford). But in general, I thought I would choose medicine.

During my junior year (I completed three years at Stanford before going on my mission), I had the opportunity to travel to San Francisco with several other pre-med students and spend a day attending classes at Stanford Medical School, which was still located in San Francisco. That was the day when I truly fell in love with medicine. I loved the classes, I loved watching surgery, I loved talking with the medical students, and I loved going to the medical library and browsing through the books there. At the end of that day, I concluded beyond any doubt that I would go to medical school.

## **Interview Story**

Just before I left for Germany on my mission, I was interviewed as a candidate for medical school by a rather cynical, worldly professor of pediatrics. This man, Robert Alway, became Dean of the Stanford Medical School by the time I had finished my mission. He had previously taught pediatrics at the University of Utah Medical School. While living in Utah, he developed a rather hostile attitude towards Mormons. At the time of my interview he told me bluntly that he thought that I was wasting my time serving a mission and that if I was still interested in medical school when I got back, I should re-apply at that time. It was a very discouraging interview for an impressionable young man. I was sure that I had been blackballed by Dr. Alway.

However, I was also interviewed by a very distinguished professor of anatomy at Stanford, who was very impressed that I was deferring my medical education to serve my church. He told me that the medical field needed more physicians who were interested in service as opposed to just making a lot of money. He assured me that he would recommend me strongly for admission to Stanford Medical School.

### **Acceptance to Medical School**

One of the highlights of my life was the wonderful experience I had on returning home from my mission in Germany. When I got off the airplane in Los Angeles and met my parents, my mother was holding an envelope in her hand, which had just arrived that day. The letter was my acceptance to Stanford Medical School. I have always regarded that event as an answer to many prayers and as a gift from God.

## **Stanford Medical School, 1961-1966**

I began medical school at Stanford in September, 1961. The school and hospital were just a year old. Edward D. Stone was the architect of the new medical school building and hospital. He was later famous for the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and the U.S. Embassy building in New Delhi, India. Many of my fellow students disliked the design of the center. At one of our class dinners, the building was famously called a “Neo-Nazi Prison” because the façade, in the minds of some, had the appearance of multiple swastikas! However, the facilities were all new and from my perspective, quite wonderful. I loved the library, the lecture hall, the student laboratories, and later, the hospital itself. I spent five years at the medical school (yes, at that time, it was a five-year school, one year dedicated to research) and a year as a medical intern. I will always remember my years at Stanford Medical School with fondness.

Interestingly, I found medical school much less stressful than my undergraduate years at Stanford. For one thing, the school refused to grade us! They believed that anyone who entered our school was so good that grades were unbecoming! That was great during those years, but when we all applied for internships and residencies, other schools around the country were puzzled and confused as to how to rank us compared to applicants from other medical schools. For that reason, I believe that grades were introduced not long after I left medical school. The top 2 or 3 students in our class were recognized as such and they had no

difficulty getting into the best residency programs, but the rest of us (no, I wasn't among the top 10% of the class) had trouble being considered because of the absence of grades or rankings. I believe that was the reason I was accepted at Stanford (my third choice) for my straight medical internship rather than the other internship programs to which I applied.

As I said previously, I believe I was fortunate enough to be accepted to Stanford because of its move from San Francisco to the Stanford Campus. Many prospective medical students believed that medical students at Stanford would get a poor clinical education in Palo Alto vs. San Francisco. And while it was true that we did not have the variety of diseases or the volume of patients we would have enjoyed in San Francisco, we did have enough. East Palo Alto brought us a satisfactory volume of indigent patients for medical students to treat in the emergency room and what we lacked in diversity, we made up for in a huge number of patients with immune disorders of all kinds, which was, at that time, one of Stanford's strengths. Stanford was not a county hospital, with a large variety of diseases, although I did have a three month rotation through San Mateo County Hospital during my first year of medical residency (after which I was drafted into the military because of the Vietnam War).

The first three years of medical school were comprised of basic medical science, a total of a year's worth of research time, and a brief rotation through the various clinical departments in the hospital. We were taught biochemistry by the best and brightest

biochemists in the country. Dr. Kornberg (1959), Dr. Lederberg (1958), and, later, Dr. Berg (1980) all won Nobel Prizes for their contributions to medicine and all taught us biochemistry. They were fabulous teachers and during the year I took the subject, they were thoughtful and reasonably kind to us. I was told that in later years, they became much more demanding and unpleasant, but for our class, biochemistry class was a marvelous experience. Dr. Lederberg taught us genetics (for which he was honored as a Nobel laureate). We dissected a cadaver, whom we named “Bertha.” Later, we discovered that Bertha died of a “broken heart,” - an actual myocardial rupture with blood filling the pericardial sac.

During our first two years, we spent a lot of time in the laboratory isolating, examining, and otherwise manipulating DNA. Stanford, with Kornberg, Berg, and others had become the world’s DNA center and the faculty thought that we should all become as familiar as possible with it. I was interested, but not overwhelmingly so. Some of my classmates did become very involved and several began working in Berg’s laboratory. However, no one switched from medicine to biochemistry as the result of this effort.

What did interest me is examining tissue under the microscope. I loved histology and histopathology. Again, not to the point of giving up a medical career to become an academic pathologist or histology professor, but I still found it very interesting.

During my third year, we studied neuroanatomy. Among other things, we were each given a human brain to examine and dissect. We were required to learn the names of all of the areas of the brain (not difficult, since I had to do the same with the cat brain when I took vertebrate anatomy as an undergraduate). While I was examining and dissecting the occipital cortex, one of the second year students ran into our room to announce that President John F. Kennedy had been shot while riding in a motorcade in Dallas. A TV was rolled into the room and we all paused dissecting the brain while we listened to the latest news from Dallas. We learned that he was taken to Parkland Memorial Hospital, where he was pronounced dead almost immediately. During his autopsy in Washington D.C., it was found that Kennedy was struck by two bullets, the first entering his upper back and exiting just below the neck and then passing into the back of the Texas Governor John Connally. The second bullet entered the back of Kennedy's head and exited the front of his skull in a large exit wound, with bullet fragments later found throughout the brain. . So while I was dissecting the occipital cortex, the bullet that killed Kennedy passed through his occipital cortex and exploded within his brain. This is a day I will never forget!

I loved visiting the medical library, perusing the books and journals, going down into the basement and exploring old journals and textbooks and comparing old ideas with new ones. I got very involved in exploring spindle muscle fibers and how

they worked. I learned why when you begin to nod off and your head droops, your head suddenly jerks upright because the activation of spindle fibers in the neck. That was just one of many areas of interest I explored during library research.

I also learned to use Index Medicus. At the time I began medical school, Index Medicus was a two volume set. By the time I finished my internship it was five volumes. Index Medicus cataloged every article written in the medical literature, both here and around the world. The world medical literature began to explode in the 1960's, both in the U.S. and abroad. Now, we simply get online and go to Pub Med to access more than 40 million citations from around the world. When we type in a brief description of our interest, Pub Med will list all the relevant articles, including brief summaries of each article.

During my internship, I would visit the library and read articles written about the diseases of my patients. The following morning, I would report my findings during medical rounds. At first, I was the only one who did this, but later, others tried to one-up me and sometimes they succeeded. But it was a good decision and such library research made sure that we were all up to date on the diseases of our patients.

We had some very interesting, different classmates. We started with 68 students, but by the time of graduation, at least six students had dropped out, dropped back a year, or died. We had one suicide and one student who insisted on sailing out to the



nuclear test site area in the Pacific Ocean to protest nuclear testing (she was granted permission to return to school the following year, but was later asked to leave for academic reasons). A good friend, Jan Dray, who had severe insulin-dependent diabetes with proliferative retinopathy, dropped back a year while undergoing recovery from multiple laser treatments – he was one of the first in the country to undergo laser vs. larger-diameter, more intense white light treatment to halt the proliferation of these abnormal retinal blood vessels which bled easily. Jan's treatment succeeded to arrest the retinopathy and he did complete medical school in the class behind ours. One student decided to go into genetics and leave medical school, and one dropped out of medical school to enter a gay marriage. Two students from the year ahead our our class dropped back, like Jan, to enter our class and finish with us, one in the third year and one in the fourth (first clinical) year. In fact, at the end, we had one of the smallest Stanford Medical School classes ever: 59 graduating students! Even those students were unusual.

My lab partner, Harry Grant, about five years older than me, graduated from Oberlin College, spent a year at U.C. Berkeley, but then decided to drop out and become a carpenter. He moved to Tahoe, knowing nothing about construction, but he successfully winged it, learning on the job and getting quite good at building winter homes in the Tahoe area. Then he got the impression that he should become a doctor, went back to Berkeley and completed his pre-med requirements, applied for medical school and Stanford accepted him. In the end, he became

interested in radiology. He worked with the Stanford radiology faculty, eventually went to Boston for his residency training and afterward joined the radiology faculty at Harvard, where he taught radiology for many years. From carpenter to academic radiologist at Harvard!

One of my classmates, Susan, had spent two years helping to edit a remarkably detailed surgical anatomy textbook that showed all of the variations reported in the literature for almost every part of the body. She told the anatomy professors that she did not need to take anatomy, that she knew far more than she would ever learn dissecting a cadaver. They reluctantly agreed, with the proviso that she agreed to take an examination at the end of the term. During her exam, they grilled her with the most complex, esoteric anatomy questions ever given to any medical student, certain that she would stumble at some point. The remarkable thing was, they couldn't stump her. She then turned the tables on the faculty, asking them questions about anatomy that they had great difficulty answering. She kept very quiet about her experience, but we all knew that she was more knowledgeable about anatomy than anyone on the entire medical faculty!

Interestingly, during our third year, Susan became my partner in an exercise in which we had to pass a naso-gastric tube on each other so that we could experience first hand the experience. I was the first subject and I have to admit that it was a most unpleasant experience, but I survived. However, when it was my turn to pass the NG tube down Susan's nose and throat, she

balked. The faculty insisted, so I tried. I got the tube through the nose but the moment it hit her throat, she wretched and batted it away. She insisted on a private conference with the faculty and afterwards, she was excused from the exercise. I learned later that Susan had overdosed herself on some medication in a classic female suicide gesture (most women who attempt suicide in this manner are resuscitated and many expect to recover – they are simply sending a strong message of despair.) Anyway, the resuscitation effort so badly traumatized her that she couldn't go through it again with me, years later.

Sil Biggs came from Colorado. He was without question the brightest student in our class. He had decided early to focus on ophthalmology and was accepted at the Wilmer Eye Institute, at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, probably at that time the most elite and competitive ophthalmology training program in the country. He remained there for six months, becoming very unhappy with the rather mean-spirited, competitive environment. At the end of each year, one resident was ousted from the eye program at Wilmer. At the end of the senior year of residency, one of the remaining four residents was selected to become chief resident. The Chief Resident could write his ticket anywhere he wanted to go and many became chairmen of other eye departments around the country. To a large degree, the ophthalmology training program at Wilmer bred department chairmen.

The academic and teaching environment was much kinder at Stanford, with an almost horizontal relationship between students and faculty, assuming that the students were prepared to discuss intelligently the subjects at hand. A lot of respect was shown to students by faculty for a job well done and for impressive library research on a subject.

Sil felt oppressed at Wilmer and quite angry at the failure of the faculty and other residents to interact cordially and with mutual respect. He couldn't abide the idea of working in that environment, realizing that in that milieu someone might seek to berate him behind his back to a faculty member.

After six months at Wilmer, Sil abruptly quit the program and entered military service (during the Vietnam War, if you were not in a residency program, you were immediately drafted as a physician or you signed up for a particular service.) It was a shock to most of us and, I suspect, to both Stanford and Wilmer Eye Institute. Had the two programs examined the respective ambiance at each institution, they might have been able better to predict the problem.

Finally, I should describe the two other Latter-day Saints in my medical class: Dale Ream and Dallas Pope. Both were unusual in their own ways.

Dale Ream was a paraplegic and was confined to a wheelchair. He was a very bright young man who grew up in Idaho on his parent's farm. During his high school years, Dale was run over by a tractor at his family's farm, crushing his spine. He was passionate about becoming a physician and attended the University of Utah for his undergraduate studies. While there, he met and married Eleanor or "El," as most people called her. Following graduation, he applied to literally every medical school in the United States. Over seventy percent chose not to respond to his application. The remainder, Stanford excepted, wrote telling him that their facilities were unable to deal with a paraplegic. Stanford was the only medical school to accept him and that they would do everything in their power to help him complete his studies.

Dale and El lived in Escondido Village, housing on the south edge of the campus for married students. Shirley and I loved to visit them. El was a fabulous cook and she never prepared a meal that we didn't savor. She also read to Dale and helped him in other ways with his studies. They were unable to have children so El devoted her full attention to Dale and his needs. Dale would have never graduated from medical school without her help.

Dale did not like us to push him in his wheelchair. He had very muscular arms and liked to wheel himself wherever he went. It was one way that he sought to be independent.

Dale was able to complete his studies. When he rotated through surgery, he would prop himself up on his legs and “stand” at the surgical table while he held a retractor for the surgeon. He could only stand for so long, but the surgeon was understanding and appreciated Dale’s effort.

After graduation, Dale spent two years at the University of Utah training in physical rehabilitation. Soon after he finished those studies, he became the Chair of the Physical Rehabilitation Department. When young men who had become severely disabled, often paralyzed, from an injury or accident met Dale, they realized that paraplegia was not the end of a productive life. Dale showed them that with effort they could continue their schoolwork and studies and enter any of a number of professions. He was not only a wonderful role model but he was able to teach them many ways to become more independent and self-reliant.

Dale died in his mid-40s, an “old age” for most paraplegics. I will always remember and respect him for the effort he made to become a physician and serve as an example to so many disabled persons.

The other LDS student in my medical class was Dallas Pope. His story is also unusual. Dallas enlisted in the Navy and eventually served as a medical technician in San Diego. The physician under whom he worked was so impressed with Dallas’s work and obvious intelligence that he suggested that he begin taking college courses online so that he could qualify to attend

medical school. Over several years, Dallas took the required courses and then applied to a number of medical schools. Again, as with Dale Ream, Stanford was the only medical school that accepted him!

Dallas was married and had several children by the time he entered medical school. His tuition and many of his expenses were paid by the military. He also lived in Escondido Village.

Dallas worked very hard and did remarkably well as a medical student. It was difficult for him as a husband, father, and active Latter-day Saint to find the time to do everything required of him. His wife was not always understanding of the time he had to spend attending medical school and studying. Dallas counseled frequently with the Stanford Ward Bishop, who helped him deal with his many challenges.

After graduation, Dallas returned to San Diego to work as a Navy Physician. His wife felt that now that he had graduated from medical school, he was in a position to buy several new cars and pay for other things that she believed the family needed. In order to afford these things, Dallas worked off base as a physician to earn extra money.

While I was serving in the Air Force in Albuquerque (because we graduated during the middle of the Vietnam War, every male graduate of my class was required to serve in the military except Dale Ream) I received a note that Dallas had died suddenly. I felt

that I had to attend his funeral in San Diego and flew there on military aircraft to do so. The funeral was held in an LDS chapel near the Naval Base. I was told by one of the attendees that there was some debate about whether or not to hold the funeral at the Church because - and this was a shock to me - Dallas had committed suicide. Apparently, the demands on Dallas were simply too great for him to bear. But the Bishop felt that the family should not be punished because of Dallas's act and held the service in the chapel. Nothing was said about the suicide.

During our clinical years, we rotated through each of the various clinical departments, with a large focus on internal medicine. But we spent time in neurology, neurosurgery, diagnostic and therapeutic radiology, ENT, ophthalmology, dermatology, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, general and sub-specialty surgery, psychiatry, and other areas such as industrial medicine, institutional medicine, and physical rehabilitation.

I have to confess that my main interest was cardiology and cardiovascular surgery. I idolized Norman Shumway, a pioneer heart transplant surgeon who spent many years developing the techniques for heart transplantation first in dogs, then in primates. He was frankly cheated out the chance to perform the first adult human-to-human transplant by Christian Bernard from South Africa. Bernard piggybacked on Shumway's work and was not as fastidious at choosing a candidate and donor for surgery. His heart transplant recipient died within a few weeks. In contrast, Shumway worked for more than a year trying to find the right



recipient, the right donor, and arrange sufficient blood transfusions to make it work. This caring approach delayed things and Bernard jumped in to capture the prize. Still, I had the chance to work with Shumway for a week. He pointed to a collection of charts for the surgical patients he would operate on during the ensuing week and encouraged me and his cardiovascular surgery residents to review them. I did much more than that. I committed all of the salient details of the cases to memory, learned the meaning of all of the terms used in cardiac surgery, and learned about the details of the procedures, themselves. So when Shumway would ask me about a patient, I was there with the answer, and more. He became quite impressed, learning my name and asking me details about his patients more frequently than even his fellows and residents, all of which I could answer. In fact, I thought I might be on track to be offered a place in his training program after finishing my internship. Then I forgot to attend an important clinical meeting until it was half-over. I raced to the meeting, but several of the patients I was to discuss had already been presented. Shumway was disappointed and later he told me that he was seriously considering offering me a slot in his cardiovascular training program until I missed the meeting. That was all it took. No mistakes. Miss a meeting and you are out! I was quite sad about it but by then, I had met Dr. Donald Harrison, a very bright, newly-minted cardiologist from Alabama who had spent several years doing cardiology research at the National Institute of Health (NIH) with Eugene Braunwald, the pre-eminent young cardiologist in the country at the time. Don had joined the

cardiology faculty at Stanford earlier that year. When I asked if I could help him with some research, he was very happy and took me on immediately.

Don asked me to help perform a clinical trial using propranolol on patients with atrial fibrillation, determining whether they could walk on a treadmill longer after using propranolol than without the drug. Eventually, the results were published in the New England Journal of Medicine, the first ever article on the study of propranolol in patients with atrial fibrillation, and was quoted in numerous future articles. He also took me to the dog laboratory and showed me how he used dogs to test drugs. He occasionally performed studies on an open dog heart and then euthanized the dog at the end of the study. I never liked such studies and decided that I would never become a research cardiologist that used dogs in this way. I decided during my internship year to give up my Berry Plan deferment (a deferment to complete studies in a particular area of medicine in exchange for a 1:1 year of military service for every year of specialty training) in cardiology in order to become an ophthalmologist. Don was most unhappy with me, since he had spend dozens of hours with me prepping me to study cardiology. Still, it was the right decision for me.

## **Shirley Sonne**

Shirley and I knew each other before I left on my mission and after I returned, but for many years, she had been dating another young man (David Bennion) quite seriously and steadily and

most people believed that that it would be just a matter of time before they would be married. But as fate would have it, they broke up after he returned from his mission in France and I stepped into the breach. I knew Shirley was a jewel. I was attracted to her immediately once I realized I had a chance to date her. I was poor and our dates reflected that, such as study evenings in one of the classrooms on quad. She invited me to help her chaperone a high school dance at Blackford High School in Campbell, where she was teaching. Shirley was only about three years older than some of her students and they would tease her by asking her to dance with them. My job was to break up the close clinches on the dance floor, which tended to anger the kids involved. After dating her for about 4 months, I took her to an AKL dinner and dance evening in San Francisco. We danced for several hours, which she loved (David Bennion was a klutz of a dancer). On the way home from San Francisco, I pulled over to the side of the road and asked her to marry me. My proposal was totally unexpected and shocked her. But a week later, she said "yes." One evening, she invited me to her home for a dinner which she had prepared. Unfortunately for me, it included asparagus, a vegetable which I can barely tolerate. I did eat it - very slowly - and had to confess to her that it was not my favorite vegetable! But otherwise, the dinner was wonderful and I told her so. During the summer months, I worked for Bishop Sant nailing sheeting on roofs so that I could afford the engagement and wedding ring we had selected together. (The rings were selected but placed on hold by the jewelers until I returned to Palo Alto later that summer and paid for them.). We wrote and called each other to stay in touch. On September 3, 1963, we

were married in the Los Angeles Temple by Shirley's grandfather, Alma Sonne, with her father and my father as witnesses. She later found out that I had actually written out a list of the qualities I wanted in a wife years before I met her and she has never quite forgiven me for comparing her to "my list." She loves to tell everyone the story of "my list" and how I married her because she "matched up." In fact, I married her because I fell in love with her, but sometimes, its hard to convince her of that!

## **Graduation and Internship**

I graduated from Stanford Medical School in 1966 and stayed there through the fall of 1967 as an intern and resident at the Stanford Hospitals. Our oldest son, John, was born in Palo Alto in September, 1967. But the Vietnam War was very hot at the time and when I decided to switch from cardiology to ophthalmology, I had to give up my Berry Plan deferment and enter the military service immediately. In fact, every male member of my medical school class was drafted into military service as a physician or voluntarily signed up for the military, except for Dale Ream, a paraplegic.

## **Military Service**

Initially, I was assigned to go to Panama for military service. I began studying Spanish and learning about Central America. But about a month before I was to enter the military, I received a call telling me that there was a new opening in Albuquerque, New

Mexico and asking me if I would be interested. I immediately chose Albuquerque!

When I went to the Presidio in San Francisco to arrange to ship our things to Manzano Base, where I was assigned, I was told initially that there was no such base! It was only an hour later after a call to Washington D.C. that the staff at the Presidio learned that yes, there was a Manzano Base, located entirely within another medical base, known at the time as Sandia Base, and now part of Kirtland AFB, in Albuquerque. Manzano surrounded a cluster of low hills inside of Sandia Base. A perimeter road surrounded those hills and from this road, there was access to a series of tunnels extending deep into those hills. The contents of those tunnels was top secret. A triple ring of high fencing surrounded the Manzano Base, the center fence charged with high voltage electricity. A cluster of buildings was constructed below the hill. The entrance to Manzano was a very imposing gate and with multiple guards. About 40 pick-up trucks with Browning Automatic Rifles (BARs) in the bed of each truck, each with an air policeman manning the BAR in the bed of the truck and two air policemen in the cab, slowly drove around the perimeter road day and night. The trucks followed one another and each truck was never out of sight of the truck in front of it or the truck behind it. I served my entire two years of military service at Manzano Base, living on Sandia Base. My duty was so light at Manzano that while I was in the military, I learned to play golf and ski, often on a free afternoon. Indeed, my duty was so light that the military did away with my job after I completed my tour of duty!

We lived on Sandia Base and while there we became friends with Richard and Priscilla Crockett, who lived near us. Richard was drafted right out of his general practice in Hayward, CA and had to close his practice to enter the military. But when he returned, so did his patients, who loved him for his kind and knowledgeable ways. His father had been a GP in Hayward when Richard was young and he decided to follow in his path, even moving into his father's office, rather than enter a medical subspecialty. Richard attended Stanford a few years before I did; however, I never knew him there.

Just prior to the end of my military service, I was approached by two men with a proposal. They knew that I had a top-secret clearance because of my job at Manzano Base. They explained that they had an opportunity for me to serve the government in Alaska that required such a clearance and that paid very well: \$500/day with double income on holidays (in my case, Thanksgiving Weekend, Christmas and New Year's Eve and Day)! My travel expenses both to and from Alaska would be paid as would all expenses while working. I discovered that the job involved traveling by air from Albuquerque to Amchitka Island far out on the Aleutians, two-thirds the way to Russia, where a ten-foot diameter hole was being drilled two miles deep underground. Once the hole was created, a hydrogen bomb would be lowered (very gently) to its bottom, the hole refilled with dirt, after which the bomb would be exploded. The government needed an "island physician" with a top-secret clearance to serve there while the project was undertaken. My job would be to provide sick call every morning, to visit those

who were ill and confined to bed, and to be available in case of an injury. Serious injuries would be cared for on the mainland.

During WWII, Amchitka was occupied by the military and all throughout this long, narrow island there were trenches and small, below-ground redoubts where the soldiers stayed. Once a soldier was stationed on Amchitka, he was there for the duration. Many soldiers were stationed there for four or more years, sleeping in their redoubts (except for those who manned the airfields and their hangers). There were one large and two smaller airfields on the island. Early on, the Japanese invaded one of the islands and our military was prepared to attack them and drive them off, but the Japanese, probably aware of our intentions, left the island before our soldiers arrived.

Most of the island's occupants while I was there were oil well drillers, many coming from Texas. Their pay was significantly greater than mine - something had to attract them to come - and the challenge for them was greater than anything they had seen in Texas. Smaller, diagonal holes were drilled into the main hole and the dirt was removed through these holes to create enough space for all of the earth that had to be removed. It took over a year to create the main hole.

There was a lot of opposition to this project, with many believing that the bomb would destroy the island, destroy much of the sea life around the island, and contaminate the ocean with radioactive debris. The government did not heed any of these protests and once the bomb was exploded, none of the predicted catastrophes occurred.

In addition to the pay, the other great incentive to serve there was the food. The government hired cooks from Las Vegas to come to the island. There was a four-page menu which included prime rib steak and other similar offerings. You were not limited in your choices and I had prime rib at least three days a week, with potatoes and gravy and a variety of desserts.

Two other attractions were a movie theater and a pool hall. The movies were not the latest attractions and I only viewed about three while there. I loved to play pool but there was often a line of men who also wanted to play and I refused to wait for an hour or so to get my turn.

The medical clinic was located on the far side of the largest airfield and so I had to drive around the airfield to get to the mess hall and the other facilities, including most of the bedrooms for those who stayed on the island. Storms were bred in and around the Aleutians so it was not uncommon that a mini-storm would blow across the island while I was driving from my clinic (and bedroom) to the mess hall for a meal. The storms were often severe, with rain, sleet, and snow, but they were small and within 10-15 minutes, they came and went. About five or six storms crossed the island each day. As they moved south and east, the storms merged and by the time they reached Washington and the rest of our west coast, they were full-fledged rainstorms.

When I returned to the U.S. mainland, I was \$33,000 richer. Shirley had moved with our two children from Albuquerque to Palo Alto to stay with her parents. I arrived there, stayed



overnight, and then drove my family to Southern California to begin my job at the Jules Stein Eye Institute.

### **Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI)**

While in the military, I applied for an ophthalmology residency at several places, including Dallas, Texas, and UCLA. After interviewing at Dallas, I was offered a residency position on the spot, but I asked for a month to consider the offer and then traveled a week later to UCLA. I interviewed with several faculty members there, including Bradley Straatsma, Chief of the Department and Tom Pettit, probably the brightest and most knowledgeable member of the JSEI faculty. He was also an active member of the Church. I told them that I had already been accepted to one residency program, that I would definitely come to UCLA if accepted, but had less than a month to accept the offer at the other program. Fortunately for me, Tom Pettit called me a week later to offer me a place at UCLA. Several years before, Jules Stein, who trained as an ophthalmologist but subsequently became a show business entrepreneur, approached Dr. Straatsma in the basement of the medical center, where the eye department was located, and asked if he would be interested in having Dr. Stein build an eye institute building on the UCLA campus. Of course, he and the other members of the faculty were thrilled at the idea. When I joined the program, the Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI), by then three years old, was a beautiful marble palace - no expense spared. The research labs and pathology laboratory were in the basement of the new facility, the outpatient clinics were on the first floor, the faculty offices and the operating rooms were on the second floor, and the inpatient

facilities (at that time, cataract surgery and retinal surgery were inpatient procedures) were on the top (third) floor. I spent 4 1/2 years at the Institute. It was a good learning experience.

Shirley and I looked for a home to buy once we arrived in West Los Angeles. There were some very old and small homes just south of the Los Angeles Temple which we checked out. We both felt that they were inadequate for our needs and, given their age, might have some serious structural problems during our four plus years in Los Angeles. We then drove out to the San Fernando Valley and looked for a home. After checking out several older homes, we found a newly built home in Northridge with three bedrooms and two baths. Shirley was happy with the home and, after checking out the local elementary school, the school. We decided to purchase the home for \$42,000. With the money we had saved, the money we received on selling our Palo Alto home, and the money I earned in Alaska, we had sufficient funds to pay for the home with several thousand dollars to spare.

While living there, Shirley and I suffered through fires, an earthquake, the Santa Ana winds, and the world's most rigidly conservative ward we have ever lived in (Women did not pray or give talks in sacrament meeting in that ward and the stake president cancelled sacrament one day when he learned that a priest had purchased the sacrament bread 30 minutes prior to sacrament meeting. It was the only time I attended sacrament meeting without being offered the sacrament!)

Having been trained to do research at Stanford, I quickly found an opportunity to research an eye disease at JSEI. I was asked as

a first year resident to examine the eyes of a very sick patient on the medical ward of the main hospital who was complaining of poor vision. On examination, I found that he had several “white spots” on the surface of his retina, close to the macula. I reviewed his medical history and discovered that in addition to being very sick with cancer and bacterial sepsis, he had grown *Candida Albicans*, a white fungus, from a blood culture. I had the patient transported to JSEI where a photograph was taken of both retinas. Less than a month later, I was asked to see similar sick medical patient with advanced cancer and a bacterial sepsis and again I found similar white spots on his retina. He too had grown *Candida Albicans* from a blood specimen. In both patients, the bacterial infections were treated successfully with antibiotics, but the patients died later presumably from their underlying diseases. I received permission to enucleate their eyes and had Dr. Fuchs, JSEI’s ophthalmic pathologist, examine them. He discovered that the “white spots” were filled with *Candida Albicans* filaments. He told me that such a finding was not rare in his lab, that he had about 10 similar cases. I subsequently reviewed the pathology reports of Dr. Fuch’s patients with *Candida* retinitis and discovered that virtually all of them had *Candida* infections throughout their body, in the liver, kidneys, heart and brain.

Over the next 18 months, I discovered four more patients who were very sick and who had white spots in their eyes. I convinced the infectious disease specialists to treat these patients with amphotericin B. They were very reluctant but I told them that these patients had disseminated candidiasis and needed

treatment. The treatment produced remarkable recoveries in all of these patients. I published these results in the New England Journal of Medicine and later reported my findings at a national meeting.

Dr. Bradley Straatsma, Chairman of the Department encouraged me to participate in another research project at JSEI. Dr. Straatsma is one of the most obsessive-compulsive individuals I have ever met and his request matched his OCD behavior. He asked me to develop a mechanical device that would manipulate instruments within the vitreous cavity. He was convinced that it would be impossible to manually maneuver intravitreal instruments without damaging the eye. Robert Machemer, who introduced vitreous surgery while on the faculty at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute at the University of Miami, was convinced that the fine dexterity of the hand would always be better than a mechanical device, but Straatsma believed otherwise. So I spent my “research year” at JSEI working with a master machinist at UCLA Medical Center to develop a device that would match Dr. Straatsma’s vision of an intravitreal manipulator. It consisted of two arcuate gear racks, with a vitreous cutter attached to the end of one of the arcuate racks. The first arcuate rack was attached at right angles to the second rack. In this manner, the cutter could be moved both vertically and horizontally along the arcuate racks, with the null point of the needle-like cutter positioned just anterior to the retina, at the pars plana. The cutter could be moved along the arcuate racks deep into the vitreous cavity, back towards the incision and all around inside the vitreous cavity.

Dr. Straatsma was so pleased with the device that he invited me to give a presentation at the prestigious Club Jules Gonin in La Baule, France, in April, 1974, describing the manipulator to the attendees. Retinal specialists around the world felt honored to even attend the Gonin Meeting, much less being invited to give a presentation. Only a small percentage of vitreoretinal surgeons were ever invited to become members of the Gonin Club, requiring both an invitation by another members of the Club and many publications about retinal and vitreous surgery.

I was required to prepare slides in both English and French summarizing the presentation, which were displayed on separate screens during the ten minute presentation. Bob Machemer approached me after the presentation and told me that it was a “unique” approach to vitreoretinal surgery. Time would tell, he opined, whether it would become widely accepted. Of course, the instrument was used ONLY at UCLA after I left JSEI by Dr. Krieger, the primary retinal surgeon at the institute, and he eventually set it aside to do the surgery manually, which became the international norm.

While in France, I also gave a presentation at the International Congress of Ophthalmology meeting in Paris on how Candida ophthalmitis (especially retinal lesions) usually indicated disseminated candidiasis, where lesions could be found in the liver, brain, heart and other organ systems.

### **Acupuncture for Dad’s Back Pain at UCLA**

While at UCLA, I learned that the anesthesia department was conducting a study on acupuncture to determine if it had real

value in treating pain. The department brought over a highly regarded acupuncturist from Hong Kong to perform treatments. I learned that the anesthesia department was seeking patients for the study. At that time, my father had severe Parkinson's Disease, with frozen limbs, difficulty initiating movement, a masked facies, and chronic depression. But he also had severe, chronic lower back pain, which had never been resolved and had persisted for several decades. I suggested to him and mother that he sign up for the trial, which was free of charge. With mother's encouragement, dad agreed to participate. Thus began a series of acupuncture treatments at UCLA, one weekly, by the Hong Kong acupuncturist who spoke only halting English. After the initial evaluation of my father, the acupuncturist explained through an interpreter that he would be able to relieve dad's back pain but that it would take eight treatments, since it was so severe, prolonged and complicated by Parkinson's Disease.

Dad agreed to the course of treatments and mother brought him to UCLA faithfully for each treatment. After several treatments, I asked my father if it was helping. I got a one word response: No. I told him that the acupuncturists had said that it would take eight treatments and that he should continue to come until the full course of treatment was completed.

Several days after dad's eighth treatment, I asked him again if he still had back pain. Again, he had a one word answer: No. The back pain was gone! The pain had been relieved with the 8th acupuncture treatment.

My father was not prone to suggestion and he had little hope that the treatment would work, but he agreed to undergo treatment anyway with the encouragement of my mother and I. Besides, the pain was almost constant and miserable. What could he lose? As is typical with Parkinsonian patients, his affect was flat and he showed little emotion when the pain disappeared. But I've always regarded it to be somewhat remarkable and a bit of a miracle that after all those years of back pain, the acupuncture treatment relieved it!

### **Trip through Eastern Europe**

Thirteen week trip largely through Eastern Europe but also briefly through several Western European countries during the summer of 1965.

### **Sacramento**

In 1974, we moved to Sacramento. We initially lived in the Sierra Oaks Ward boundaries for a year, then moved to our present home. I worked hard to build a practice. Shirley became president of nearly everything organization she joined: Elementary school PTA, High School PTSA, Ward and Stake Primary, Ward and Stake Relief Society, Medical Society Auxillary, and most important, her husband's life. We bought our home for the amazingly low price of \$69,000, spent another \$35,000 to remodel it, connecting the children's bedroom wing to the rest of the house and expanding the kitchen to front and back porches. Later, we added a pitched roof to the house, since there were leaks everywhere that we had to catch with buckets in multiple

rooms. Still, the house was a bargain and it is now worth more than \$1.5 million.

### **Trips to Switzerland (Jungfrau Gebiet)**

We took several fabulous trips to Switzerland, including my favorite spot in the world, the Jungfrau Gebiet, including Grindelwald, Schynige Platte, Lauterbrunnen, Wengen, Murren, Kleine Scheidegg, and the Bahn through the mountains Eiger and Mensch to the Jungfraujoch.

### **Our Children**

Shirley and I were blessed with five marvelous children. Our friends liked to talk about “the Griffin children,” who they thought of as five peas in a pod, all much more similar than different. I must confess that as look at the family portrait taken of the seven of us at the time of Richard Sonne’s funeral in Logan, there is a great physical similarity among all of our kids. But they are all different in many ways and Shirley and I celebrate their differences as much as their similarities.

Which child do we love the most? We have friends who have definite answers to that question. In contrast, Shirley and I have always told our children that we have great love for them all, that there is enough love in our hearts for each child and to spare. Although our children may disagree, we have no favorites now, although it was obvious that our first child, John, was the apple of our eye when he was growing up. That was especially evident to Laura, who for years had some difficulty forgiving us for doting on John and his activities and for having a blind eye to his mean



streak towards her. But I believe that at this point in our life, we are pleased with all of our children, with their academic achievements, their families, their continued faith in the Church and the restored gospel, and with the fact that each is the breadwinner for their respective family. Each has specific traits that we love and cherish.

## **John**

John was our first child, born at the Stanford Hospital on September 20, 1967, just several months before I entered the military. Shirley's parents loved John and my parents, who came up from La Canada to see him, adored him. They were pleased that we named him John, after me, my father, and a number of other direct Griffin ancestors.

As a small child in Albuquerque, a waterfall for John was a "batti-ball" and a fountain was a "batti-boom-boom." We remember how he loved to "hike," or run as fast as he could in whatever direction he chose. Once, while returning from a long hike in Yosemite to Nevada Falls, John took off down the trail, running as fast as he could. By the time I turned the other children over to Shirley and chased after him, he had disappeared, but people coming up the trail told me that, yes, they had seen a young boy running down the trail 5 minutes previously. A half-hour later, I arrived at the bottom of the trail to find John, happy and waiting for us. I didn't have the heart to get angry, although I did tell him that his mother and I were very worried when he disappeared down the trail and that he should never do anything like that again.

John loved swimming and water polo and set the pattern for those sports for the rest of our boys. He pitched in Little League.

John was an outstanding student from elementary school on, chosen as the best student in his graduating class at Arden School and valedictorian at El Camino High School.

John was accepted to both Stanford and Harvard and when it came time to send in his acceptance letter, he filled out the acceptance form and sealed the envelopes for both schools and wouldn't tell us his choice until we got to the post office, when he put the Harvard envelope in the post office box. It was a shock for us, both Stanford graduates, and a monumental decision for John, one that affected the rest of his life - his later schooling, his wife, children, and - frankly, his personality, which became much more serious and noticeably less joyful.

Harvard was hard on John. His prep school classmates were easily a year ahead of him in education, but he chose the advanced courses anyway and struggled to keep pace. His first year calculus teacher was from France and could barely speak English. His roommate was from Mississippi and was one of the most courteous and polite young men I have every met: "Yes, sir, Yes ma'am, and lots of Thank You, Please and You're Welcome.

John served his mission in the Frankfurt, Germany. He excelled as a missionary. During his first year, he served in Fulda, a city well known by the U.S., German, and Soviet military for the nearby "Fulda Gap," the only passageway through a north-south mountain range in Germany through which Russia could move its tanks, other heavy military equipment and soldiers in the event of

a future conflict between the Soviet Union and the West. The Soviets had many divisions stationed near the eastern side of the Gap and the Western powers, primarily the U.S. forces, has its divisions in and around the city of Fulda to prevent movement through the Gap. John and his companion explored the border between East and West Germany and talked to military personnel stationed in Fulda.

John's mission president encouraged his missionaries to expend extra effort to find and baptize people in their respective areas during the last half of John's first year in Germany. John and his companion succeeded in this effort far beyond the achievements of the other missionaries. As a result, John was invited to be the President's Second Counselor at the end of his first year.

Normally, missionaries were called to that position only during the last few months of their mission. John was instructed to tour the mission and teach other missionaries how to have the same success that John had experienced. John was a stern taskmaster and he succeeded sometimes by fear rather than love, but success was the goal and baptisms increased throughout the mission during that second year.

In part, baptismal success was the result of the construction, open house and dedication of the Frankfurt Temple. John served with his companion as a tour guide at the Temple during its open house and he met a number of people both directly and by contacting persons who indicated in writing after their Temple tour that they would like to know more about the Church.

I'm sure that John will elaborate on his mission experience in his own personal history, so I'll conclude my discussion here.

Despite his rough beginning, John also excelled at Harvard and graduated Phi Beta Kappa. He went on to study political economy at MIT, finishing his PhD in three years.

John met his wife, Jill Cheney, at the Cambridge Ward near Harvard. Students from all over the Boston area came to the Cambridge Ward for Church. On the Sunday Shirley and I visited John, there were more than 175 students (and others) attending Church. Jill was working on a PhD in physical chemistry, having been admitted to BYU as a Kimball Scholar, graduating with top honors at BYU and spending a year at Oxford working with her father, who was also a physical chemist who worked for Upjohn in Michigan, which later merged with Pharmacia and Pfizer. John said that he loved the thoughtful and well-informed responses Jill gave to questions in Gospel Doctrine class at the Cambridge Ward and her soft, melodious voice. He began to date her in his senior year and they were married in the Oakland Temple, in August, 1991, three days before Laura and John Paul Kennedy were married, since there was no temple close to Kalamazoo, Michigan.

After graduating from MIT, John moved to Provo, Utah, and taught political science at Brigham Young University for several years, the only major university that offered him a path to a tenured faculty position.

John became disillusioned with the Political Science Department at BYU when they essentially fired his best friend in the

department, who also had a law degree. Later, John spoke to him after he had obtained a new job as a lawyer and he told John that he was so much happier (and better off financially) in his new job than at BYU. John listened carefully and later decided to apply to the University of Chicago Law School and obtain a law degree, leaving BYU, despite assurances from his department chairman that he would not be rejected for tenure.

At the University of Chicago Law School, he was invited to join the Law Review in his second year. After graduation, he was offered a job at Munger, Tolles & Olson where he worked for four years as an associate. The working environment was tense and after his fourth year at Munger, John began searching for opportunities at another firm and eventually moved to Colorado to work for Bartlett Beck, where he became partner after a year. He was quite happy at Bartlett Beck and worked at the firm for more than a decade. The senior merger/acquisition attorney at the firm retired in early 2022, creating a lot of extra work for John.

John concluded that the stress from practicing law was severely affecting his health. He decided to submit his resignation at Bartlett Beck and, like Jill before him, become a school teacher. Because both of them love the Denver area and their ward, they didn't want to move to Utah, where John might have taught at BYU. Instead, John decided to teach at a public STEM school in Denver. He was asked to teach American History to 8th graders. It is clear that John loves teaching and interacting with his students. He and Jill, sharing a common profession, talk with

each other a lot about their respective teaching experiences. This has brought them closer together.

John and Jill have 5 children: Jasmine, Kate, John Benjamin, Mirielle and Jane.

## **Jasmine**

Jasmine, their oldest child, was born in Cambridge, Mass. while John and Jill were both still pursuing their graduate studies. Jill walked home from the hospital several days after giving birth with Jasmine in her arms and with John assisting her! John and Jill moved to Germany during a fellowship there and Shirley still remembers visiting them in an apartment near Berlin and watching John teaching Jasmine how to play chess at age 18 months! At every step in her education, Jasmine was exceptional. Shirley and I attended her high school graduation in Denver, where she received almost every award for graduating seniors, leaving almost no awards for her classmates.

She elected to attend Harvard and majored in applied mathematics. In her sophomore year, Jasmine was invited to help juniors and seniors understand the principles in an advanced mathematics course that she had completed with honors in her freshman year! She graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude at Harvard in Applied Mathematics. I took a photo of Shirley, John, and Jasmine standing together, three generations of Phi Beta Kappa recipients in our family. Jasmine accepted a job at Bain Capital. One month before she graduated from Harvard, she married Michael Burton, who graduated top of his class at MIT in aerospace engineering. Mike was enamored with

Jasmine's math skills. Once they went to New York to visit the National Museum of Mathematics and had their photo taken at the front door of the museum, which had a large pi sign on the front door handle! Mike eventually elected to switch from aerospace engineering to computer science. He now works online in Cambridge, MA, for a startup company in Provo, UT. Meanwhile, Jasmine is now a Vice President at Bain, soon to be promoted to Principal, which will for the first time grant her a share of the annual profits at Bain.

Finally, when they married, they chose to have a number of children. Four years ago, James was born, followed two years later by Jack. In early December, 2022, Jasmine delivered her first daughter, Lili Ann.

Mike and Jasmine were invited by one of Jasmine's former female colleagues, who moved to central Boston, to live in her 5,000+ sq.ft. home 30 minutes north of Boston. They hired a Mexican au pair to help care for the children. Mike and Jasmine each have an office in the home. In April, Jasmine will have to travel to Boston twice weekly but now she is enjoying the remainder of her five month postpartum recovery period.

## **Kate**

Kate attended Colorado State University, graduating in computer science. She obtained employment at a computer science firm in Denver and has done exceptionally well. She recently told us that she is very happy with her present work and has received both a promotion and a salary increase each year in recognition of her excellent work. Kate plays both the piano and the organ.

For years, she was the ward organist in a singles ward near her parents' home. Last year she elected to attend church near her apartment in downtown Denver and recently was assigned as organist there. Kate is on the high end of the autistic spectrum but in recent years one can hardly discern her autistic traits. She is not married, has no steady boyfriend, and rarely dates.

### **John Benjamin**

Jasmine, Kate, and John Benjamin all studied piano during their teen years. John Benjamin loves to compose piano pieces, as well. When visiting John, we would often listen to him compose music as he played the piano. However, he never wrote down his compositions. John Benjamin was active in scouting and earned his Eagle Scout award. When he received the award, Shirley and I flew out to Denver to witness the ceremony. I wore my scout uniform (which just barely fit) to the event and Shirley and I had our photograph taken with John Benjamin and with him and his parents. John was accepted to BYU and chose to attend college there. He majored in computer science but after five years, he still has one course to complete before he can receive his degree in that field. Currently, he works at BYU supervising several of the housing units there.

### **Mirielle (“Miri”)**

The most social of their children, Miri rose to preside over her classes at elementary, middle, and high school. She is a swimmer and spent hundreds of hours each year practicing and participating in swim meets, including out of state to regional meets. She also taught swimming and worked as a lifeguard at



her neighborhood pool during the summer. She is an outstanding student as well.

Miri entered MIT last year and swam for MIT. She decided to serve a mission starting in September, 2022, was sent to one of the missions in Spain, and spent her first six months in cities along the northwestern coast on the Bay of Biscay. Before leaving on her mission, one of Miri's swim team friends asked her if he could attend church with her. After a month's attendance, he decided to be baptized! This was Miri's first "missionary baptism," even before starting her mission! Although she and her companions have taught many people the missionary lessons and many of these have attended Church, no one has yet been baptized.

### **Jane**

Jane is interested in business and was invited to attend a nationwide business conference for HS seniors in June, 2022. She was recently accepted to BYU with a full, four-year scholarship. She will probably accept the offer, although she is waiting to hear from several East Coast universities.

### **Laura**

Laura, our second child, was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, while I was serving in the Air Force at Manzano Base. Shirley took so long to have John that after I drove Shirley to Sandia Hospital once labor had begun, I went home to take care of John for an hour or so. I finally asked our neighbors to look after John while I went back to the hospital, thinking that I would have a

long wait before the birth. Well, I arrived just outside the delivery room to hear the cry of a newborn and was told by the nurse that I had a daughter! We were both delighted. A boy and then a girl! We named her Laura, a beautiful-sounding name never used by either of our families. As things would turn out, Laura was our only daughter.

Although she grew up in John's shadow, Laura was equally talented and smart. She was regarded by her English teacher, Mr. Speakman, as an outstanding writer. That was an amazing complement, since Mr. Speakman was quite gruff and rarely gave praise to anyone. Students did everything they could to avoid his English class. However, Laura has always maintained that she appreciated Mr. Speakman, that he was an excellent English teacher who always treated her well. His wife, Mrs. Speakman, also an English teacher at El Camino High School, taught Laura AP English during Laura's senior year. She also told us about Laura's outstanding writing. In addition to academics, Laura played volleyball at El Camino.

Laura was accepted at Stanford but elected to attend BYU, since she thought there was a better chance of meeting active, faithful Latter-day Saint young men there. Paradoxically, she wound up meeting and falling in love with John Paul Kennedy while visiting John at Harvard, so her reason for attending BYU didn't bear the fruit she expected. Still, she had an outstanding education at BYU, taking honors classes which she believed were every bit as demanding as anything she could have taken at Stanford. She also attended BYU abroad, majoring in English and spending the bulk of her time in London, although, as part of

her experience, also spent several weeks in Israel at the BYU facility there. She graduated with great honors at BYU and later attended BYU Law School with John Paul (JP). Although JP earned both a JD and an MBA while at BYU, his grades were average whereas Laura's grades were exceptionally good. She was offered highly desirable positions after graduation. She served as the law clerk for a Federal Judge in SLC for eight years - unheard of, since most clerks serve for only one or two years - and finally joined Parr Brown law firm in Salt Lake, where she was made Junior Partner after two years.

John Paul became a permanent house husband for their family while Laura practiced law. That arrangement has worked out well for Laura, who never could have become a senior partner in her law firm if John Paul hadn't remained at home caring for the family.

## **Robert**

Their oldest child, Robert, was an outstanding student in high school. He was accepted to Harvard but chose first to serve a mission in Samara, Russia. He returned home in the summer of 2018 and began his university education. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he had to take courses on-line during the spring of 2020.

Robert was also an A student at Harvard who worked very hard to maintain his grades. He graduated from Phi Beta Kappa (our second grandchild to earn that honor), magna cum laude with highest distinction in his major, organic chemistry.

Rob has decided to continue his organic chemistry studies in graduate school and was offered opportunities to do so at UC Berkeley, Northwestern, University of Chicago, UCLA, Stanford, Cal Tech, and Scripps Institute. He decided to accept a five year all expenses paid offer at Stanford to complete his PhD.

Robert has been very close to a non-Mormon girlfriend, Liliana, since his freshman year at Harvard. She was invited by Robert to move into his apartment at the beginning of his graduate studies in Chemistry at Stanford. He seems to have lost his faith in the Gospel and no longer attends Church. We and his parents are very sad about this.

### **Matthew**

Matt grew up in the shadow of Robert, but Laura made certain that Matt was recognized for his achievements and abilities just as much as Robert, not wanting him to suffer from lack of proper recognition as she felt she had been. Matt and JP were close, especially during the years he played soccer. Matt served a two year LDS mission in San Diego.

Matt was accepted to BYU and chose to attend there. We believe that he will excel in his studies in computer science. He has already developed a number of friends in Provo and periodically returns home on the weekend to be with his family.

### **Elizabeth**

Elizabeth (“Liz”) elected to attend Utah Valley University (UVU) after completing high school. She is a good student but she has

developed several health problems that severely interfere with he classwork.

## **Mark**

Mark, our middle child, had the shortest fuse of all of our children when he was young. It didn't take much to get him to yell and scream about something that upset him. He also had the shortest attention span when studying, so much so that Shirley had to sit with him when he was doing his homework so that he wouldn't get mad at some assignment and quit or just get tired of sitting there at the table doing homework. Mark took piano for several years before informing us that it was boring and he wasn't going to do it anymore. He did play soccer and little league baseball, although he never was an all star like John and David. I always worried about Mark when he was young, whether he would be able to earn the grades, compete in athletics, and have the temperament to do well at a highly competitive college like Stanford.

One day, I came home from the office to discover that Mark had taken an ax to the beautiful oak tree just outside the kitchen window and had succeeded in gouging it pretty severely. It was possible to plaster the wound with a healing compound and then cover it over with tar, but there was still a chance that the wound would be fatal. I was absolutely furious at his thoughtless act of vandalism that was likely to result in the death of that oak tree.

However, before lighting into him, I remembered Prospero's comments in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "The cloud- capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe

itself—Yea, all which it inherit—shall dissolve, and like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep. . . . Bear with my weakness. My old brain is troubled. Be not disturbed with my infirmity. . . . A turn or two I'll walk to still my beating mind.” This caused me to also “still my beating mind.”

When I finally sat down with Mark, I told him: “Mark, what you did to our oak tree made me very upset. I felt like spanking you. That oak tree may die soon. Almost certainly, it will die sooner than it would had you not taken an ax to it. But God has promised mother and me that you will be our son forever, part of our eternal family. I want you to remember me as someone who is thoughtful, loving and willing to forgive. So even though the probable loss of the oak tree hurts me, I forgive you. I love you much more than I love any tree. The oak tree did eventually die, probably from oak root fungus rather than the ax injury, but I love Mark and feel close to him. He and his family remain an important part of my life.

Years later, Mark mentioned this experience in a Priesthood Quorum lesson, and he began to weep as he recalled it. My attitude and willingness to forgive him for something he realized was wrong had a profound effect on Mark and he will remember our conversation for the rest of his life. I am so glad our Heavenly Father caused me to think about Prospero’s comments in the Tempest before confronting Mark.

By the time Mark turned sixteen, he had undergone a major transformation. He was an outstanding student in school, he loved being on the swim and water polo teams, he was handsome and the girls in school loved him, and despite the decisions of John and Laura not to take advantage of their proffered admissions to Stanford, Stanford still admitted Mark. John Bunnell, a Latter-day Saint who was my year at Stanford and later became part of the Stanford Undergraduate Admissions Committee, told Shirley that if Mark turned down Stanford, no Griffin child would ever again be offered admission! Mark did choose Stanford and graduated with honors in biology. He met and married smart, short and cute Jolie Gardner, also a Stanford graduate. He was accepted to Columbia Medical School, where he met several other LDS students. It seems that Columbia was the only top-tiered medical school at that time that gave caucasian men the same level of consideration for admission as Asians, Blacks, Latinos and women. Several of these LDS medical students became close friends, studied together, and most ranked near the top of their class. Later, Mark was offered a slot in the Head and Neck residency program at the University of Iowa, regarded as the best ENT program in the United States. He now lives in Grand Junction, CO, where he had developed a outstanding reputation as an ENT - Head and Neck Surgeon. Mark is very generous with his means. After serving for nearly a decade as the Stake Membership Clerk and as a member of the Bishopric of the married student ward in NYC while attending Columbia, he is now his ward's Elders Quorum President. He and Jolie have four children, two sons and two daughters, and live in a home that eclipses our own in size and beauty. During my

recovery from my ankle fracture he called me almost every other day to check on my progress.

## **Sarah**

Sarah is Mark's oldest child. A beautiful young woman and remarkably athletic. When she was a young girl, she amazed us by successfully and repeatedly shooting baskets into the hoop of their driveway basketball standard while jumping up and down on a pogo stick! Over the years, she and her dad would come to Sacramento to visit and we loved our time with her. Sarah helped her parents prepare for the several family reunions we held at their home. She also accompanied her father on a visit to our school in northern Zambia. She is the only white girl any of those Zambian students had ever met, and they all sought to get close to her and touch her white skin and her long straight hair. Sarah tolerated this well and seemed to love her visit. She was an outstanding student, getting straight As throughout her high school career and being accepted to Stanford. We visited her once when she was living at Florence Moore Hall. In 2021, she did a quarter of study in Cape Town, South Africa with a small group of Stanford students and subsequently spent time becoming acquainted with Paris and northern France. Unfortunately, she had to attend her classes remotely during the pandemic years.

## **Jacob**

Jacob goes by "Jake" and like Sarah, was an outstanding student in high school, being elected "Best Boy" (male student body president) in his senior year. I still remember how Jacob would jump from the sofa to a chair and then to another location and



then back to the sofa, often jumping up and down multiple times on one piece of furniture, when he was a child.

Unfortunately, Jacob lost his testimony of the Gospel during high school, even having difficulty believing in God. Jake seems to be doing well at Stanford this year, although he elected to defer his college education for a year during COVID-19, since he did not want to attend his classes remotely. He is interested in computer science, artificial intelligence, and education and hopes to work at a job which combines these areas.

Jake has always had difficulty finding food that he likes. This initially created problems at Stanford, but lately he largely appears to have solved them. Jake is short (5 foot 6 inches). He has a very close relationship with Jolie. Mark no longer tries to convince Jake to pray and read the scriptures, since those efforts caused friction between them in the past. But Mark does try to call Jake and talk with him at least once a week.

## **Anders**

Shirley and I have had little experience with Anders. We know that he loves animals and has always had pets, often in a cage in his room. He reads about animals constantly. He just completed a trip to Africa and loved the experience of going on safari with Mark. Sarah joined them to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro successfully. They all loved the experience. Mark was able to draw closer to Anders on this trip.

## **Claire**

## **David**

David was born at the University Hospital at UCLA in May, 1974, during my last year of residency, just a week before I traveled to France to speak at the Jules Gonin Club in La Baule and then at the International Congress of Ophthalmology meeting in Paris. Shirley was not at all happy that I left her at home to care for our four children, including infant David, to go to France, although the trip was virtually required because of Dr. Straatsma's request that I speak at the Gonin meeting. Thank goodness her mother came down to help with the children while I was gone.

That is not the only time Shirley was stressed while I was away. In 1973, I was in Florida, attending the Cataract Surgery Congress in Miami, when a major earthquake struck just six miles from our home in Northridge, CA. The quake threw our grandfather clock across the room breaking all of the clock's glass. Fortunately, no one in the family was hurt, although there was no running water in our area for several days. Instead, a "water truck" drove around the valley, supplying enough drinking water for us and the other families affected by the break in the water supply. Also, we were very fortunate that the dam above the valley didn't break, since the water would not only have flooded thousands of homes but the primary source of water for the San Fernando Valley would have been destroyed until the dam was repaired, many months later.

Anyway, that was the last straw for Shirley. Any thought of my remaining in Southern California to join the JSEI faculty was

destroyed. We were moving north - to Sacramento, as it turned out, because of the recommendation of Shirley's dad, Richard Sonne. Shirley would not hear of any change in those plans.

David was fun when he was young. He has always been a good athlete. His only "problem" was that he loved to "copy" what Mark was doing, which often made Mark angry. In fact, for several years, Mark would fly off the handle at any little thing that David did to upset Mark. Once, he ran down our long bedroom hallway with a baseball bat in his hand and when David escaped into the large back bedroom, Mark smashed the bat down on the closed bedroom door, creating a large, unfixable dent in it. This and other events caused Shirley and I to consider building an attic room with a stairway in the laundry room that would reach the room in the attic. It would be a long, narrow room with a roof that sloped southward except for the dormer window. We had Cal Price come over and estimate the cost of construction: over \$25,000! All to separate our two sons!

Shirley took Mark aside and told him that were he to harm David in any way, or even continue his aggressive behavior against his brother, that she would send him to Palo Alto to attend the military academy there. Grandma Sonne could look in on him from time to time, but there he would learn discipline, especially how to control his temper. The folks at the military academy would punish him for any infraction. It would not be pleasant. The thought of having to leave home, family, his ward and his friends scared Mark and he promised to cease his behavior towards David. And he did! Suddenly and permanently. Shirley figured out how to end Mark's anger without spending a large

sum of money and ruining her laundry room. She also had a talk with David and told him that he was to stop “copying” Mark or aggravating him in any other way or she would find a way to make his life miserable. Eventually, the two boys learned to like each other and both swam on the team at El Camino HS and played water polo. Both boys were made “King” of the Senior Ball and each was honored as El Camino’s top scholar/athlete in their senior year.

While in high school, David spent every day of the year participating actively in sports: swimming, water polo, and basketball. Although all of our children were active in sports, none were as involved as David. In fact, David was named a Junior All-American water polo player, a great honor. He played “hole-set,” requiring him to stay high in the water with an “egg-beater” kick for many minutes during the game. Other players tried to pass the ball to David, who was positioned in front of the opponent’s net. David would then try (and often succeed) to score a goal by zipping the ball past the goalie. He was the high scorer in most games.

David was very disappointed when he was called to serve a mission in Virginia rather than to a German-speaking mission, as did John and Mark (and later, Craig). But he excelled as a missionary and eventually became Assistant to the Mission President. We enjoyed meeting him and his Mission President at the conclusion of his mission and traveling around Virginia with him to meet several of the families he taught, as well as visiting Williamsburg and Washington D.C.

As he grew to adulthood, David became our kindest and most thoughtful child. Even now, he calls us frequently, meets all of the numerous demands of his wife and children without complaint, serves the Church with diligence, and seems very happy except when he is sick. He gave up a promising career when he moved from Contra Costa to Utah to enable Rebekah to be close to her family, particularly her mother, and has struggled ever since to find a job that pay as well and fully utilizes his talents in banking and business as his job did in Northern California. But he never complains and he always finds good things to say about everyone. Shirley feels that he should have been a dentist. He works well with his hands, is well-liked by everyone, and would have done very well running a practice. But that is no longer a choice for him.

David and Rebekah have four boys: Benjamin, Eli, David (Davy), and Ricky. Their youngest child is a daughter, Debi. Two years ago, Rebekah insisted that David leave their home. She changed the locks to the home's doors. David spent more than a year trying to convince Rebekah to welcome him back into their home, without success. Meanwhile, Rebekah continued to ask David for increased funds to attend counseling and courses on writing. It finally became apparent to David that there would never be a reconciliation. David filed for divorce, which after many months of failed negotiation finally resulted in a divorce agreement satisfactory to them both. The divorce was concluded in June, 2022. David is now free to seek other acquaintances and has dated several women since the divorce was final. He has made a great effort to remain close to his children and they live

with him part time in his apartment. Rebekah insisted on retaining their house, where the children stay about 60% of the time.

David suffers from more illness than any of our other children. In particular, he has suffered intermittently from a constriction in his distal esophagus, causing sudden projectile vomiting and severe pain. He has undergone mechanical dilation of the distal esophagus several times. With time, the problem seems to be lessening.

David loves scouting and went with his older sons to many scouting events. He continues to attend similar events with Ricky. David's favorite hobby is woodworking and he has made some amazing things, including a huge entertainment cabinet. For Christmas, 2016, he made us a beautiful inlaid chess board.

**Benjamin, Eli, David (Davy), Ricky, and Debi**

## **Craig**

Craig is our youngest child. He is our only child who did everything without requests or reminders. He got up early, made his bed, fixed his breakfast, went to school on time, minded his teachers, did his homework, and often went into his bedroom, changed into his pajamas, and went to bed and to sleep without saying a word to us. It is good that he was our last child, since we would have been spoiled had he been first.

At about age two, he stopped talking unless spoken to. We were concerned that he had lost his hearing, but tests showed normal hearing. Still, we had his pediatrician insert hearing tubes in both ears.

Fortunately, he had one friend he loved being with: Jonathan Wunderlich. They loved playing Monopoly together and often kept a single game going for days, since they insisted that one of them had to go broke for the other to win. It was clear that he behaved normally around Jonathan, teasing, laughing, and conversing normally with him. But with his sibs and parents, teachers and most classmates, he was quiet and somewhat shy, rarely looking anyone in the eye. He loved to read and learn new things, was very good at math and science. As opposed to our other three sons, he never showed any interest in biology or the field of medicine.

Craig was accepted to Stanford University. He quickly chose computer science as his major and explained to us how he loved to achieve a goal through the process of algorithms. Craig did have a group of bright friends at El Camino High School, including Jessica Lehman, daughter of my personal physician, David Lehman. Jessica had spina bifida that kept her confined to a wheelchair most of the time but that didn't prevent her from attending Stanford. Several other friends were also accepted to highly competitive universities. By then, Craig was no longer awkward and he got along well with selected high school peers. Craig played tennis throughout high school. I believe that if he had chosen to do so, he could have been a very competitive tennis player, but that would have involved playing tennis every

weekend, including Sundays, and like our other children, he chose to remain active in the Church rather than pursue conflicting interests. Craig became good friends with Brandon Badger at Stanford. The both loved to play tennis and often played with each other. Brandon joined the Stanford Tennis Team. However, the coach used him solely to play against other members of the team but never to play competitively against tennis players from other schools. He still received a letter in Tennis and was given special privileges, like sitting in seats reserved for team players during tennis matches held at Stanford.

Craig served an LDS Mission in Switzerland. Interestingly, so did his wife, Becky, but they saw little of each other while in Switzerland. It was only later, when Craig and Brandon elected to spend a summer in Provo, near Brandon's home there, trying to develop a website that sold tennis gear, that he got together with a group of returned missionaries who served in Switzerland. When he mentioned to them that he was looking for a running partner, one friend suggested Becky Everett. But he was warned that she was training to run a marathon. Undeterred, he called Becky and asked her if he could join her during her runs. She agreed, with the proviso that she would not alter her schedule and that if he couldn't keep up with her, she would keep going and leave him behind. This is what happened initially, but eventually, he was able to keep up and run several miles and then up to twelve miles with her, and their friendship grew along with running together. When it came time for him to return to Stanford in the fall, Craig called us and said that he had decided to spend another three



months at BYU. That time was spent mainly to become well acquainted with Becky and by Christmas, we learned that she had accepted a proposal of marriage from him.

Craig returned to Stanford to complete his junior year in Computer Science (CS) and Becky remained at BYU to complete her nursing studies. She graduated with honors in Nursing that spring. They were married in the Oakland Temple after her graduation. While Craig completed his final year at Stanford they live in a high rise on campus for married students. Becky was able to find a job nursing at Stanford Children Hospital. Craig graduated in the spring of 2001, at the height of the crash of the tech companies in Silicon Valley, following their meteoric rise in the late 1990s. The crash was inevitable, since venture capitalists on Sand Hill Road had for years been funding start-ups with little or no prospects of succeeding and reality finally caught up with the fervor in the Valley. During the CS graduation ceremonies at Stanford, several of the new graduates who had been unable to find a job wore billboards over their graduation gowns that read “Can Code - Willing to Work!” Fortunately, Craig was able to find a job. He really wanted to go on to get a master’s in CS but because of an unfortunate situation where one of his partners did absolutely no work on a joint project they had in a class during his sophomore year, his GPA was just low enough that he was not considered for the Master’s Program, even after he told the admissions committee the reason for his one “C” in his sophomore year.

As it turns out, it was probably a blessing in disguise, because after four year working for Kanisa, he landed a new job in March,

2005, at Lab 126, a small division of Amazon that was in the early stages of developing the Kindle. Craig summarized his 9 years at Lab 126 as follows:

- - Built and led development of many of the Java-based applications running on all versions of the Kindle e- ink devices.
- - Developed UI controller toolkit/framework that is now used by most applications running on our e-ink devices
- - Engineering lead of system apps team
- - Wrote Kindle Store application, which allows users to search for, buy, and download e-books/digital periodicals, directly from the device, in less than 60 seconds.
- - Fun fact: first apps developer hired by Lab126

The most important of these accomplishments was his creation of the Kindle Store. Jeff Bezos was so impressed that he flew down from Seattle to meet Craig when he learned that he had developed the Store - a feature Bezos had said early on was critical to Kindle's success. Walter Mossburg of the WSJ agreed and said that the Store made the Kindle different from all previous hand-held devices, in that it enabled users to directly download books to their Kindle without having to go through

their computer. The same sentiment was voiced in “The Everything Store,” a book about Bezos, although Craig was never mentioned by name in the book.

Craig and Becky eventually moved to Campbell, CA, to a 2,400 sq/ft townhouse on Campbell Avenue. They have two girls and two boys. Becky stopped working as a nurse at Stanford after Emma, her oldest, was born, but recently worked as a school nurse at a private school nearby when her youngest, Lucy, started pre-school. After working for Goodreads for a few years, Craig returned to Amazon proper, where he worked as a software development engineer in Cupertino.

Although Emma plays competitive soccer and often plays on Sunday, they all attend church on a regular basis. The family loves coming to our home and they all feel that it is their second home.

Late in 2017, Craig moved with his family to Austin, Texas, where the other half of his Amazon team works. Half in the Bay Area, half in Austin. As a condition for their approval, the children made Craig and Becky promise to spend every Christmas at our house. They purchased a large home with five bedrooms and a large back yard. Although Texas was initially a challenge for the family, especially Becky, they are adapting to life there and like their ward family a lot.

Emma, Bryce, Spencer, and Lucy

## **Bob’s Medical History**

## **Sleep Apnea**

On Monday, September 11, 2006, I drove to Folsom to undergo an overnight sleep study.

For many years, especially after I retired, I suffered from a form of chronic fatigue. By the time I was 60 y.o., even after an extended night's sleep of 8-9 hours, I awoke fatigued. My body ached and I remained tired and worn- out. Every task was a physical and mental chore. By early afternoon, I felt sleepy and by 3 p.m., I was ready for a nap, which I took most days of the week for 2+ hours. Often, I stayed awake until 11:30 p.m. or even 12:30 a.m. before I go to bed, because I know that even a long sleep will not be

restful. During the years I served as Bishop in the Ashton Park Ward in Sacramento, the deacons would bet when I would first fall asleep during sacrament meeting! Someone always won! Once, my counselor had to elbow me awake when it was time to close the meeting. Very embarrassing, but those close to me knew that I suffered from severe sleep problems. I sought help from a neurologist, Dr. Hsia, who believed that I had obstructive sleep apnea, recommended that I undergo a sleep study, obtain a definitive diagnosis, and begin treatment.

About half-way through the sleep study, the technician came into the "bedroom" and fitted me with a CPAP mask, turned on the machine, and invited me to keep it on the rest of the night. I had no problem accommodating to the mask and when I awoke again about 5:30 a.m. with an urge to urinate, I felt more rested than anytime in recent memory. The technician told me that I clearly

had sleep apnea and that my doctor would be contacting me within 72 hours.

Well, on Thursday afternoon, I forced the issue and called Sacramento Sleep Solutions (SSS) to get the data. I was told that I had unequivocal obstructive sleep apnea, with a respiratory arousal index of 37.6/hour, which increased to 50/hour when snoring was included in the calculation. The CPAP was set to 8 cm of pressure to overcome the obstruction. I then called my neurologist, told her that I had been diagnosed with sleep apnea, gave her the numbers, asked her to write a prescription, and then called the center again for CPAP fitting.

Friday morning, I went to SSS in Roseville<sup>37</sup> to be fit. Several machines were presented to me, but I wound up getting the Fisher & Paykel SleepStyle 600 machine, which heats the humidifier water and the tubing right up to the mask, to prevent condensation of the humid air as it passes from the humidification chamber down the tubing to the mask. This insures that the air passing into the nose and down the nasal passages into the throat remains humid, so that the airway passages do not dry out during the night.

The machine works by pumping air at a given pressure, determined during the sleep study to be efficacious, into the nose and airway, adding sufficient air pressure to keep the airway open, especially the oral pharynx, which commonly closes as the base of the tongue collapses onto the back of the oral pharynx during sleep. This continuous flow of air under pressure prevents apnea, hypoxia, and sudden wakefulness as the hypoxic stimulus

exerts its effect. Including snoring, I was going through an apnea/arousal episode about 50 times an hour or 400 times a night. It is no wonder that I was so fatigued. Think how you would feel if you were awakened by someone 400 times every night! Even if you couldn't remember the episodes, they would have a profound negative effect, including inappropriate drowsiness and sleeping spells during the day.

Later, the CPAP machine became increasingly unbearable: need it or not, the positive pressure from the machine was on continually, even when I attempted to expire, which made breathing out difficult. Increasingly, I set the mask aside and turned off the CPAP device in order to get a "restful" sleep, although I realized that by doing so the bad effects of sleep apnea persisted.

I subsequently learned about a new innovation called the BiPAP machine, that forced air into the airway on inspiration but reduced the forced flow of air during expiration, making expiration much more comfortable. I visited the Sutter Sleep Center to re-confirm my sleep apnea and they fitted me with a BiPAP machine. Once I was using it at home, it was much more comfortable to use and I found myself using it 6-8 hours a day with no ill effects except for dry mouth and nose. With daily use, my energy and sense of well being improved greatly and I slept much less during the day, especially during Church.

## **651 Fulton Avenue**

In 1999, after years of steady 20% growth in patients and income, we were bursting at the seams at 87 Scripps Drive, where we initially expanded from 1,100 sq. ft. to about 2,300 sq. ft. for the

same reason. File cabinets, desks, and even diagnostic equipment were placed in the hallways, since too various rooms were filled to overflowing. I told Brent Reed, my associate of 4 years, that we needed to plan another move, one that would satisfy our needs for years to come. We had a consultant come and he agreed. So we planned to buy, rent, or build a 8,000 foot facility that would accommodate not only our existing practice but an optical shop, an optometrist, and an excimer laser center for refractive surgery, which we expected to be approved in 1992 or 1993 by the FDA. We wanted our new office to be reasonably close to the existing office, since the majority of our patients came from the surrounding area.

We spent more than a year looking for potential new space, mostly rental space. We almost signed an agreement for a long term rental, but on reviewing the agreement, drafted by nasty NYC lawyers and unalterable, it was untenable and our lawyer recommended against it. Tenant improvements would have cost over \$1,00/sq.ft. and they immediately became property of the owner, not the tenant. Many other egregious clauses in the agreement gave us pause. Finally, although we liked the space and the location, we walked away.

Finally, we discovered a vacant piece of property behind Loehman's Plaza on the diagonal stretch of Fulton, which ran southwest towards Fair Oaks Blvd. It was a relatively unloved area, with several unkempt buildings on both sides of the street, but it was available. Eventually, the architect we chose was able to squeeze an 8,000 sq.ft. building we wanted on the lot and still provide sufficient parking for staff and patients. We bought the

property, then worked with the architect until the plans were finished, and then hired a construction firm to build the building. I went over to the site every day to watch progress and look for mistakes. Within weeks, I discovered that the builder had failed to plumb each exam room (for a wash basin) and the basic plumbing had to be replaced. Otherwise, construction went well and I had few other complaints. The architect also visited the site frequently and consulted each time with the builders. Eventually, the building was completed, the surrounding grounds were paved and planted, and we began to move in in 1991, a process that took about a week.

## **Reimbursement - Sudden Decline in Income**

That same year, 1991, both Medicare and Foundation Health Plan, the two major payers for health care services in Sacramento, lowered their reimbursement for medical services. Medicare introduced RBRVS, a method of calculating the value of a given service, which one analyst properly called “Really Bad, Really Very Soon.” In general, payment by Medicare for ophthalmology services was reduced by about 25-30%, but in the case of cataract surgery, reimbursement was lowered by a whopping 35-40%. Before RBRVS, eye surgeons were paid \$1,515 for a cataract surgery (without intraocular lens implantation). After RBRVS, reimbursement was dropped to a little more than \$1,000 with intraocular lens implantation, only to be lowered every year thereafter, so that by the time I retired, the fee we received from Medicare was about \$875 per eye.



At the same time, Foundation Health Plan (FHP) announced that they would reduce our fees so that they were in line with Medicare's fees and that they would cease paying us more than the additional 20% (Medicare paid 80% of the fee) of Medicare's fee, rather than paying us the difference between what Medicare paid and our standard fee for service.

These two changes in reimbursement cut our income by nearly 30-35% from those two providers. We provided care for almost twice as many patients as before (many of them came in primarily for refraction) and our total reimbursement rose no more than 10-15%. We were exhausted and began losing money each month, since our costs had increased (cost of the building, increased staff, and the optical shop). In particular, the optical shop lost money for nearly 18 months, since many of our patients already had relationships with other opticians and went to them for their glasses.

I finally concluded that FHP had lowered their reimbursement for an eye exam because they had agreed in most cases to provide optical services (glasses) to the patient, and that we had to capture that part of eye care in order to make money again. We began to pay more attention to our optical shop, increasing the quality and price of the frames and strongly encouraging our patients to buy their glasses from us.

During this difficult transition, we lost money every month for 18 months. The bank, initially quite willing to loan us money to cover our losses, became concerned as we kept asking for more money. We finally became indebted for more than \$500,000. It

was only with the intercession of our accountant, who met with the bank and reassured them that these losses would end, that they continued, reluctantly, to provide us with additional loans.

### **Illness Induced by Debt**

By 1993, both Brent Reed and I were physically ill. Brent had passed out several times and was rushed to the hospital to be sure than he hadn't suffered a heart attack. I finally realized that I was consuming a huge amount of sugar, urinating frequently, and feeling weak and dizzy. I obtained a glucose test kit and discovered that my blood glucose was 550 gm%, with normal being 80-120 gm%. At the time, I was negotiating with Sutter Medical Group (SMG) to head a small group of ophthalmologists to provide eye care to SMG's patients and my personal physician, Dr. Forster, was also the head of SMG and the man with whom I was negotiating, so I felt that I couldn't tell him about my health problems. As a result, I began seeing Dr. David Lehman, a former member of the group who had struck out on his own and created an independent medical practice, which was quite risky at the time in Sacramento. I told Dr. Lehman, who I knew as "Dave," about my problems and he began to help me by controlling my diet and putting me on some oral medication to combat the high blood glucose. He also discovered that I had high blood pressure (HBP) and high cholesterol and started me on medication to bring those two problems under control. Under his care, I began to feel much better and also, at his suggestion, I began to exercise, primarily by running, which greatly increased my sense of well-being.

## **Refractive Surgery**

Dr. Reed and I built the new building on Fulton Avenue in large part to create a facility to perform refractive surgery. We were convinced that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would approve refractive surgery for myopia by 1993. We were wrong. It wasn't approved until 1996! So the main source of future income for the practice was unavailable.

However, I decided that I needed to undergo refractive surgery if I were to recommend the surgery to others [at the time, the most acceptable refractive surgery was photo- refractive keratectomy (PRK)], which has supplanted radial keratotomy, and in 1993, while at the annual American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) meeting, I asked my friend, George Waring, a corneal surgeon who was preparing to become a U.S. leader in refractive surgery, who I should choose as my PRK surgeon. By then, the surgery had already been approved in Europe and in Canada. George told me to speak to Dr. Don Johnson from Vancouver, who was speaking on refractive surgery at a refractive surgery conference at the AAO meeting and who Dr. Waring regarded as one of Canada's best refractive surgeons. I did so and arranged to travel to Canada to undergo PRK in my non-dominant right eye.

While in Vancouver, I discovered that another ophthalmologist, Dr. Jerry Tennant, who practiced in Texas, was traveling to Dr. Johnson's practice with a group of his patients so that they might also undergo PRK. The arrangement he had worked out with Don Johnson was as follows: Dr. Tennant would recommend PRK to his patients, sign them up for surgery, provide the follow-up care

as well as transportation to and from Vancouver, arrange their hotel stay in Canada and their transportation from the hotel to Dr. Johnson's office/surgery center and back. Dr. Johnson would evaluate the patient at his office, determine the amount of PRK that should be done to fully correct the patient's vision, and perform the surgery. Dr. Johnson would keep 70% of the fee for surgery and the Texas surgeon would be given the remaining 30% for the things he did for the patient. Dr. Tennant paid for his own round trip transportation to Canada and for the cost of the van(s) required to transport his patients while in Canada. The patients paid for their airfare and for their surgery.

### **Taking Patients to Canada**

After undergoing PRK by Dr. Johnson, I asked him if I could make a similar arrangement for patients in my own practice. He readily agreed. When I returned to Sacramento, I told my partner, Brent Reed, about the arrangement and encouraged him to undergo PRK himself and join me in taking patients to Canada. He agreed to both, went to Vancouver to have PRK, and then we both began to suggest to our patients that they could travel with us to Canada and undergo surgery.

Within a month, we six of our patients had signed up for the trip to Canada. About a week before we left, Brent examined Jennifer Smith, a news anchor for CBS news in Sacramento, and told her what we were doing. She became very excited and pleaded with us to allow her to travel to Canada with our group and report on the experience. She said that it was amazing to her that U.S. patients who wanted PRK would have to travel abroad to have

the surgery and that despite the surgery's approval in Europe, the UK, and Canada, the FDA was withholding approval. We agreed to take her. She told us that her cameraman would be traveling with her, together with another assistant - would that be OK?

Well, the result was that Jennifer Smith was permitted to observe the PRK surgeons and her cameraman was permitted to film the proceedings. One of Brent's patients was severely nearsighted. We called ahead and asked Don Johnson if he could successfully treat someone with seven diopters of astigmatism and he told us he could. When that patient got up from the operating table and took a look around, she burst into tears and said that she couldn't remember ever seeing that well. All of this was recorded on film.

When we returned, Jennifer created a five minute story of our trip, including the experience of the strongly nearsighted patient, and within a few days showed it on the 10 pm news. The station received more than five hundred phone calls (!) within an hour after the broadcast asking for more information. As Jennifer told us, the only other time that the station had received that many phone calls was when the first war with Iraq was announced. So the station decided to

re-broadcast the segment on PRK at the 7 am newscast. This time, they received more than 600 phone calls! The station manager told Jennifer that they couldn't deal with so many calls and from that point on, all calls were referred to our office!

Needless to say, we were inundated with calls. We decided to hold an evening meeting to describe PRK and our trip to Canada and more than 100 people showed up. More than half arranged

appointments and about 25 of those asked us to take them to Canada for surgery. From then on, through word of mouth and through additional referrals from the TV station, we held 1-2 meetings a week and for several months, more than 50 patients a month requested PRK in Canada. On one trip, both Brent and I rented large 15 passenger vans (forbidden in the U.S.) to accommodate the 26 patients on that trip.

For about six months, we travelled to Vancouver once or twice a month with PRK patients. The Sacramento Bee published an article about our trips. Many of our colleagues were unhappy with us and expressed their thoughts to the media, but that only increased the number of people calling us to inquire about refractive surgery.

### **FDA Approval of PRK**

In the fall of 1995, the FDA approved the use of the Summit excimer laser for simple nearsightedness. We regarded the Summit laser as a piece of junk and couldn't understand why that laser was approved before the VISX laser, which was far superior. It turns out that Summit's representative to the FDA, an attractive woman, seduced the individual in charge of excimer laser approval and induced him to approve their laser before all of the evidence of its effectiveness was available. So Brent and I, who had already ordered a VISX laser, had to cool our heels while another group of ophthalmologists in Sacramento immediately purchased a (\$500,000) Summit laser and began treating patients. We told our patients that the VISX laser was far superior to the Summit laser and advised them to continue

traveling to Canada for treatment rather than going to our competitors for care. Finally, in February, 1996, the VISX laser was approved for mild, simple (no astigmatism) myopia. We still recommended traveling to Canada for more severe myopia and for myopia with moderate to severe astigmatism. But slowly, the FDA increased the degree of myopia that could be treated and by the beginning of 1997, astigmatism treatment was approved. Increasingly, we began to perform PRK ourselves rather than taking patients to Vancouver.

## **Switch to LASIK**

LASIK was being done by a few surgeons in the U.S., but the microkeratome (the instrument used to create the corneal flap, beneath which the excimer laser treatment was performed,) was crude and often failed to create a satisfactory flap. We were reluctant to do LASIK because of this problem. By late 1998, a new microkeratome was introduced which worked well in almost every instance. We took a course on the use of this new instrument and subsequently we began to perform LASIK. The benefit of LASIK is that patient recovery was almost immediate. By the day after surgery, patients were seeing well with no pain or discomfort. With PRK, the corneal epithelium was removed almost completely to perform the surgery and it took two or three often painful days before the epithelium healed, the pain

disappeared, and the patient could see well. Patients were much happier with LASIK than PRK. So within a year, almost all refractive surgeons were performing LASIK and refractive surgery became much more attractive to patients with myopia and astigmatism.

## **Patrick Rooney**

During our trips to Vancouver, I met Patrick Rooney (Pat), an entrepreneur from NYC who was attempting to convince Don Johnson to join with several other busy Canadian refractive surgeons to create a company comprised of such surgeons and their surgery centers, which could later be taken public, with shares sold on a stock exchange. As Pat like to say, with stock we are talking multiplication (P/E ratio), not addition (calculating the value of a private practice), meaning that the value of such a public company could be many fold greater than that of an individual practice. Pat Rooney claimed that he already had several Canadian surgeons interested and that he needed Don to commit to get them also to commit to become a public enterprise.

## **Nemmo Bay**

It was with Pat Rooney and his son that Brent and I and our wives joined Don Johnson and his wife on one of the more spectacular trips we have ever taken. Very expensive (\$3,000 per day) but spectacular. We flew from the city of Vancouver to the northern end of Vancouver Island, where we were picked up by



helicopters that flew us into one of the huge fjord-like bays of the mainland. We flew for miles, from a major fjords into a large bay and then into a smaller bay. It was there that we landed on a helipad perched on stilts next to a steep but narrow bay. Similar stilts supported a group of dwellings for visitors and a headquarters building that housed the dining area and kitchen as well as living and sleeping quarters for the staff. This complex was called the Nemmo Bay Resort. The resort accommodated only 12 guests at one time. In addition to the eight people mentioned above, the CEO of Boeing flew from Seattle to the resort on his own large helicopter with three of his children.

Each day, we arose for a sumptuous breakfast, after which we collected coats and cameras and boarded one of three helicopters. We were lifted up and away from the resort and climbed high into the surrounding mountains to several lakes, where we landed and fished from the shore. The helicopter staff unloaded poles, reels and lures, prepared one set for each of us, and showed us how to cast our line out into the lake from the shore and slowly reel in the line. For my wife, Shirley, who had never held a fishing pole in her life, they cast the line and then handed her the pole with instructions on how to reel in the line. In almost every case, a salmon or other large fish struck the lure and ran with the line, bending the pole. We slowly reeled in the fish, lifted it out of the water, photographed it next to us, and then released it back into the water (Canadian Fish and Game insisted on catch and release for all the fish in high lake waters). After 30-40 minutes at one lake, we boarded the copters and flew to another location to repeat the process. We also flew up and over high mountain

crests, dropping down on the other side three to four thousand feet to small crystal blue lakes below. At noon, we would land near the crest of a mountain, get out and take in the views, and have a delicious lunch prepared for us at the resort. We returned to the resort in the late afternoon, had dinner, and then sat outside along the narrow bay to listen to the manager of Nemmo Bay Resort talk about the beauties of the area.

I have never since seen the heavens as clearly as on those two nights. All lights were extinguished at the resort. The stars looked so low that it seemed we could reach up and pluck them. The milky way stood out more brightly than I had ever seen it before or since. One of the staff rowed out into the bay and with each stroke of the oars, the water shimmered brightly from bioluminescence. I truly wanted to stay on for a week and explore the region further, both day and night, but on the third day, we reversed our journey, flew on helicopters back to the north end of Vancouver Island, and from there flew back to a small airport near Vancouver.

## **Horizon Vision Centers**

When it became clear to Pat Rooney that Don Johnson was not about to make any decision, he turned his attention to me and suggested that I begin raising money so that I and others could form a refractive surgery company in California similar to the one he was recommending to Don. I agreed with him that such a company had appeal and on returning to Sacramento, I began calling patients who had undergone PRK and encouraging them

to invest. Within a week, along with \$200,000 of my own money and \$40,000 from Brent, we had raised slightly more than \$1 million! When Pat Rooney heard of our success, he became very excited (I learned later, of course, that he became excited because he was convinced that he would be the recipient of most of that money.) Pat found two businessmen in the San Francisco Bay Area that were willing to head up Horizon Vision Centers (HVC). I found David Bates, who was working with a busy refractive surgeon south of Oakland, and who liked the idea of a Horizon Vision Center of Northern California. We all got together and agreed that our Northern California center would become a subsidiary of HVC, which would work to become a public company. Once it became public and had been so for a year, we would be able to sell our stock in HVC for 5-6X what we paid for it.

## **Problems**

Shortly after this, we learned that Pat Rooney had been convicted of fraud when taking a previous company public

and that the Securities and Exchange Corporation (the federal agency overseeing the stock market) had banned him from taking any company public in the future! I guess that we should all have checked on Pat Rooney beforehand, but now we were dependent on him to take us public and he was confronted with this governmental barrier from doing so. Pat was convinced that he could successfully appeal the ruling, but the rest of us had our doubts. David Bates and I were able to get the leadership of Horizon Vision Centers to agree to divest themselves of our

Northern California affiliate if Pat Rooney was unable to take Horizon Vision Centers public by November, 1995. When November came and went, they made good on their promise, much to the unhappiness of Pat Rooney. Shortly thereafter, the two leaders were fired by Rooney, who was Chairman of the Board of Directors! Just as well, since they planned to quit HVC anyway if Rooney failed in his effort to take it public.

### **Buyout of Our Northern California HVC**

Within a year of becoming independent of Rooney et al, David Bates was approached by a Texas company that expressed interest in acquiring our HVC. After several months of negotiation, we agreed to a buyout with a P/E of 5. Finally, I was able to provide our initial investors with a 100% return on their investment (they were very pleased) and in my own case, my investment returned over \$1.5 million. We were more than happy to give up ownership of HVC in exchange for the money! The Texas company had to treat us well or the surgeons generating its income would simply quit. After an initial failure to generate patients from radio advertising, HVC turned its attention to providing surgeons with the latest excimer laser updates and with all of the ancillary equipment required for preoperative measurements and post-operative care. HVC charged us about 20% of our fee for use of the equipment and the laser facility. It was a good arrangement for all of us.

## **Good Years**

From 1997 through the end of the year 2000, we were able to generate a lot of income from laser refractive surgery. However, in 1999 and 2000, I noticed that I was making even more money from my investments (stock market, real estate partnerships, and other things) than from my practice. I didn't recognize that this was a manic period in the stock market that was bound to end, as it did in 2001, but I was induced to retire early so that I could fulfill my desire to do humanitarian vision care service, initially for Bill Jackson and Deseret International and then later for LDS Charities.

## **Beginning of Humanitarian Service**

My first venture with humanitarian service was in 1991, when Shirley and I traveled to Zimbabwe, where I met Solomon Guramatunhu, a Zimbabwean ophthalmologist, brought him supplies and equipment for cataract surgery, and helped teach him intraocular lens implantation. Subsequently, Solomon was visited by many other ophthalmologists sent to Zimbabwe by Deseret International to teach him a variety of surgical skills, learned how to perform retinal surgery, glaucoma surgery, and ophthalmic plastic surgery. Very good with his hands, he became the most talented ophthalmologist in Zimbabwe, built the Greenwood Park Eye Centre, founded the Ophthalmological Society of Zimbabwe and Eyes for Africa, trained dozens of surgeons from all over Africa, and sent his son to BYU for his university education.

## **Bolivia**

In 2001, when I told Bill Jackson that I was retiring so that I could spend time doing humanitarian service for Deseret International, he told me that he wanted me to travel Bolivia and work with the staff at the National Institute of Ophthalmology in La Paz. I went there, took supplies, did little teaching, but I learned a great deal. One of the most satisfying activities Shirley and I did was to travel to a small village near Cochabamba with a member of the faculty at the Institute, Joel Moya, the only Aymaran Indian ophthalmologist in the world. The small hospital in this village was located next to the LDS church! Three operating stations were created. Dr. Moya, two private ophthalmologists from Cochabamba, and two senior residents from the Institute performed about 50 cataract operations in one afternoon! The patients were all Aymara Indians. On the following day, the bandages were removed and many patients, formerly blind from mature bilateral cataracts, were overjoyed at being able to see. One man stood up and thanked Dr. Moya, again expressing his delight that Dr. Moya, one of their own, had arranged the trip and had given vision to many who previously could only see the motion of a hand, and the entire group stood up and applauded his loving service. That evening, Dr. Moya took us to the newly opened LDS Temple in Cochabamba (“the most beautiful building in the city,” in Dr. Moya’s opinion), where we performed endowments. SLC had furnished the temple

with clothing and furniture typical of that in the United States, and the very short Bolivian members had to wear white clothing that was much too large and then hop up onto a chair that was clearly too tall, with their feet dangling in the air above the floor!

## **El Salvador**

Probably my most satisfying humanitarian eye service was done in El Salvador.

Bob first visited El Salvador, one of the poorest countries in Central America, in June 2001, at the invitation of Bill Jackson, President of Deseret International. There, we met the women who run FUEDEM, an organization that provides vision care for the poor, initially in San Salvador but subsequently throughout the country. Nina Paloma became the chairwoman of FUEDEM, a dynamo who grew up as part of the privileged aristocracy in El Salvador, prior to the civil war. She has a strong work ethic and experience in business. Her husband, Joachim, is a vice president of Taca Airlines. Nina is a very high energy woman with many ideas for improving the delivery of vision care to the poor. Over the years, she listened to Bob's suggestions—even visited Sacramento to see his office and surgery center, returning home to give the architect a sketch to work from for the design of the new FUEDEM eye clinic. The finished clinic shows incorporated many of the features of Bob's office and of the eye surgery center in Sacramento.

In 2002, we went to San Salvador to participate in FUDEM's ongoing eye campaigns. El Salvador is such a small country that it is possible to leave San Salvador early in the morning, drive to a remote town or village, conduct eye screening, and return to the city by evening. FUDEM screens school children throughout the country, especially in

the poor provinces, and they also screen adults for cataracts, although cataract surgery is performed in FUDEM's San Salvador operating room. A large team arrives early in the day, establish patient stations, and efficiently sees hundreds of children each day. Often, there is time to examine a few adult patients with serious vision problems. Initially, eyeglasses were prescribed, then made in manufacturing facility in San Salvador, and sent back a week or two later to be distributed to the children. Unfortunately, in remote villages, the children could not be found or failed to show up on the return visit to receive their glasses.

Bob suggested a way to streamline the process: "Harry Potter" style (round) eyeglass frames were used in which the lenses could be rotated within the frame to match the astigmatic axis. That way lenses in commonly used strengths, including astigmatic lenses up to 1.50 diopters, could be taken to the village and eyeglasses and used to create finished eyeglasses at the village within 15 minutes. The children could have their final fitting and the glasses could be dispensed within 30 minutes of their initial examination.

Bob spent many many hours finding and contacting the factory in China which could make frames and lenses and ship them to El



Salvador; his idea worked perfectly, saving both time and money. Since the program was started, over 300,000 children in El Salvador have received prescription eyeglasses at the time of their initial visit.

Nina and Joachim, her husband, always treated us as honored guests, often inviting us to their lakeside resort home. Their boat was at our disposal, together with an in-house cook and driver. The gorgeous lakeside home was always quiet and peaceful, a wonderful change from the hot, crowded city of San Salvador.

We visited El Salvador annually from 2004 through 2009. Bob participated in the dedication of Fudem newly remodeled clinic in 2009 and in 2012, Bob was honored at Fudem's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. On several visits Shirley took 20-30 dresses for little girls, distributed by a local Relief Society president.

Bob and Doug Jackson also had the opportunity to visit the San Salvador LDS Temple a year after it was dedicated.

## **Egypt**

In October 2004 we traveled to Egypt at the request of Bill Jackson. We met Joe and JoAnn Goodrich, the delightful humanitarian couple in Cairo, who introduced us to Dr. Ahmed

Hathoot and Dr. Sayed Saif, both ophthalmologists in Cairo who spent a great deal of time treating the poor. Dr. Hathoot was a

young energetic ophthalmologist with a recently started practice in Cairo who made frequent trips to areas in Egypt without vision care of any kind. The Japanese Embassy had outfitted a truck as a surgical unit so he could do cataract surgery away from Cairo. Dr. Hathoot would spend afternoons holding an eye clinic and evenings doing surgery, then drive back to Cairo. We once accompanied him to a village where about 30 people were already waiting for him. For the first time Bob saw case after case of trachoma, a disease of the cornea caused by repeated eye infections, mainly the result of poor hygiene (flies), which if treated early with antibiotic drops can be cured. If not treated, trachoma causes permanent damage to the cornea and blindness; patients with this disease ranged from young children to old men already blind. A standout memory was an old man with eyes white from cataract brought in by four women veiled in black. I still see them in my mind's eye, because nothing could be done for him. Bob observed and consulted on unusual cases as requested. I took photos, tried to be friendly, waited patiently. Another time at another village, we watched as people drove their goats, sheep, cattle home for the evening, sometimes riding a donkey or a camel, no vehicles. Dr. Hathoot saw about 150 patients, handed out many small bottles of antibiotic eye drops, and then performed five cataract surgeries. About 10 p.m. we were taken to a nearby "villa" for a dinner prepared by local women—chicken, rice, vegetables which tasted very good as our first meal of the day. AND there was a bathroom with the filthiest toilet I'd ever seen; I was glad I had brought some TP. (Oh, how we appreciate our bathrooms after these trips!) We then returned to the eye clinic. Finally, about 1 a.m., Dr. Hathoot finished his

surgery, gathered us into the cab of his unheated truck and began the five hour drive back to Cairo. It was freezing—desert nights are cold—and we were dressed lightly for desert heat. Oh, we were cold! Brrrrr!!!!

Our biggest adventure in Egypt came in 2006, when we accompanied Dr. Saif on a five-day campaign to the western desert. Dr. Saif, an eminent eye surgeon, a professor at the medical school, and very well known through his weekly radio show in Cairo on health care offerings in Egypt. From our point of view, his most striking characteristic was his quiet, humble soul. I felt like I was meeting Mother Teresa the first time I met him, and I'm sure Church leaders felt the same, for they purchased a Mercedes bus for his next campaign. He had "presence." We were invited to his home for a delicious feast prepared by his wife and daughter the night before we left on the campaign; his wife, his two sons, his daughter and their families all lived with him in his large villa. Platters of lamb, chicken, rice, potatoes, vegetables, dolma, salad, and many other dishes were offered us. The Goodriches and the Gerbers were with us—the Gerbers were the new humanitarian couple sent to replace Joe and JoAnn.

The next day we were on our way to the semi-annual campaign Dr. Saif had made to various villages in the Western Desert, including his home village in the desert. He had been making these campaigns for more than 40 years. A large busload of medical people, including us, had already left. Lenore and Grant Gerber were with us. According to our guidebook, The Western Desert is still a place of mysteries and legends, and the relatively new 600-mile road connecting Cairo with the four oases offers

one of the most interesting drives in Egypt. After a couple of hours the road dropped down into a depression that was an oasis and we began to see tufts of grass, a few bushes, and finally date palms in clusters of many hundreds. The arrival of the caravan was announced by a loudspeaker at the local mosque, and people began to gather. Veiled women were usually Bedouin, and the thin children were definitely poor in their too-large clothes, bare feet, dirty faces. At first shy, the children would eventually come up to high-5 Shirley and get their pictures taken. Dr. Saif would see the patients, handing each one a bottle of his special antibiotic eyedrops; any needing surgery returned that evening. About 3:30 we arrived at a local hotel and had dinner—soup, potatoes, meat, rice, salad, an orange. Sometimes there was another snack about 10, after they returned from the hospital.

Dr. Saif seemed to think we needed entertaining, and we had excursions to tombs of two ancient Egyptian families and an old Pharoanic village, as well as extra time in the white desert of amazing white chalky formations and black desert. In the Pharaonic village a Bedouin woman was selling trinkets and carrying an old black dress hand embroidered and decorated—which I bought for about \$30. as a memory of this place. The dress is very small, and that evening I saw several similar dresses in a local museum.

We were followed everywhere by a pick-up truck of five security officers to protect us Americans. We were told a guard always slept in the lobby of our hotel. We were safe. Dr. Saif told us that his home city, Dakla, is one of the safest places in the world, absolutely no crime. There didn't seem to be a sense of acquisition and ambition among the people. It's a quiet calm

place. No one grabbed us in the local market or tried to get us to buy their stuff. This is rural Egypt. BUT on our ride to the next oases, about two hours out of town, we had a flat tire and the spare also went flat. Our driver took the two tires and hitched a ride to the distant town while we sat and sweated in the hot desert sun. It was at least two hours before he returned in an old minibus to drive us into Kharga, from which we visited a nearby necropolis, ruins dating from Roman, Greek and Coptic Christian eras. There were small domed chapels whose ceilings were decorated with beautiful frescoes — the remains of over 200 Coptic Christian churches! From there we made the long, 10 hour drive back to Cairo. We learned several lessons on our trip through the oases and the campaigns with Dr. Hathoot:

1. People, though poor, showed great dignity. They stood tall and looked you straight in the eye. They were beautiful.
2. The spirit of Dr. Saif and his wife was tangible. He radiated God's love for all people and carried a holy spirit with him in all his dealings. Perhaps that is why the Church purchased the Mercedes bus for him. Unfortunately he passed away a couple of years later, after heart surgery. His son Yasser has tried to carry on but his father really can't be replaced.
3. The Western Desert and Oases are beautiful. It was a privilege to visit this part of the world with its quiet beauty.
4. The hospitality extended to us was magnificent. Both Dr. Hathoot and Dr. Saif treated us as VIP guests. Dr. Hathoot now lives in exile in Utah; while he was attending an eye meeting in Boston a few years ago the police came to his home in Cairo looking for him. He doesn't dare return.

5. The experience of the small villages, ordinary people, wonderful doctors was rare. It's an adventure I'll remember always. To meet Dr. Saif was a privilege; he will be in my memory forever, and I will carry his spirit in my heart as well. He was a great man who completely lived the Moslem faith's injunction to serve others.

## **Indonesia**

Bob was invited to go to Indonesia with Bill Jackson to determine the need for humanitarian eye care in that country. Together, they visited the University of Indonesia Eye Center in ... and met with the Chief of the Eye Department, .... At that time, Dr. Randall Olson, Chief of the Moran Eye Institute, was also visiting the department at the request of the country's President, who had visited the Moran earlier to undergo eye surgery at the recommendation of an LDS businessman who visited Indonesia frequently and was a friend of the President.

Shirley and Bob returned to Indonesia in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2009, the last time as Church Vision Specialists. Indonesia is a collection of islands, the main one being Java. It is the largest Moslem country in the world, with a population of some 230 million. We spent time in Jakarta, a huge city with horrible traffic and pollution, Yogyakarta, the second largest city on Java, and Bandung. Usually our official visits took about a week, and then we treated ourselves to several days or a week on the beautiful island of Bali.

In 2003 we flew to Bali prior to our medical visit, because Shirley had found a terrific “deal” that included airfare and a stay at the fabulous five-star Nusa Dua Beach hotel. Carruths would join us after we spent a week in Yogyakarta, where we were met by Brent and Charlene Lee, the wonderful peripatetic couple we first encountered in Bolivia. This time Brent was teaching at the dental school in Yogya. They showed us around, though we did not stay with them. We met Dr. Suhardjo at the Medical School and accompanied him on his monthly “eye camp” to a city where many people needed cataract surgery; his residents received their surgical training on these campaigns. He needed more operating microscopes, which Deseret International tried to provide. The Lees took us to Borobudur, one of the world’s great ruins, largely unknown in the west, built in the 800s by Buddhists; it consists of huge stone blocks, ten layers high, each of which is decorated with carvings of people, animals, flowers. From Yogyakarta we flew to Jakarta so Bob could go to the University eye hospital. We met with Elder Subandriyo, who drove us from Jakarta to Bandung, in the much cooler highlands, where we met other ophthalmologists. Elder Subandriyo at that time was an Area Seventy who devoted most of his time to overseeing the Church in Indonesia and Cambodia, a very capable, humble man. We then flew to Bali to meet the Carruths for a week in paradise.

Bali differs from the rest of Indonesia because it is 90% Hindu. Hinduism here is a gentler, kinder religion than we found in India, with no apparent caste system, no strict vegan diet, no harsh rules. The beautiful landscape is lush, especially in the highlands and along the terraced slopes of the volcanoes, and the white sand beaches are gorgeous. We visited Hindu temples, where we donned sarongs and sashes. We happened to be there

during the annual Full Moon Festival, when families dressed in their finery came to the temple bearing huge trays of food commonly carried on the heads of the tiny women, to be blessed by the Hindu priests. We were the only Caucasians there. The Balinese women were gorgeous in their colorful sarongs decorated with gold designs against their dark hair and brown skin. It was a quiet and reverent celebration. Another time, Dr. Mas, one of the ophthalmologists in Denpasar, took us to her mother's village, and we joined a procession down to the river where a local goddess was immersed and blessed; we've seldom been so hot — very humid in the sun. In Bali Shirley bought the beautiful fabrics that she uses to display her nativities.

In 2009 we were assigned by the Church to develop vision projects in East Malaysia (Borneo) and Indonesia. We flew to Kuching, Malaysia on Singapore Airlines (the best), where Bill and Ellen Davis, humanitarian missionaries, met us and had appointments with local vision people. The Rotary Club there worked with the local Society for the Blind. We attended Church in Kuching, a branch of about 100 mostly Filipino members, who came to work in the cane fields or as household help. An ophthalmologist and his family then met us at a restaurant on the coast near the Sarawak Cultural Village, which they insisted we visit. It consists of traditional dwellings of Chinese, Malay, Iban, Penan, and other tribespeople. It's a little like the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii. Bill Davis was good at the blowgun! It was VERY HOT. We flew to Kota Kinabalu, where we met another large group of Rotarians who supported cataract outreach campaigns. The Church has provided thousands of eyeglasses in both places.



From there we flew to Jakarta, where we stayed off and on at the Mission Home with President and Sister Marchant, who fed us well and drove us all over. We flew to Yogyakarta to meet with Dr. Suhardjo at the eye hospital, where Bob observed eye surgery. Dr. Suhardjo desired a teaching microscope from the Church. One afternoon the residents took us to Prambanan, the large Hindu Temple complex built in the 7th century. A couple of years later we met Dr. Suhardjo and his wife in San Francisco, where they spent several hours with us seeing some of the sights, including a crossing of the Golden Gate Bridge and a view of SF from Sausalito, before flying on to Salt Lake and then to Chicago for the AAO meeting.

## **Syria**

Syria was a new experience for us in December 2002 and October 2004. We're so glad we visited Damascus, Aleppo, Palmyra and other historic places, for most of them have been destroyed in the ongoing civil war. On behalf of Deseret International we contacted Dr. Rida Said who oversaw the National Eye Institute; several years ago he left Damascus to move to Paris and we fear that the beautiful Eye Institute now may not be functioning. Dr. Said wanted to send more fellows to observe and study at the Moran Eye Institute in Salt Lake. He and his wife invited us to dinner one night and to a party in a Swiss hotel another night—these people had a good time! Mrs. Said went to Paris twice a year to choose her designer wardrobe—everyone spoke French as well as English, for Syria was a French colony after World War I.

In Damascus we spent time in the big mosque, the Ummiyad. There men were praying, foreheads to the ground, and the women prayed far behind so as not to be a distraction. In the mosque stood a large shrine said to contain the head of John the Baptist, who is recognized as a prophet by Muslims, showing how Jewish, Christian and Muslim religions are intertwined. We hired a car and driver to take us from Damascus to Aleppo in the north, via Roman ruins at Palmyra, halfway between the fertile crescent and the Mediterranean Sea, the stop for huge trading caravans in ancient times. (On TV we saw pictures of these destroyed ruins a couple of years ago.) In Aleppo we met Dr. Antaki, who, we discovered, had taken his ophthalmology boards the same day as Bob in San Francisco! He traced his Christian ancestry back to Antioch (hence his name, “Antaki”). After Bob spent time at the hospital, we toured the city and wandered in the Suq, the market which had been there for more than a thousand years! Hundreds of shops sold gold jewelry, rugs, food, whatever you might want. We stepped into one to get warm (it was VERY cold), and I ended up buying a beautiful hand-sewn white silk robe, at least 50 years old. We understand that the Suq is now just a huge pile of rubble.

On the way back to Damascus we made three stops. 1. Saint Simeon’s monastery, now in ruins, was at one time the main destination for Christian pilgrims in the entire Middle East. Memorable there were the ruins of a church that had a baptismal font with steps leading down into a deep cement pool—designed exactly like the one in our Stake Center! Of course there was also a basin for sprinkling. 2. Maaloula , “the prettiest village in Syria,” was the only place at that time where Aramaic, the language of Jesus, was spoken. Little churches, houses,

monasteries were built against white cliffs; some of the small churches had beautiful bright frescoes. Unfortunately most of the Christian town was destroyed early in the civil war. 3. Krak de Chevaliers was an intact medieval castle built by Crusaders; on our second visit a crew was filming a movie there—it was a perfect backdrop for knights in shining armor. In 2004 we repeated the same itinerary with Bill and Audrey Jackson, who wanted to see these marvelous places. We didn't mind at all!

## **Ethiopia**

In January, 2001, I traveled to Ethiopia to work with the ophthalmology unit at ALERT Centre, then a Dutch-run facility next to the city of Addis Ababa which primarily serves individuals from throughout Africa who suffer from leprosy, known as Hansen's Disease, and also which now cares for patients with tuberculosis. I was housed in a small one-room facility designed for visitors to ALERT.

On my first day in Ethiopia, I was invited to travel to a large open field in Addis Ababa to witness a huge celebration on the first day of Timket, or the Ethiopian version of the Feast of Epiphany. It is one of the largest celebrations of the year in Ethiopia, including a form of "re-baptism," in which "baptismal water" is thrown by priests from blessed tubs of water onto surrounding celebrants or, in some cases, is sprayed by hoses onto a large group of

believers. Timket is a three day celebration and the priests offer prayers throughout the night as well as during the day for the duration. I was able to take videos and photographs of at the first two days of Timket, which I may include in this life story if I elect to annotate it with illustrations as well as text. Not only did I watch the people celebrate but I witnessed a group of priests participate in their own ceremony and was able to take both videos and photos of both.

I visited the eye care facility at ALERT and watched eye exams, refractions, and surgery. I brought some equipment for exams and for surgery which I gave them. They were not interested in learning anything from me and they believed that their examination methods and surgical skills were sufficient for their needs. They did not do indirect ophthalmoscopy and did not want to learn how, unwilling to spend the time needed to examine the peripheral retina properly. That was true not only in Ethiopia but in many other countries I visited. If they determined that a patient had a retinal problem, that person was sent to the Eye Clinic at the University of Addis Ababa for management.

I was invited to travel with one of the younger eye surgeons to a remote village in Ethiopia, hundreds of miles from Addis Ababa, located on a site about 3,000 feet above a nearby river, to witness the care received at that location. The surgeon set up an operating room in one of the rooms of medical facility in the village and with the help of a very capable local nurse, performed about three cataract procedures, implanting a 19 diopter intraocular lens in each patient. There were no problems with the surgeries and the patients, who presented with white, mature

cataracts, were clearly better off after surgery than before. While we were there, another charitable group based in Germany, called Menchen fuer Menchen, were also working in the village, carving a dirt road from a neighboring, smaller village to the larger village we were serving to enable produce to be transported from both villages to Addis Ababa for sale there. They also bored several wells in the town, allowing the women to get water at those wells rather than walking down 3,000 feet to the river, collecting a container of water, then carrying it on their heads back up the steep road to their village. Water was previously so precious that it was used only for drinking and cooking. With the wells, they also could plant and grow several crops of vegetables. The mothers could spend time with their children and help in school rather than spending 5-6 hours traveling vertically down and up the mountain to fetch 2-3 gallons of water. Finally, the German charity was in the process of building both a hospital facility and a secondary school. Lastly, they spent time with the village chief, the priests and teachers encouraging them to end female circumcision (excision of the clitoris) in young girls.

Even higher up the mountain, near the top, another, smaller village existed. We traveled up there to deliver water to them and while there I purchased a piece of pottery that the village women made and which I was able to transport all the way home after my trip to Ethiopia. It is displayed on a top shelf in our library.

Bill Jackson, Jr. was stationed in Addis Ababa at the time and I had the opportunity of visiting him at his home and discovering from him that there was a branch of the Church in Addis. He

offered to take me there on Sunday. I was amazed to discover that more than 70 people were in attendance, many 20-30 year-old men and women. They held sacrament meeting and after the meeting, a baptism was held in a huge blue-painted tub in the front of the church. I was able to photograph the baptism! I discovered that the women wanted to marry but the men were unwilling to do so until they had a job that would support a family, so they all stayed single, since good-paying jobs were scarce in Ethiopia.

An older man who worked at ALERT was a member of the Church and he was present at the Sunday meeting. I got to know him during the week, especially at mealtime, when we all ate together at the communal dining hall. He was a very devout member of the Church and a delight to be around. He introduced me to a group of women at ALERT who had embroidered huge tablecloths and I purchased one to bring home to Shirley.

I arranged at one of the hotel travel agencies to take a week-long tour of Ethiopia at the end of my service at ALERT. I found Ethiopia to be one of the most interesting countries I have ever visited.

I started the tour in Aksum, elevation 7,000 feet, known for its tall, carved obelisks, relics of the ancient Kingdom of Aksum, once the most powerful state between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persia. A fourth century obelisk announces the conversion of the city to Christianity by the King of Aksum. Also in Aksum is St. Mary of Zion, a Christian church which purportedly once housed the biblical Ark of the Covenant. The neighboring Chapel

of the Tablet is said to contain the Ark today. Ruins of the major city of the Kingdom of Aksum are still present, today. I visited the nearby ruins of the Castle of the Queen of Sheba. Tradition has it that during her visit to King Solomon in Israel, he gave her the Ark and told her to take it to Ethiopia for safekeeping.

Next I visited Lalibela, elevation 8,200 feet, a town famous for its eleven rock-cut monolithic churches, carved downward out of solid rock between the 7th and 13th centuries, the most famous of which is the Church of Saint George, a cross-shaped church which can be reached by walking down a path cut in the stone around the periphery of the church. In several cases, one passes through dark tunnels from one church to another. A few windows are carved out of the walls of the churches to dimly illuminate the interior. Biete Medhane Alem is the largest of these structures, thought to be the largest monolithic church in the world. A baptismal font is present next to one of the churches, indicating that baptism was performed at that time by immersion.

From Lalibela, I traveled to Gondar City, elevation 7,500 feet, once the capital of Ethiopia until the 16th century, sight of the famous Fasilides' Castle, other medieval buildings and the imposing Fasilides' Bath, in which people are re-baptized during Timket.

From Gondar, I traveled to Bahir Dar, a city modernized by the Italians in 1936 and later given its present appearance by a German master plan in the 1970s, adjacent to the largest lake in Ethiopia, Lake Tana. The Blue Nile river flows out of Lake Tana through the city and winds downhill to Khartoum, Sudan, where

it joins with the White Nile. I travelled from Bahir Dar, down to a small dam which controlled the outflow from Lake Tana into what becomes the Blue Nile. The flow of water was almost minuscule when I was there - not much more than a trickle. But I was told by one of the uniformed authorities there that water would be let out of Lake Tana in much larger amounts later in the day. Most of the water of the combined Nile River that flows into the Aswan Dam in Egypt from the Sudan comes from the Blue Nile. Indeed, Egypt has told Ethiopia that the water in Lake Tana belongs to Egypt, not Ethiopia, and that were Ethiopia to divert large amounts of water from Lake Tana to other areas of Ethiopia, Egypt would consider that an act of war and respond accordingly. Fortunately, there are smaller lakes and reservoirs in the Ethiopian highlands that can be used for Ethiopia's own needs.

I took a boat from Bahir Dar across Lake Tana to Narga Selassie Church to view the murals there. The murals were remarkable and one of a kind, including one in which Mary was switching young Jesus for some wrong he had committed.

## **Lebanon**

Lebanon is a miniature California, with a beautiful coastline and a mountain range rising up from the coast to the famous cedars of Lebanon on Mount Lebanon, where snow falls at its heights, including a small ski resort at the top, all serviced by a long, winding road from the Mediterranean to the top of Mount



Lebanon. Swim in the Med in the morning and ski on the top of Mt. Lebanon in the afternoon!

On the east side of the Mount Lebanon is the Bekaa Valley, the northeastern extension of the Great Rift Valley, with a rich farming region in the south and a dry area in the north (Mount Lebanon creates a rain shadow there). Baalbeck, an ancient city for which there are extensive ruins, is a main tourist attraction in northern Bekaa Valley - we visited there. Illegal drugs, such as hashish and opium poppies are also grown in the valley, although less so in recent years. On the eastern side of the valley, a smaller range of mountains separates Lebanon from Syria.

About forty miles north of the capital city Beirut are two interesting sites. On the coast is the city of Byblos, a city which dates back at least 6,000 years, one of the oldest in Lebanon. We parked there and walked around the city by foot. Many tourist shops, some very old buildings, and a wonderful restaurant next to the harbor, where we ate lunch, which included falafel, tabbouleh, hummus, and tahini, and for desert, baklava. Many of these delicacies are now available in Near-Eastern restaurants in Sacramento, but not as delicious as those made in Lebanon.

On the mountain side is a wonderful cave complex, the Jeita Grotto, which is visited only by boat, since an underground river runs down the center of the grotto. At the end of the river grotto, one can climb a series of steps to the upper grotto, where the world's largest stalactite can be viewed. All very remarkable and both less than an hour from Beirut.

In Beirut, we visited the American University and spoke with the ophthalmologists in the hospital, there. They were not involved in humanitarian service but advised us to visit Akka Hospital in Beirut. Again, the doctors at Akka did not seem particularly interested in receiving assistance from us. Finally, we contacted the Palestinians in Beirut, who seemed quite willing to meet with us and obtain our assistance. We met with Dr. Papagian, a fully trained ophthalmologist and with two Palestinian eye doctors who each had received one year of training in Romania. Dr. Papagian has an interesting background. His parents, who were Armenian, were driven from Turkey at the end of WWI and settled in Jerusalem. The family was then driven from Palestine, when the Jews took over Palestine and re-named it Israel, and fled to a small village in Lebanon, on the southeastern end of Bekaa Valley, on the hills leading to Syria, where a group of Armenian Palestinians settled. Dr. Papagian went to college in Jerusalem and was selected by the Palestinian authorities in Lebanon to train as an ophthalmologist in Moscow. He claims to have trained in part by Dr. Svyatoslav Fyodorov, a famous Russian ophthalmologist who became the head of the Moscow Research Institute of Eye Microsurgery. There, Fyodorov trained young ophthalmologists to perform radial keratotomy in an assembly line fashion (“I only have your Henry Ford to thank”), each surgeon performing one radial cut before the patient was moved down the line for the next incision! I had the opportunity to visit Fyodorov’s facility and watch the assembly line surgery during a visit to Russia with other American ophthalmologists. In any event Dr. Papagian was trained to do most forms of eye surgery while in Moscow and on his return to Lebanon became

the only surgeon allowed to do cataract surgery at Al Hamshari Hospital, a major Palestinian hospital near Sidon. The less well-trained eye doctors practice at PRCS (Palestine Red Crescent Society) Safad Hospital, which is located inside the large Palestinian camp in Beirut. These doctors insisted on taking us into the Palestinian camp to visit Safad Hospital. It was quite frightening to ride through the streets of the heavily crowded camp, receiving many curious stares. We went to the second floor of the hospital, where the eye clinic and operating room were located. It was there we first saw a 6 inch round sticker encircled in red with an AK-47 in the middle and a diagonal red stripe crossing it out affixed to the door of the operating room (“no guns in here”). Later, I also saw a similar sticker on the window of the van that took us into the camp. Several days later, we received a note from Sharon Eubank, head of LDS Humanitarian Services and LDS Charities, admonishing us to never, ever to visit the inside of a Palestinian camp again! The doctors pleaded with us to provide Safad Hospital with a slit lamp and a surgical microscope, but Dr. Papagian told us to ignore their requests, since they were not well trained as surgeons and would probably damage more eyes than they would improve.

We subsequently visited Al Hamshari Hospital and saw the eye clinic used by Dr. Papagian. He pointed out that he was unable to determine the proper power for the IOLs he implanted since he did not have an a-scan biometer. He told us that if there was any one thing he would request from us, it would be an a-scan. We agreed with his assessment and told him that we would ask our charity to seriously consider his request.

He also took us to the surgery suite at Al Hamshari Hospital and showed us the OR he used for eye surgery. We noted with satisfaction that he had a Zeiss operating microscope in the room along with all of the necessary surgical instruments for cataract extraction and intraocular lens implantation. Since he was the only fully trained ophthalmologist in Lebanon who performed cataract surgery for Palestinians refugees living in the country, we strongly recommended to LDS Charities that they provide him with the a-scan biometer he requested.

Jim and Karen Anderson, from Farmington, Utah, were the humanitarian missionaries in Lebanon during our first visit to Lebanon. Jim was head of a medium-sized bank in Utah before he retired and Karen had served as a nurse to several general authorities, including President Hinckley! Adventurous souls, they later served as LDS Humanitarian missionaries in a refugee camp in northern Syria for Yazidi Christians, who had been driven from their mountain home by ISIS.

Lebanon has a mixture of Muslims, Christians, and Druze. Once a majority Christian country, the Christians who lived along the coast, particularly in Beirut, fled the country after Israel invaded the country, leaving mostly Muslims living in the coastal regions of Lebanon, particularly in the south. To a large extent, Lebanese Christians (Maronites) lived in the hills and mountains, along with almost all of the Druze, who are recognized by their white robes and hats. Many wealthy Muslims from the near East build palatial homes in the Lebanese mountains, where they bring their families (including many wives) to escape the summer heat in the gulf.

Jim and Karen took us on a drive in the mountains above and south of Beirut, where we saw the large residential complex of the head of the Maronite Christians. We also stopped at a small cafe run by Druze, where we enjoyed the most delicious beef tabbouleh we have ever eaten!

On Sunday, Jim and Karen took us to the small Beirut branch of the Church, located on the third floor of an apartment building in the western part of Beirut, near an elevated highway. There, we met Karim Assoud, his wife, and two sons, his unmarried brother Nabil, and their mother, this family group forming the backbone of the branch in Beirut. In addition, we met the Branch President, his wife, and his 12 year-old son, lame from birth but very smart and capable. A young American woman who was studying in Beirut was also in attendance, along with a few other folks, making a congregation of about 20 people.

Of the Assoud family, Nabil was the first to join the Church. While he was studying in London, he passed by the Hyde Park Branch of the Church and felt a strong desire to enter. Upon entering, he was shocked to see that the interior of the Church was identical to the interior of a building he had seen in a dream. He was greeted warmly by the members, eventually taking the missionary lessons and joining the Church in England. He became a firm believer in the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Prophet Joseph Smith, even after he returned home. He talked at length about his conversion with both his brother, with whom he was close, and his mother. Several years later, Karim traveled to Florida to a tennis camp there in the hopes of becoming a star professional tennis player. While in

Florida, he looked up the Church, met the missionaries, became converted and before leaving Florida, receiving the Priesthood and eventually was ordained an Elder, since the mission president in southern Florida realized that Karim needed the Priesthood in order to organize a branch once he returned home to Lebanon. Later, after organizing the Beirut branch under the supervision of a regional authority, he was given permission to ordain his brother, Nabil, to the Priesthood. Next, after attending Church meetings with her sons for many months and hearing their testimony of the restoration, his mother decided to join the Church, undergoing baptism in a plastic pool erected on an outdoor porch of the branch. Then one of Karim's employees chose to learn about the Church and eventually he and his wife joined the Church, followed by their son. He later became the Branch President.

Karim played professional tennis in France, where he met his beautiful wife. He taught her the gospel and she joined the Church, but she is not an extraordinarily devout member. She comes to church most of the time, bringing her sons. After returning to Lebanon, he obtained the exclusive right to sell Oakley sunglasses and other Oakley products in Iraq at a time when the U.S. had more than 150,000 troops stationed there. He established an Oakley store in several of the military bases in Iraq and often sold as many as 1,000 pair of sunglasses a month at about \$200/pair, with a profit margin of more than 50%. Over several years, he made a substantial amount of money, much of which he saved, reinvested, or used to purchase his beautiful home, located in a valley in Beirut complete with a Roman

aqueduct crossing the valley and a tennis court next to his home. As his business grew, employed first his brother and then the current branch president. His brother is a very capable accountant who manages the financial aspect of the business. Some months after we visited Lebanon, the Church set Karim apart as District President for the entire Near East, requiring him to travel to Iraq, Jordan and Egypt.

We also assisted an Armenian group in Beirut develop an small eye clinic, mostly for Armenians living in Lebanon. We provided equipment for one of the examining rooms in an impressive new clinic they were constructing. However, we concluded that additional assistance was not appropriate, since the volume of Armenian patients was quite low, particularly compared to the needs of the Palestinians.

LDS Charities approved our request for an a-scan biometer for Al Hamshari Hospital and it was shipped to Lebanon the following year. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society facilitated its entry into the country (without their help, it would have taken longer than 6 months) and once it had arrived at Al Hamshari Hospital, we scheduled a return visit. As a companion, I had an ophthalmologist from Southern California. It was his first (and, as it turned out, his only) trip for LDS Humanitarian Services. He enjoyed the experience but he told us after his return home that he simply couldn't afford to spend so much time away from his solo private practice each year.

When we arrived at Al Hamshari Hospital, we assembled the biometer, but initially we were unable to get it to work. We

eventually called the company's representative in the U.S. (middle of the night for him) and he then called company headquarters in Japan. They advised us to plug in what seemed like an excess cord into a nearly hidden socket at the base of the a-scan. Once we did that, everything worked perfectly! We measured the corneal thickness of each other and then brought in several patients who had been patiently waiting outside the clinic and measured them. With those measurements and with a keratometry reading, the power of the IOL for each patient could be calculated. We were all very excited, particularly when we found that IOLs of the needed powers were available for these patients. We advised Dr. Papagian to order IOLs with a much more diverse set of powers than he currently had available so he could serve moderately high myopes and mild to moderate hyperopes. Once we were convinced that Dr. Papagian could use the a-scan unit properly, we visited a restaurant of his choosing to celebrate our success. It was then that he told us about his background and his desire to eventually develop a private practice to serve the Armenians in Lebanon. We encouraged him to continue caring for the Palestinian refugees, since he is the only qualified Palestinian eye surgeon able to perform cataract surgery for the nearly 200,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Akka Hospital performs cataract surgery for a few Palestinians and wealthy Palestinians occasionally go to the American University in Beirut for surgery, but most depend on Dr. Papagian for surgical care. It is true that the two eye doctors who work at Safad Hospital occasionally attempt cataract surgery, but their results are poor and they have no IOLs available to implant.



## **Viking River Cruise, St. Petersburg to Moscow**

In October, 2017, we took a fateful river trip on Viking from St. Petersburg to Moscow, on which, while at dinner on our next-to-last day I fell while getting up from my chair, twisting (and breaking, I discovered later) the tip of my left tibia and my lower fibula. Subsequent surgeries over two years, nine months of IV drug treatments to treat a MRSA infection, all concluded with a below the knee amputation of my left lower leg. Slow recovery from amputation, with the second of two prostheses working well.

To be added later:

Descriptions of the trips we took through Eastern Europe between my 3rd and 4th year of medical school, multiple trips to France, several to Germany. Several fabulous trips to Switzerland, including my favorite spot in the world, the Jungfrau Gebeit, including Grindewald, Schynige Platte, Lauterbrunnen, Wengen, Murren, Kleine Scheidegg, and the Bahn through the mountains Eiger and Mensch to the Jungfrauoch; Italy including Rome and Florence; Trip with family after John's mission; trip to Normandy; separate trip through Southern France; trip to Southern Spain with Marian and Paul, many trips through England (one with Dad Sonne, one with the Carruths including a trip to Scotland, one through Wales, and one mostly seeing the sights in London; humanitarian service trips to Argentina, Chili, Uganda, Jordan, Botswana, Namibia, and Angola; several

trips to Zambia to our school there; trips through South Africa, an extensive trip through Turkey, a trip to the Masa Mara to see the animals, to visit Uganda (humanitarian) and to visit President Dave Boucher in Kenya. Finally, our trip by boat from St. Petersburg to Moscow, at which time I broke my left lower leg. Subsequent surgeries, IV drug treatments, concluded with a below the knee amputation of my left lower leg. Recovery from amputation, with two prostheses, the second working well.

Much longer description of our life at 4913 Puma Way.

Our Experience with the Pandemic of 2019-2020