

This book is dedicated to all my friends and family, whether they know only a little or very much about me. May it help you discover much.

Early Years

I would play with other children who also didn't have much.

One time, we ran out of rice, the only thing we could afford;

I went hungry for two days.

Finally, mother was offered work.

The neighbor feed me.

Mother met my stepfather.

My brother was born and then

I was sent to school.

I fall in the water almost drowned.

Mother, angry, sent me away.

Stepfather was sad.

He left my mother and brother.

Mother had no home, no money, no work.

She took me back, but my stepfather refused to return.

Introduction

In this, my very first book, I will write about my life. Though I could just include the later years after I became a resident of the United States, that wouldn't be a complete story. My dreams when I first came here at age 32 were to be free to work in the USA. I also wanted to get an education, as I could not read or write. Once I finished high school, I wanted to have a professional job, one which did not include cleaning house, cooking, etc. I would use the income from said job to buy my own house. Once I achieved those goals, I wanted to find a good man to settle down with and raise a family.

This book would be pandering to those who only seek fluff instead of every aspect of a person's life, warts and all. My aim is to help people who feel like they are prisoners of circumstances facing insurmountable obstacles. Whether you are living in persecution, are missing your family and friends, have no money, or you feel like all the world's responsibilities are stacked on your shoulder, things can change for the better if you allow them to.

That's not to say it will be easy, and that's not to say that you will not face any new obstacles, but if you let God lead the way, He will deliver you to the right people at the right time. And those people will help you all the while teaching you to help yourself. If not for all the kind-hearted souls, I would not be where I am today, enjoying my life with my husband, Bob, in New Albany, Indiana.

I wrote this book just as much for others as I did for myself. It has helped me come to terms with my past, as well as giving me the motivation to help others because every one of you are facing some sort of obstacle in your life. I sympathize and empathize with you, and it is my sincere hope that my story will offer you encouragement and help you along your own journey as you go where your heart and soul carry you. May God and perseverance be your compass.

Cathy Rebello Sterrett

Early Youth

There are some parts of my early childhood that I don't remember very well. Most of what I have to tell you about my beginning is what my mother told me when I was older. I was born on February 14, 1942 at my parental grandparents' house at Tank Pointhi Varambanly District of south Kanara, Karnataka state in India. My birth was registered two days later on February 16, 1942.

My parents' names were Rama and Sheshi, but I did not know our last name. We were of the Brahman caste, which is the highest caste in the Hindu religion. My father was a well-to-do farmer and could have afforded to support us. If my mother had not left my father, I could have had more in life with my own family, including a good education.

Leaving Udupi

My father was very distant, but he provided us with everything that we needed. We did not have much compared to today's first world standards, but we had more than some of our struggling neighbors.

Life was relatively stable for a while with my father doing his farm work and growing crops which he could sell at the market.

My father was the head of the household, and we all knew it. Mother knew it, but she always had her own ideas about everything and could have been quite hard to get along with.

Despite my mother's disobedience, I can't really say what went wrong between my parents that caused my father to throw my mother and me out of his house. Years later, Mother told me that father wanted to kill her. She was so scared that she kept both a knife and an axe under her mat. I must have been between two or three years old at the time, so I do not have any memory of that.

After my parents were separated, my mother and I had no place to live. Though my father's decision seemed cruel, there are always two sides to the story. Because I was never able to bond with my father, let alone get inside his mind to read his thoughts, I will never know the

full story about what happened. All I can do is speculate and use my imagination to fill in the blanks.

What little I saw of my mother when I was older, she had a bad temper and didn't even love her own child, but she showed affection to other children, especially boys. Mother seemed to favor boys, even over her own daughters. Perhaps she thought of them as the sons she never had. I never had a chance to get to know her well or learn to love her as a mother. I did remember my her even after she gave me away to the Rebello family when I was ten years old and into my adult days. Mother later told me that I did have an older sister who was four years before me, born in 1938.

My mother told me that my sister was married at a very young age. Therefore, I have no memory of her, but I often think about her and I wish I could meet her. I know that is not possible since I do not know my parents' last name.

When Bob and I last visited my family in 2019, I hoped that I would have a chance to meet her then, but I did not. I don't even know if she is still alive, and if she is, I wouldn't really begin to know where to look. That was the last time I went back to India, as COVID hit mere months later, and I was unable to travel anywhere. Now that I am older, I don't see myself traveling back to my homeland anytime soon, but I haven't given up hope that my sister is out there somewhere, perhaps thinking about me as I am thinking about her.

Finally, one of the farmers in the area hired my mother to work at his farm and gave us a small room to live in. The room had no door, so there was very little privacy and hardly any protection from the harsh elements. Many times, we went hungry because Mother did not have any work. She was saving the little rice we had until she had some work. When she was offered the job, before she left to go to work, she put the last of the rice to cook so that it would be ready when she returned. Unfortunately, some stray dogs found their way into the room and ate the last of the rice.

Though we had very little to eat. She told me that the hunger would not bother me as long as I had friends to play with. They kept my mind occupied, and I had fun with them. Even though we had nothing to eat a lot of the time, Mother would not take charity from anyone. She had a lot of pride and would not lower herself to beg for food. Even as a small child, that concept fascinated me. I probably inherited that attitude from her, as I like to earn everything that I have.

I guess that's where I got my pride and the belief that I had to work for anything I wanted to have in life. I'm always true to my word because of what I had to go through from a very young age. Even though I do judge people who want handouts, I often feel guilty about it because I do not know their story or their struggles. Because I am only human, I have to fight those sinful thoughts until my dying day. I know that I am getting better because I've had good spiritual friends along my journey; they set the foundation for me by their example. I am incredibly grateful that God sent them to me. Without His help, and the help He has assigned for me, I would not be anywhere near as fortunate as I am today.

One day in the village, they were having some sort of festival. For whatever reason, Mother told me that I could not attend. However, she dressed me up all nice just in case. Some of our fellow villagers, including my friends, invited me. But since I was an obedient child, I did not attend.

When my mother got home from work and heard that I had not attended the festival, she was proud of me. Years later, she told me that my brother would have disobeyed. That was surprising to hear that from her, especially **since I was not her favorite. ??????**

Deep down, I know that Mother did love me. Whenever she had to work, she used to give me jaggery (a sweet made from sugar cane) to eat while she was gone. It was her way of treating me because she was leaving me alone all day. I used to hold the treat all day and eat it when I saw her coming home.

One time, she ran out of jaggery, and I was crying her co-workers, annoyed at her treatment of me, punished Mother by throwing a rice pounder on her foot; that disabled her from going to work for a long time.

Mother was single. She was also young, in her early twenties. She was pretty and raising a child by herself. I think somebody introduced Mother to a widower from another town. I was about only three years old at the time.

She revealed all those things to me when I was older. I do not know whether they were married or not, but Mother took me and went to live with him. Then, she got pregnant with my brother. I was about four years old when he was born, at least that's what I am guessing since Mother told me he was born during the end of December. I made up his birthday when my niece asked when he was born. Because he is four years younger than me, he would have been born on 12/30/1946. I do not know whether his birth was registered at the courthouse. I was lucky

enough to get my birthday certified at the mercy of the parish priest where I was Baptized in Ganguli, India. If it was not for the priest, I would have been still celebrating my birthday on February 29th, the date Mother told me I was born, instead of the 14th.

I was told that my stepfather was a particularly good man. I don't remember much about him, but I do remember that he would buy me my favorite treat after he went shopping at night. Mother told me that she was jealous because my stepfather gave me so much attention. He adopted me and treated me like I was his own child. Mother told me he had grown children from his previous wife, but I was too young to understand any such things. All I knew was that life was better once we began living with my stepfather.

When my brother was born, I thought he was the most handsome baby. I did not know he was my half-brother. It did not matter then, and it certainly does not matter to me now. I was so excited that I had a baby brother to play with.

I was not so fortunate to grow up with my new family. When I was around five, Mother sent me to the school I would attend with other children from the neighborhood; that was the beginning of my new life. Even though I was the youngest of the group, most children started their formal education at age five. We had to walk a long way through the field to get to school. The older kids took care of me while we walked there. Every day when we went to school, we had to cross a narrow bridge that was only two logs side-by-side. Sometimes, when the tide was up, the water would almost touch the logs.

One day coming home from school, I made the mistake of looking down. My legs began to shake. The idea of me crossing the man-made bridge got me so nervous that I fell into the water and almost drowned.

The older children rescued me. ??? same paragraph

When my schoolmates told my mother and stepfather about the accident. Mother could have handled it differently, but she treated the accident like the end of the world. She took it upon herself, without consulting my stepfather, and removed me from the school. Mother then shipped me off to work for a family who had young children so I could work caring for those children. I cannot remember all the details; for all I know, the same people she sent me to work for could have told me about how my stepfather felt. ???

I remember crying when Mother told me that she was going to send me away. I do not know why my stepfather did not stop her from doing so.

During my later years when I was growing up, I saw that Mother was hard to live with. For whatever reason, my stepfather did not like what she did to me. It was not like they had to worry about money at the time; my stepfather had an oil mill business he supported us with.

Later, I learned that when my stepfather took me across the river to meet the people my mother had given me to, he was crying.

Shortly after I had been sent away, he became so miserable that he left my mother and little brother. Even though Mother brought me back after much difficulty, it was too late. My stepfather refused to return, and I would never see him again.

Maybe there were other problems between my parents. I wish I had been a little older. I would have understood more about what was going on. At this time, I was about 6 years old.

After my stepfather left, our house was repossessed, and we had no place to stay. Mother had no means of taking care of my brother and me by herself. I suppose she did what she had to because she was desperate and out of other options.

While I was in the horrible place in the western Ghats (coastal mountain range). Here I was taking care of young children and doing other chores. I had head lice, so they had to shave my head. I had beautiful, curly, long hair, but I was too young to take care of it myself. I also had no clothes to wear. I vaguely remember wearing rags just to cover myself up. My employer even bought me a dress just to show my mother how nice they were to me. However, it was only a front.

In time, mother came and took me to be with her.

Now that Mother had two children to care for again, she didn't know what to do, so she consulted her friends and neighbors. Some of them advised her to send both of us to orphanage, but Mother did not like the idea, especially after she saw what I had been through. I know that God had planned this for me, and I am thankful that He is always watching out for His children.

After I came back from the Ghats, Mother sent me to work for a rich family in the area. One of my jobs included me getting water deep from the well. I had to pull the rope with one arm and retrieve the narrow pot with the other. Unlike the wells in America, this one was not closed, and a person could easily fall in. The wheel was hard enough for someone a normal age and size to pull, so it was all the worse for me. It got to the point where I started crying because I was scared to draw water from the well. I told the family about it. Another reason why I cried so

much was because I missed my mother and brother; they were all I could think about. After that, the family brought me back to my mother.

Mother was informed by a neighbor about Nathalie Rebello. One of Natalie's daughters, Lathy Lewis, was our neighbor living in Udupi. My mother found out about Natalie and she inquired of Lathy about me. The next time she came to town, Mother and Natalie arranged to take me to Kannada Kudru. I did not know where or why I was going. As far I was concerned, she could have sent me to the boondocks.

Leaving Thonse

Natalie and I travelled by bus, and it was a long trip. First, we stopped at my future Godmother, Bessie Rebello's, home. Her parents lived in Kundapura, about three miles south of Kannada Kudru across the Panchagangavali River. Bessie was visiting her family.

Shortly after we arrived there, Bessie and her mother prepared a good meal to get me warmed up for the long journey I was going to face. I was very hungry and must have eaten a lot.

After we ate and rested Natalie Rebello and I continued our journey to Kannada Kudru by boat. During those days and for a long time after a boat was the only transportation to Kundapura or Gangoli from Kannada Kudru.

A lot of farmers lived in Kannada Kudru. They owned a lot of land and had plenty to eat, but they also had to work hard, as most of the food was grown on the farm. They grew rice, beans, coconuts, sweet potatoes, melons, and potatoes, as well as some other vegetables and fruits. They also grew thousands of mangoes for consumption and even did some fishing and hunting.

After we came to Kannada Kudru to the actual place where I was to stay, I remember crying and telling Natalie that I missed my mother and brother. I wanted to go back because I was in yet another unfamiliar place where I felt that I didn't fit in.

It was not much later when Natalie went back to my mother. She must have convinced her to come to Kannada Kudru so she could be close to me. Mother came to the Rebellos with my brother, and I was happy to see them both.

After Mother came to live and to work in their fields, the Rebellos must have asked her to sell me to them. I do not know all the facts and details about the “transaction.” All I knew was that I now belonged to the Rebellos and that my mother no longer had any rights to me.

Mother had literally sold me for a grinding stone, much to my dismay, especially when people started to tease me about it. Natalie and Auro were well-to-do, so why didn't they offer Mother money instead of a grinding stone; she could have used the money more.

Natalie and her husband converted me to Catholicism and gave me the name Mary Catherine Rebello, which I still go by today. The Rebellos had a big family consisting of eight children, three boys and five girls. So why would they want me? I could only imagine that my life there, just like it was in the Ghats, was not going to be pleasant.

Life in Kannada Kudru

Now that I was living with the Rebellos, they put me to work right away. I did a lot of farm work and housework.

I was nine or ten around this time, and I didn't know what was going on. I had not received any formal education while I was living in the Rebellos' house, despite the fact that they told me that I would attend school after I was adopted. But I was not truly adopted. Instead of love, I received orders.

Natalie arranged for my mother and brother to live in Kannada Kudru, but she was living in what would be considered a barn and had no privacy. But she made the most of it and managed to cook and take care of my brother. My brother played with my Godparents' sons and was friends with them. There were a lot of children, and I had to clean up after them every time they moved their bowels. It would get all over their legs and feet. There were no diapers at the time. Mother needed to have a grinding stone so she could use it to grind her spices for curry and chutney. Grinding stones were a necessity, so that was how Natalie convinced Mother to give me up. Though the Rebellos had money, they lived very far away from civilization, as was common for most farmers then.

Some of the work I did on the farm included working in the field, preparing coconut leaves to be weaved into mats which were used for roofing and used as tents for weddings. We

made rope from coconut husks, and I weaved the husks. I also went fishing in the stream when the tide was down and the water was low. We children would go in and make the water muddy and catch the shrimp. Sometimes, we also scooped up large oysters. The oyster shells were very sharp and cut our bare feet as we waded in the water.

The Rebellos also took in a widow who had no one else after her husband died. After they invited her into their home, she had acted as a midwife and nanny; she raised all eight Rebello children and took care of the necessary housework.

Years after Natalie had taken her in, the widow woman became bedridden, and Natalie assigned me to be her caretaker. Natalie and I took care of her together, and she trained me how to do things properly, such as taking care of her bedding, dressing, and feeding.

One of my nastiest tasks involved washing her clothes, most of which were soiled because she could not get up and go outside to relieve herself. There were no diapers as there are today. I couldn't believe they gave this job to a young child rather than to a grown woman. Even worse, they did not let me properly wash the bedding and clothes with soap and water. Also, I had to use my bare hands, which was not only disgusting but also unsanitary for both me and the poor woman.

There were two sisters, Maggie and Puli, who had lost their parents and neither of them had ever married. Also, their only brother was killed in a hunting accident. The sisters had no place to go, so the Rebello women took them in.

Looking back on it, I realize the family only took in people when they thought it would work to their advantage. I really did not think Nathalie Rebello was giving aid to the helpless but helping herself with free labor. In exchange, she would provide her "boarders" with a roof over their heads and food in their stomachs. We did not have a bed, so we slept on the floor or on a thin mat with a pillow, if we were lucky.

After the widow passed away, Maggie and I took care of most of the household chores. I didn't quite know what to expect, but I knew it wasn't going to be easy. That would entail me getting up at 5:00 every morning to begin my daily tasks, which included washing all the eating utensils, plates, and pots and pans using water from the well. Then, I had to wash clothes on a rock again. Our main supply of water came from the well. When the water would dry up in the summertime, I would have to go to one of the ponds nearby and wash the clothes there.

During monsoon season, Maggie and I would take all the dirty clothes and go by boat to another island, where there was cleaner water. Maggie was very helpful, especially because she knew how to row the boat. We also brought back fresh water for drinking.

We labored under the hot sun and walked barefoot in the sand. Sandals were reserved for children attending schools and people who owned homes; it was a fashion statement which indicated status. Servants were not permitted to wear sandals.

As a child, I knew no other work besides routine work. My fun “labors” included going oyster digging early in the morning before the tide came up.

Another fun thing we children did was pluck the feathers off wild game that the men went out and hunted. Because I loved to climb trees, I would sit on the branches and pluck feathers while I told stories to the others around me. I was a tomboy when I was little.

There were no grocery stores or any other type of stores anywhere on the island. Market day was once a week on Saturday. Local men were the ones who did the shopping. And if someone forgot to get absolutely everything they needed for the week, then too bad, they had to wait until next week. If we were ever in a pinch, we could borrow from our neighbors, depending on what exactly we needed. We bought fresh fish from the local fishermen because they did not sell it at the market. They fished occasionally, slaughtered beef, or the kids would catch shrimp by hand in the pond. We used to run around the pond, barefoot, to make the water muddy, so the shrimp would come to the surface, and we would catch them to have for lunch or dinner.

Many farmers living on the island had a surplus of the food they grew on their land, so they took it to market to sell on Saturdays. They also purchased whatever they needed for the week, so it was most convenient for them.

Mr. A. Rebello made money from the sales of the goods and gave it to his wife. I doubt she ever had a bank account, but she always kept lots of cash locked up in a large wooden chest and wore the key around her neck. She carried that key with her everywhere she went.

She used to travel a lot to visit her children in different places. Nathalie also traveled to find mates for her children who were still not married. Once all her children were married, she was looking for husbands or wives for her grandchildren. She knew a lot of people in other places; she was from the city.

The Rebellos had one mango tree in front of the house. When we were young, we would wait for the crows to come and eat the fruit. Occasionally, mangos would fall from the tree, and

we would run over and retrieve them. Then, we would hide in the hay and eat the fruit in secrecy. Also, if we could brave the climb on the unstable ladder, we would sometimes eat in the attic.

In Kannada Kudru, each island had a one-room grade school, and it was very large. They only had one teacher in charge of all the children. Some children who lived a long way from the school had to walk for at least a mile or two just to get there, sometimes on the hot sand. After graduating from grade school, children went to Gangoli for high school. They had to cross the river by canoe. While that did involve less walking on their part, the trip was a bit longer.

Kannada Kudru did not have a church. On Sundays, we had to find someone who could row the boat. Usually, young boys would transport us across. Also, we could go with our neighbors in their boat. Some women knew how to use the boat, so we were able to cross the island to make our way to the church. After crossing, we still had a long way to go on foot until we made it to our place of worship.

When we got out of the boat, we always had to look out for the tide. If it was high, then that meant we would have to walk across human waste that came up with the tide. (Again, there were no bathrooms.) All adults had to take turns alternating going to church on Sundays because there always had to be at least one adult at home per every household.

When I left Kannada Kudru years later, the locals were traveling by motorboat instead of rowboat. New technology made our lives a little bit easier, but there was always the matter of finding someone who was qualified to operate it.

The last person who lived in the house where I spent the later part of my childhood was my Godparents' son, Albert and his family. He had two daughters. After they were married, they moved to the city. Some years later, his wife died.

When my husband and I last visited in 2019, everything had changed. They now have a church on the island, and all the houses are also more modern. Transportation has vastly improved. A bridge was built connecting the island to the mainland.

Education

Education always seems to me more of a priority for those who have money and are well-to-do in their place in society. The Rebello men all received a complete high school education, but the women only made it through middle school. The only exceptions I knew about at the time

were two of the younger Rebello daughters, Alice and Fermine. Since I was a servant, my Godmother did not send me to school so I could learn to read or write.

Looking back on things, how could I have ever believed that the Rebellos were going to adopt me as one of their own and send me to school? Though Nathalie, as well as some of the menfolk began to recognize my intelligence, the other women became jealous of me. At least, that is only my guess to why they had poisoned Natalie against me. The other women were threatened by me and did everything within their power to keep me out of school and in their homes as an uneducated, illiterate servant.

At times when I was fed up with working for no pay, I told them since they had adopted me, they should treat me as an equal part of their family. Of course, they didn't like that, and they were quick to snap at me and tell me how ungrateful I was. After all, they had provided me with food and a roof over my head.

The old woman and I had bonded some as I became her personal caretaker. Shortly before she died, she told Natalie to give me her silver bangles, but Natalie took them away from me when I join a convent around the age of 18. **After about three years of living on the island, I was baptized when I was twelve.**

I enjoyed visiting with the Rebellos' oldest daughter, Theresa, in Gangoli. She and most of her children were nice to me, except for one daughter who had darker skin than her other sibling. I guess even I was lighter-skinned than most of the other kids. When she came to visit her grandparents in Kannada Kudru, she gossiped and made up false stories and told my Godmother and anyone else who would have cared to listen.

When I visited Theresa Rebello's oldest daughter there, she, too, put me to work. The worst thing I had to do every morning was to clean the barn where the cows were kept during the night. I had to collect all the cow dung in my bare hands and clean the barn again because it was still filthy. I pulled water from the well and carried it to the barn. Later, I would make flat, bread-like paddies from the cow dung which were then dried in the sun the for fire **for burning**. I also had to clean up all the chicken poop in the chicken coop. Those were the dirty jobs I disliked the most; I never had to do anything like that on the island.

Even though they put me to work, I did have some fun. We enjoyed going to the forest to pick fresh fruit or berries. We would climb the trees and pluck the fruit. We would eat some right there. They also had lots of cashew trees, and I enjoyed picking and eating the nuts just as

much as I did the fruit. Even though these activities were fun for me, I still had to walk barefoot in the hot sun and carry baskets on my head.

There was a pond nearby with lots of frogs and tadpoles. The creatures fascinated me as a child, and now when I think of them, I can't help but chuckle because they looked like little sperms.

Sent to Bombay

After my Baptism at the age of 12, I was sent to Bombay with the Rebellos' older son, Lorry and his wife, Olivia, and his family to work for them. They lived with Olivia's rich brother.

After one year or so, Olivia returned to Kannada Kudru.

Natalie sent me with Fermine and Peter to Bombay to find me a job and make money to send to Natalie. **My brother worked for the Breganzs'.**

The daughter, Fermine, found me a job in the same building where she lived so she could keep an eye on me. My employers were the D'Souzas. The couple had only one son named Nicholas. I was his nanny, teacher, and playmate.

I used to walk Nicholas and Pamela, Nathalie Rebello's granddaughter, to school and pick them up after school. I think the walk to the school was about a half mile or so.

When I would go to pick up Nicholas, I would go a little early and copy his homework. Nicholas's mother would drill him and try to help him learn.

That was also very helpful to me, as I listened in on their sessions and slowly learned how to read and write, little by little. I was also beginning to learn the answers to math problems and other homework questions. It wasn't ever the education I dreamed of having, but it was still a far cry away from the one week of schooling I had when I was five or six.

The flats in Bombay were small, so it was easy for me to hear Nicholas and his mother tackling his schoolwork. I wanted so badly to learn to read and write; I used to take every opportunity I had. I used to study Nicholas's books.

At first, I learned the alphabet. Then, I learned two-letter words and then three-letter words, as well as one four-letter word. Next, I learned to sign my name. One of Natalie's granddaughters showed me how; she spelled my name with C rather than a K. Ever since then, I

have spelled my name with C. I get offended if anyone spells it with a K. Now, people who know me make sure and say, “Cathy with a C.”

After that, I finally began reading easy books, including spelling and math. I also remember learning how to spell while I worked; I hid the book under my bed. My first word I learned to spell was “frightened.” Every chance, I had I would read, no matter what it was. I never gave up learning.

Every day after tea at 4 o’clock, I had to take Nicholas out or to the park to play. I, too, had lots of fun playing with other children. I did all housework: cooking, cleaning, and marketing. When I went to the market, I had to remember the long list of what she wanted me to buy because I still could not read or write. I also washed the clothes, did the ironing, and scrubbed the white-tiled floors on my knees. I had to get up very early, usually around 5 o’clock a.m. to get in line for the milk truck when it came in. That way, I wouldn’t have to stay in line for most of the day.

In Bombay, we did have running tap water, but it was municipal water. We only got it at certain times, which meant that we had to plan ahead. After we washed the pots, we placed them upside down so they could dry properly. In Bombay, we had no washers or dryers during those days. We did not even have a washboard. Instead, we had a little wash area with a tap and walls built around it in the kitchen. That was where we washed dishes, cleaned fish, etc.

My dinner was served to me on my plate every night, but I was not allowed to eat ‘til all the work was finished. Since I was a servant, I was not allowed to get myself my own dinner. I was also not allowed to eat in the same place as my employers. Most of the time, I was not given dinner until 11:00 or 12:00 at night. Sometimes, I was so tired that I would fall asleep on the floor, where I was sitting. Most of the time, I was too tired to eat. On top of that, they only allowed me a few hours of sleep every night. Then, I had to get up and do it all over again.

All the money I earned from the D’Souzas the was sent to Natalie Rebello back in Kannada Kudru.

Even though I had to get up early to do so, the D’souza the lady let me buy and deliver milk for the other families I worked for. That way, I would have some spending money.

She also didn’t seem to mind allowing me clean the house of one of the residences on the same floor without the Fermine knowing.

But my new life was still far from the fairy tale I dreamed it would be. There were times when the family would physically abuse me. Most of the time, I was stabbed with a knife, which would cause me to bleed a lot. I don't recall what I had done to deserve that. Honestly, I don't feel anyone deserves that kind of punishment.

I also had a bit of a naughty side, which often landed me in trouble. Once, I teased a neighboring old woman, accusing her of being a chicken thief. I did that every morning while I was in line waiting for the milk truck. I thought it was nothing but a little harmless fun until she followed me and told my employers what I did. As punishment, they put green pepper in my eyes. I was crying so much because they were burning like hell. I thought it was a normal thing to do since people teased each other all the time in my culture.

During another morning when I went to get milk, something strange happened. There was a woman who did odd jobs for families, such as clean their houses and grind spices. The people who employed her could not afford servants. The woman had two children she needed to support, an older brother and a younger sister. The lady and her son had their eye on me; they wanted to con me for quite some time. That day, the two of them kidnapped me so they could get money by selling me to a rich family whom I would work for.

I was young and naïve. I did not understand they were trying to do this to me for their own benefit. I thought I would finally be free from the Rebellos, so I did not struggle when they snatched me up; I thought they were going to give me a better life.

It did not take long for the Breznars and the D'souzas to take action. They knew who had taken me, and I was brought back to them the same day.

When Breznars and the D'souzas asked me who had taken me, I lied to them. The mother told me to tell them a fat man had taken me. Both women began whipping me and would not stop until I told them the truth. Fermine Brezner was heavily pregnant with twins at the time. The force that she used to whip me she could have cause her to have the babies right there and then. I couldn't help but cry. Here, I thought they were going to be glad to see me, but I was only met with punishment when I lied, and I only lied because I was afraid of what the kidnapers **would** do to me, if I didn't. I didn't want them to try and take me away again.

A short time after that, I had my first period. Even though I had heard about it from other girls, I did not know how to be prepared. I used to wear dresses and no underwear. I was grinding hot spices when I started my period, but I did not know what was happening to me. The

blood went through my dress. I was so embarrassed and uncomfortable that I did not know how to handle it. When my employer saw the stain in my dress, she knew I had my period, and she showed me what I was to do. She told to use old rags to stop the blood from flowing on to my clothes. I had to wash the rags with my bare hands so I could reuse them. At the time, I did not know about pads or tampons. I found the whole task to be gross and disgusting. But not only did I have to wash my own rags, I had to wash my employers', too.

My employers lived on the third floor of their building. I would get milk for several people because they paid me to deliver it to them. That way, I had some pocket money.

My First Puppy Love

My employers used to send me out to buy liquor, which was illegal at the time. A family brewed their own liquor in their shop.

The shop was owned by a family who had identical twin sons. Both the sons were handsome. The one I was attracted to was named Frances. Even though the boys looked so much alike and I could not tell them apart, they knew that and they did not want to mislead me. I was sad when Frances did not return my affection. He probably thought I was too young for him since I was only in my early teens.

The family who owned the liquor shop lived about half a mile from where they brewed and sold their products. Since I lived on the third floor of the building where I worked, I got a clear view of them most of the time. I knew what time they went for lunch. I would stand at the kitchen window and look down at them, and I still had a difficult time identifying one young man from the other. That was the extent of my puppy love. I knew if we had fallen in love, it would have never worked out for me. The Rebellos would have immediately brought me back to Kannanda Kudru to marry me off to a farmer, just as they had planned.

When Fermine Brezner came to her in-laws' for her brother-in-law's wedding, Fermine's mother had asked her to bring me to Kannada Kudru for a visit.

We were traveling by ship. Fermine had gotten me a child's passage ticket to save money. But when the ship inspectors noticed I was not a child, she had to pay a fine. Fermine blamed me and said that I should have not have big breasts. She yelled at me and slapped me just because I was going through puberty. I could not control my physical development.

Whenever we traveled together after that, she had me bind my breasts so tight they looked like they were not there. I was as flat as flatbread. It turned out she *could* try and make me control my growth. The things some people try to do in order to save money.

Some years later when I was in my late teens or early twenties, Nathalie brought me back to Kannada Kudru to marry me off to a young man who was adopted by another farming family. I tried everything I could to get away from Nathalie because I refused to marry that man. It would have been an arranged marriage because I did not even know him. I was not cut out to be a farmer's wife, so I refused his proposal.

Nathalie was angry at me for refusing the farmer's proposal. At this time, I was about 18 years of age. She then gave me two choices: either get married or become an old maid.

At this time, I was about 18 years of age. I made a completely different choice; I decided that I was going to join the convent. When I told Nathalie about that, she was very happy that I was going to serve the Lord, just like one of her granddaughters did. It seemed like she was generally happy for me when she could have easily refused my request. If she had done that, I would not have had the life I have now, and I certainly would not be writing this autobiography.

At this time, I really didn't know God in a personal way. God had other plans for me, and I was going to trust His judgment. Nathalie had a lot of contacts. She found the convent which would take me and arranged the date and time. When the day came, she, along with my mother, who had come for a visit, accompanied me to the convent.

Nathalie also gave me a big sendoff party with the intention of collecting money from the guests to keep for herself. She dressed me up in a nice sari and made me sit down in a chair. Ahead of time, she told the guests to give me nothing but money. And she took the money from me as soon as the guests left.

Because I would not be allowed to wear jewelry at the convent, Nathalie had me give her my golden earrings and silver bangles I received from the old woman whom I cared for shortly before she passed away.

I did not know where in India the convent would be (and I still do not). Nathalie only told me what she thought I needed to know.

I worked at the first location I was sent to for a while and then I was transferred sometime later. I was supposed to enter the convent in the novitiates mother house, but they did not send me there. I asked why, but no one ever gave me an answer. I did not know what was happening.

That was when they sent me somewhere else, to another convent. It had both an orphanage and a hospital. It was an interesting experience working there. I helped the nuns with whatever they needed assistance with. I was there about two years.

One time, I even helped the head nurse, Mother Superior, deliver a baby. That was when I learned how women gave birth to babies. At that time, I still wasn't sure where babies came from and which hole they came out of, but I learned that a little bit later.

Mother Superior was overworked that day, and that was why she needed my assistance. While the woman was waiting to give birth on the birthing table, Mother Superior told me to watch for the baby's head. When that happened, I was to wake her up from her nap. For some reason, she let the other nurses get some rest.

So there I was, sitting at the edge of the table and waiting for the baby's head to make its appearance.

As soon as the baby started crowning, I ran as quickly as I could to get Mother Superior.

I assisted her in delivering and then bathing the newborn. It was such a beautiful experience; I had never seen anything like it during all my twenty years I had lived so far.

The nuns also put me to work in different departments, including the school, where I assisted both the teachers and the students. I also felt that was a valuable experience and it, once again, put me in a learning environment.

I enjoyed most of the work I did for the nuns in the convent, except for one job. I did not like working in the orphanage because once the children were put to bed, you had to stay there until eight o'clock the following morning. During those days, there were no disposable diapers. We had to wash all the diapers by hand. That was a particularly nasty job because the babies had slept all night in their dirty diapers. Sometimes, by the time we went to change them, their bodily waste had gotten all over their bodies. I was completely grossed out, and it seemed like they had taken in more orphans than they could handle.

At the same time, the convent also had two young ladies whose job it was to prep young women who wanted to enter the convent as novitiates. They start out as novices and work in the convent until they are ready to take their final vows of servitude to the Church. That surprised me because I was just working doing different jobs in the convent; no one ever said anything about sending me to their mother house to join the novitiate. I didn't know what was exchanged between the Rebellos and the nuns.

That was when things started to shift for me again. I did not know what I wanted to do with my life. I began to question whether being a nun was my true calling. I felt as if God had called for me to live my life as a nun, I would have done what was expected of me and obeyed and honored every vow.

I truly did not know what I wanted to do with my life because I never had much of a choice before. Was I now a free person? I had to find that out for myself. I still had a lot of growing to do. And as much as it might sound bad for me to say, I do not even know whether I really felt the calling to become a nun or if I'd only went to work for the convent to escape the Rebellos and avoid marrying the farmer, as they had wanted me to.

One thing I knew for sure was I was not going backward. I wanted to keep on moving forward with my life, and I knew I would never have gotten that if I returned to the Rebellos. Maybe it was time for me to take a chance and see how much freedom I actually had.

I told Mother Superior that I wanted to leave the convent but I did not want to return to the Rebellos. She was not overly pleased with my decision, but she didn't deny I was having second thoughts. I still didn't even know where in my country I was, and I felt that was one of the things holding me back.

The nuns then arranged for me to go back to Bombay to the Regina Pacis convent, which took in orphans and young women who had no place else to go. While living there, the staff helped young women find domestic jobs with an employer who was right for them. Whenever employment opportunities did not work out, we were welcomed back into the convent until the nuns found us another job.

While boarders paid to live in the convent, we stayed there free of charge, but we also had our work cut out for us. Those nuns were educators who ran their own private schools. All of us girls had to work very hard cleaning. We waxed the parlor's wooden floor and did the dishes in addition to cleaning all the boarders' rooms and bathrooms. I did not really mind doing all that work, but the food they gave us and our sleeping arrangements were abysmal.

We slept in a large dome, but we had to carry our own bedding back and forth because we did not have a locker where we could keep our personal things. We took our bedding to our live-in job. If we quit that job, we carried our bedding back to the convent. As a result, the girls stole everything that was left unattended from each other. The place where we slept was

absolutely filthy. Most of the other girls did not mind where they slept; they would also walk with their dirty feet on the other girls' bedding.

The food they served us was scraped off of the borders' plates. They placed all the leftover food in one pot. Then, they mixed it all together and served it to us domestic workers. That was what the other resident girls told me shortly after I arrived there. They also served the same horrible food to the orphans. When I heard that, I was completely disgusted. Sometimes, we bought our food from a local restaurant, but we had no place to store it. We would either have to eat it right away or it would be stolen. The girls would keep their food in their sleeping bags, and sometimes the rats would get to it. One time, I felt a rat as it ran across my body when I was asleep.

We had no hot water in which to bathe, which really bothered me. The area around the toilets was also very disgusting. The convent took in women from all over India, and most of them had never used, or even seen, a toilet before. Except for the fact that the nuns made us clean the bathrooms to their satisfaction, they must not have wanted us to spend too much time in there when nature called.

I vowed to myself that I would stay at my job, even if my employers mistreated me because that would mean I would be free from the horrible eating, sleeping, and bathroom conditions in the convent. I was just beginning to test my freedom from the Rebellos; it was like jumping from frying pan into the fire, but I was determined not to give up. I knew that, someday, God would deliver me to my purpose.

I continued doing domestic work in Bombay while waiting for an opportunity to join the Jesus and Mary convent. Again, I was running away from the reality of the world, but I kept telling myself that I was doing it for my own good. I told the nun in charge of the girls I wanted to join the convent while waiting. I kept working domestic jobs and saved up my money, which was a good thing because I was told I needed to have money to join the convent.

While I was working for different families in the area, the husbands would fondle me when their wives were out of town. I was naive at the time and didn't fully understand what was going on. When I mentioned it to the nun who oversaw the domestic girls, she refused to believe me. Was I so unimportant that they would dismiss a legitimate claim from me so easily? Apparently, I was.

When I had saved up enough money, the Regina Pacis nuns arranged to send me to the Jesus and Mary convent in Pune. They knew how dissatisfied I had become with my life at their convent, so I decided I would start fresh somewhere else.

When one of the head nuns, Mother Provencal for the convent of Jesus and Mary, was visiting one of the branches in Bombay, I went to visit her in the hope she could assist me during my transition.

She was very nice to me and agreed to help me work things out the next time she was in Bombay.

Once I arrived in Pune, Mother Provencal arranged for me to attend the regular school. I was placed in the 8th grade. The other women who had come from different parts of India were starting in same grade, as well. The difference was those women had graduated from high school, and some of them even had a college degree. They were educated in their own language. They were sent there to be educated in English. I found it very difficult to keep up with the other students. I was the only one who lacked a formal education. The only advantage I had over other girls was I could speak fluent English, which became very useful for me later in life.

Even though I was in my twenties, I was so small and thin I was told by Mother Provincial that I looked cute in my school uniform. I actually looked and felt like a teenager who attended the Jesus and Mary convent school.

Mother Provincial knew I had no prior education and needed extra help. She assigned two tutors to assist me: one for math and one for English. I took full advantage of the opportunity; I studied hard and got good grades. After every exam, we had to have our report cards signed by Mother Superior or Mother Provincial. I looked for her as she went to the chapel to pray. She was pleased with my grades. I knew Sister Josephine – who oversaw pre-postulates - - and other women were jealous of all the attention I was getting, but I enjoyed it. For the first time in my life, I finally felt like I was getting ahead.

The nun who was in charge of our pre-novices was from the state of Kerala. Most of the women who came to join the convent were from Kerala, so our mistress was partial to her own people. The women attending classes were there only to brush up on their English. Once they improved on their ability to speak the language, they entered the novitiate. Once a person joined the novitiate, the rules were very strict, and we had to keep up with other novices.

When I finally entered the novitiate, I had to still attend school and do all the things that were required of me as a novice. I found that extremely difficult. My fatigue began showing during morning prayers and meditation. The novice mistress did not treat me fairly. She told Mother Provincial what was happening and that I was not cut out to be a nun. **She poisoned her mind.**

Mother Provincial called me to her office and told me I did not have the fortitude or calling to become a nun and that I had to go back to Regina Pacis. She said that the convent was not a place for me to hide.

After she told me that, I was very depressed. I did not want to live anymore, so I thought of a way I could kill myself. There was a deep pond which the nuns went to where they could pray and meditate. I thought about jumping into the pond, but I was too scared. **I decided not to end my life.**

Now that I am older and settled into my life in America, I know the nuns were right. At that time, I was miserable receiving that news.

God had other plans for me, and I am grateful for His guidance throughout my entire life. If not for the Lord and His plans to make me prosper, I would not be where I am and who I am today.

Leaving the Convent of Jesus and Mary: On My Own

When I left the convent in Pune, which is located to the southeast of Bombay, Mother Superior gave me five hundred rupees to help me get started in my new life. I had no home to go to, but there was *no way* I was going to go back to the Rebello's in Kannada Kudru.

I went back to the Regina Pacis convent. The sister who was in charge of the wayward girls found me a nice family to work for. Coincidentally, they had four girls who went to Jesus and Mary school in Bombay. The mother taught piano lessons at the school, and the father was a doctor. The oldest child was seven or eight and the youngest was about eighteen months old.

I was a housekeeper, cook, and nanny to the children. I loved the girls as my own, and they loved me, too. Every evening, I would take them to Magagon Hill to play. It was a long walk and a long climb to the top of the hill, but it was worth it to make them happy. **The mother's name was Hyacinth. Out of respect, I wanted to call her Madam, but she told me not to.**

The doctor, however, wanted me to address her with respect. He threatened me saying if I didn't he would throw me off the third-floor balcony.

In the morning, I would fix breakfast for the children and get them ready for school. That was the time during which I learned to properly put on socks and shoes for the children. Then, I would go to the market and do some grocery shopping for the three meals that I cooked each day. I also washed and ironed clothes. I especially took great care when I handled the girls' uniforms; the pleated skirts were hard to iron. I did all the washing by hand and then hung the clothes out to dry. Part of my duties included taking care of the two youngest girls, Karen and Rhoni. The couple was very particular about how they wanted their food prepared, but I knew how to please them. It was a lot of work, but I liked the couple, and I loved the children.

I also attended night school at Regina Pacis. I don't know how I did it, but I guess I had a lot of stamina at the time.

When they realized I had too much work, they hired me a helper. At that time, Hyacinth did not know how to cook. In the big city, women didn't have to cook for their husbands. Doctor Coutinho loved my cooking. I did not go to any culinary school; I just learned by practice. In fact, I could cook anything the family wanted to eat, even Muslim dishes, Mangalorian and Goanise.

Once again, I fell into the trap. Hyacinth had gone to visit her mother in Bangalore. I was sleeping in the children's room to keep an eye on them, especially the baby. That night, the doctor came into the room and walked over to me. He began fondling me underneath the covers. The worst thing was that I started to like it, and from there on, it got to be a habit. My helper was still sleeping in the kitchen.

Finally, when I realized what he was doing was wrong, I knew it was my fault as much as his. I do not know why he started doing it, and I never should have gone along with him.

The doctor would come home every afternoon for lunch. I would make him chopped up tomatoes and other dishes he liked. During that time, I asked him to help me with my studies. The routine went on for a while, and it seemed to work.

One day, when I was feeling brave, I told him what he was doing was wrong and if he didn't stop, I would look for another job. He knew how much his wife and the girls loved me, so he decided that I was worth keeping around. From there on in, he stopped, and I was relieved.

The youngest child, Shameem, was only two and a half years old. She was my favorite, and I called her my pet. The other three were jealous because they thought I didn't love them the same, but I assured them I loved them all, as well as their parents.

Dr. Coutinho had a bad temper. One time, he beat his wife in front of their children. They were terrified and came to me for protection. To make matters worse, her mother was there visiting the family.

For some reason that afternoon, she was coming home for her lunch break. Someone on the street had conned her into giving them all her gold that she was wearing, and that set him off. Even though the doctor was a good man, his wife and children were afraid of him when he lost his temper.

I did my best to work for the family, even when I was feeling sick. One time, I had a high fever. I was not feeling well at all, but I just kept on working because I had to get dinner ready for the family. It got so bad to the point where I could not even stand up.

Hyacinth called the doctor at work and told him what was happening. He came home right away and took care of me. **Had he not come to my rescue, I would have died.** There were other instances when I became sick and had to stop working until I felt better. When I was younger, I always put my work responsibilities before my health.

Nathalie Rebello was visiting one of her daughters and her brother in Mumbai. When she heard where I was, she came to take me back to Kannada Kudru. She told me, "Why are you working for other people when you can come home?"

I knew better by now, so I refused her offer.

When she talked to the nun at Regina Pacis who was in charge of domestic workers, the nun who told her I was of age I could make my own decisions. Natalie was disappointed and left. The next thing I heard from her daughter was that her mother died of heart attack. She said I had killed her by refusing to go home. What home? I had no home. She wanted me to come back so I could be like the other three helpless women. There was no way that was going to happen. I really think God was watching over me.

Leaving the Coutinhos

Even though I loved working for the Coutinhos, I wanted more for my life. I was no longer satisfied doing domestic work. I wanted to be a telephone operator or maybe work in an office. I told them I wanted to have a different job and left shortly thereafter.

The next job I applied for was selling bath soap for a company. I went door to door as a salesperson. Most of the time, I walked, but sometimes I relied on public transportation. We had to sell a certain amount of soap, but most people just slammed the door in our faces. I hated that job; I felt like I was begging people to buy the product even though they didn't listen to our pitch half the time.

During that time, I was roommates with another woman, but it got to the point where I could not pay the rent; she might have been charging me too much. I had so little money that I could hardly pay for my food.

A little while later, I found a cheaper place where I could live. I paid rent to a mother and daughter. I could not afford that, either, and I went many days without any food.

It got to the point where I went back to the Coutinhos and asked them to lend me some money. Hyacinth asked her husband, but he said no since I had stopped working for them.

It was time for me to find another domestic job.

I ended up back at Regina Pacis. That was the last place I ever wanted to go back to, even though we stayed free. The nuns there had found me all my domestic jobs.

They found me a job with an English couple. That job did not last very long, and I found myself having to move on again.

I wanted to leave India for good and go to Dubai or Kuwait, or a similar Arab country, to get another domestic job. I told this to Sister Irene.

Sister Irene did not want me to go to any of those places. She thought young women should not be going to those places, that it was not safe. Instead, she thought it would be better to send me to England or America. In one of those places, I could make a lot of money and then return to India and live happily ever after.

People from other countries did come to the convent looking for women who would do domestic work. The nuns also made arrangements for those women; I think the nuns made sure we would be given time to go to church on Sunday and other holy days. They also ensured that we would be paid a fair wage.

I talked to Sister Adeline, and she arranged for me to go to a foreign country.

Soon after we had that conversation, Gobend Nachnanai, who was visiting Bombay on business, had heard that the nuns placed workers in foreign countries. He was in India, looking for nanny for his older brother and his family. Gobend Nachnanai visited Regina Pacis nuns and the sort of job they did. He knew about the young women who had no families and did live-in housekeeping or nanny jobs. They used people from India for cheap labor to work in his department store.

Gobend helped me get my passport. He left India while I was waiting for my visitor's visa. While I waited for this, I had to find another domestic job. The sisters helped me to find something.

I worked for a family with two school-age girls. They were upper middle class and had a lot of money. I did most of the domestic work, everything they needed.

I was still waiting for my visa, which was taking a very long time. My employers came to India to expedite my visa. I also let Sister Adelaide take care of me and handle everything. She told them that they had to let me attend church every Sunday and pay me whatever sister had arranged.

Once the visa was ready, Dr. Nachnanai bought my ticket, and the departure date was arranged. At the time, I had a boyfriend. I introduced him to my brother, Phillip

Need Biography of Phillip

One night, he took Joseph and me to dinner and paid for it. Afterward, my brother asked me to pay him back when Joseph was not looking. People tell me I am cheap. My brother is even worse, he has always thought because I am older, I should care for him and that I have money.

Leaving India and Coming to America

The day finally arrived for us to board the plane to go to the USA. Joseph came to the airport to say goodbye. He had ulterior motives about seeing me off. Once I got settled in America, he wanted me to bring him over.

Dr. Nachnani, his wife Linda, their son Anil, and myself, We flew to the America on a jumbo jet 747. We stopped in Germany. I did not know where we were, and I did not enjoy the trip. I had never been on a plane before, and my motion sickness kicked in. I was so sick for a long time after. We stayed in Germany overnight before we boarded for Washington.

The hotel we stayed in was very luxurious, and I was not used to such niceties. The Nachnani's son, Anil, and I stayed in separate rooms. I did not know how to operate the shower; everything was new to me. Luckily, six-year-old Anil showed me how to work it.

We stayed in the hotel for about twenty-four hours and then boarded the plane to America again.

We arrived in Washington D.C. on March 24, 1974 just before Easter, and there was snow on the ground. I was amazed because it was the first time I had seen snow. Gobend Nachnanai and his family met us at the airport. They took us to Alexandria, Virginia. They lived on Blue Dale Street and had a large house with a pool, a basketball court, a tennis court, and lots of land.

Shortly after we arrived, we went to Disney World in Orlando, Florida. We left during Easter weekend, so we did not attend church. They left the youngest son with Linda's parents in the Carolinas so the rest of us could enjoy the trip.

The next morning, we came down to breakfast, which was buffet-style. I just passed by the food, and the doctor thought something was wrong with me because I didn't want me to eat the food. I had never seen such food as that, and so much of it. I did not like American food because it made me sick.

We went on the rides and checked out the other attractions. Due to my motion sickness, I don't remember if I enjoyed the rides, but it was nice of them to take me with them.

One day, we went to the beach. I was shocked to see Linda lying out in the sun. Later that evening, **sunburn?** she was hurting so much that she didn't even enjoy the dinner theater we went to later that night. However, I had a really good time interacting with the actors.

We picked up the younger son, Ashoi, on the way back to Virginia.

Before I came to America, Dr. Nachnani's mother lived in Glade Spring, VA with her younger son, Gobend, and his family. Gobend's wife was Indian and could speak the language and could prepare her Indian meals. The mother came to live with us. They wanted me to cook Indian food for her, as well as take care of the children, take them to school, clean, and do many other jobs. Linda stayed in bed most mornings and read the newspaper. Once it was time for her social engagement(s), she would get up and get ready.

My bedroom was a large room with a large bed. There were no mirrors and no windows. I would get up early to help the children get ready for school.

Linda Nachnani thought I knew everything about how to work all the major appliances, but I didn't. I put her wool pants in the washer, which I didn't know I was not supposed to do. When I took them out, I noticed they had shrunk. After that, she showed me how to work the appliances and how to separate clothes.

I thought all my troubles were over, but it was just beginning. In the end, things turned out to be wonderful, but not without the difficult journey. Now, I look back on my life, grateful for God's plan. I do believe things do happen for the best. I have realized that after the long journey in my life I have been blessed. With God's help and help from good friends from my church, I am where I am today.

Even though I did not travel every day, especially after getting back, I found myself getting nausea every day. Linda really thought I was pregnant. I wasn't, but she was pregnant with her third child, another son. Maybe it was because of my change in lifestyle.

Linda's sister-in-law, who was Indian, thought I ought to be treated like a servant. Linda was different and paid no mind to her. Linda was moody at times, but she was nice to me overall. Dr. Nachnani was not too bad, either. Even his other brother and his family were nice to me, except for the one brother and his wife, who lived in Springfield, Virginia. He was the one who made the arrangements to bring me to America. He owned a business in Springfield and used people from India for cheap labor.

Dr. Nachnani was a cardiologist, and that was why his family was very rich. The doctor was from India and was of the Sindhi caste. From my experience, the Sindhi were businessmen who made money by not paying or under paying their workers.

When I would take the children outside to play, I would meet the neighbors' children. I felt like a teenager. One of the neighbors' children gave me her old bike and taught me how to ride. They were nice to me and treated me like one of them. I had so much energy then. I wanted to learn everything, and any opportunity I had I took advantage to learn. I was only thirty-two, eighty-five pounds, and five feet tall. The neighbors thought I was a teenager. Most children learned to ride their bicycles at an incredibly young age.

The neighbor girl, who was about 12 years old, gave me a bicycle to keep. She also used to give me swimming lessons in the Nachanani's pool. I never did learn how to swim in order to save myself from drowning. I didn't learn very much and I still don't know how to swim. Neighbors were always good to me. Linda did not work. I took care of all the housework and the

children. She did all the rich people things, like worrying about her makeup and hair and fulfilling social obligations.

The doctor had three other brothers, but he was the richest of all the four brothers. He had two boys, and one on the way. Also, his elderly mother lived with them.

The other brothers who lived in America did not have large houses and servants. One time his brother visited along with his family.

One evening, the doctor and his wife went out. After the children went to bed, I took the bike out. Their house was on top of a hill. I made it to the top of the hill, when I went rolling down, I fell off the bike and hurt myself. I could hardly walk. I did not tell them about the accident because I would have been in trouble. Whenever I had a chance, I practiced. Once, I got on the bike, I could ride a long way. I never learned to get on or off the bike without falling.

My day would start at six a.m. and end at eleven p.m. or midnight with no break. The only break I had was when I would take the children out to play.

I would work seven days a week, sixteen hours daily. I was like a prisoner in their house. Once a week on Sundays, I got to go to church because that was arranged by the nuns before I left for America. They would drop me off and come and pick me up after the service.

When I asked about paying me, they told me I was an illegal alien and I could not open a bank account. Therefore, they said they would keep the money safe for me.

I met some people at church, and they were good to me. They would pick me up on their way to worship and then bring me back. Once in a while, the Nachnans would let me attend other functions at the church, such as the welcome party for the new members.

During that time, I met the Mondloch family. They had eight children ranging from ages of thirteen to twenty. The Mondlochs would pick me up for church on Sundays. Other than that, I did not have a chance to really get to know them until I left the Nachnans on December 19, 1975.

A few months after I arrived in America, Linda gave birth to her third son, Manish. He was so cute. All three boys were cute, and I loved them all. I would have loved them even more if I had more time to spend with them. I had to do everything in the house, except for grocery shopping. Maybe I would have done that if I could drive at the time.

I had to care for three little children from age five to the infant. Every meal the doctor's mother wanted was hot chapati which was time-consuming to prepare. One of the reasons I was hired was to cook for Indian hot meals. The doctor's wife, who was American did not know how to cook Indian food. I don't know why the doctor wanted to bring his mother to live with him and his family. The only reason I could think was because they had a bigger house, a lot of bedrooms. She had her own private quarters. Her rooms were located off the living room and the kitchen. They kept her comfortable in her old age with the richest son. Occasionally her sons and their families visited from Texas.

One of the brothers who lived in Texas had two daughters. The oldest was Angela. We got along well, and her family was kind to me; they didn't like the way I was treated. Angela and I got along very well I guess because she could speak freely to me, I think she was a teenager at the time. I can get along with any age people if they treat me right. Her dad was the oldest son of Nacnnis. I was told that her grandmother did not love her dad as such because he had two girls. In those days In India, it was a big thing to have a boy in the family.

When Linda's twin sister's family came to visit from South Carolina, they were nice to me. When all the family went out for dinner or whatever, her father would stay back. After I put the children to bed and the grandmother in her room, he would fondle me and make me sit on his lap. I was naive about it and I let him.

The following summer, the doctor's older brother and his family from India and the other brother from Taxes with his family came to visit. Now we had a house of four families. I had to do everything for this large family all by myself. Even my bedroom was taken. I had no place to sleep, not even an air mattress. I had to wait until everyone had gone to bed, before I could find a spot to sleep. I could not sleep on the carpet **why**?. It was not a pleasant situation.

I realized there was no way out of this. The only thing, was to go back to India which I did not want to do. Since I had no option and had no one to talk to, I wanted to take my life but did not know how. I was too scared to jump in the pool and drown. One day, I collected lots of his mother's heart pills, took them, and went to sleep thinking I will die that night.

The next morning, I was feeling weird and could not function. Linda was in bed as usual reading the morning paper. Somehow, I went to her bedroom and told her what I had done. She called her husband at work. He told her I will be alright once if I threw up and rested for a while.

After this incidence, they sent me to see a psychiatrist. At that time I didn't know anything about shrinks. I was supposed to tell him what was bothering me, I did not trust him therefore, I only told him the important things such as the long hours of work with no day off. Then, they started to give me half a day off once a week. While I was going to church every Sunday, I was making some friends, some of them were real caring people. After I started getting the half a day off, one of the church friends offered to pick me up and take me shopping or do whatever I wanted to do.

That friend's name was Jean Moore. She had five children and also sang in the church choir. She taught me how to sew. We cooked dinner together, and I had dinner with them. I used to have a good time with Jean and her children.

The situation at the Nachnanis' was a little better, but I knew I was not going anywhere. They were not making any effort to help me get my green card. They were only renewing my visitor's visa every three or six months, and I was working for free.

I still felt like a prisoner in their house. Maybe if I had stayed long enough, until all three boys were grown and after his aging mother died, they might have let me go. I was not going to count on that. I was already thirty-four and wanted to better my life. I knew that was not going to happen if I lived with them.

After the doctor's family went back to India, I asked Linda when I would get my permanent residence or work visa. I told her I wanted to move on. She relayed that to her husband after he got home from work.

That night, he took me aside and threatened to send me back to India if I ever mentioned wanting to leave them again. At that point, I was scared; I did not know what to do or who to talk to.

The following week on my half day off, Jean picked me up, I told her my situation. she suggested I go see my parish priest at Good Shepherd church. The priest asked if I knew the Mondlochs. I said yes, and he told me to see Joyce Mondloch. who I had already met at the newcomers' party previously at the Good Shepherd church.

That following Sunday when the Mondlochs picked me up for church I told Joyce of my suicide attempt and how the doctor had threatened me. Joyce told me that they were there for me if I needed, not to do anything foolish.

Escape from Nachnani

The following week on my day off when Jean picked me up, I told her my plans and asked if she would drop me off at the Mondlochs.

Joyce and Ruth Franey, Joyce's neighbor, had cooked up something for me to get me away from the Nachnani's.

Ruth's husband was an attorney. He advised Joyce and Ruth to go to the Nachnani's house take my stuff and move out as soon as possible without any explanation and face the consequences later. They knew what they were doing. Joyce and Ruth got me in their van and drove me to the Nachnani's. I grabbed whatever I could and got out of there. I did exactly what they instructed me to do.

Linda was very surprised and asked if I would stay till the doctor got home. I refused.

I came and lived with the Mondloch family. They had eight children. Joyce and Bob Mondloch were ready to help me any way they could to get me out of slavery.

The next thing they did was to contact immigration and tell the truth how I came to the States. Joyce made an appointment and took me to the immigration office in DC.

At immigration, after they listened to my story, they said I had to go back to India and reapply. I did not want to go back. I knew I would never return if I was deported. I was very scared. Joyce, my good friend, told them that it was not my fault for coming illegally.

Then the immigration recommended we go see Mrs. Murphy at Catholic Migration and she would help me.

Joyce made an appointment to take me to Catholic Migration to meet with Mrs. Murphy.

Seeking a green card – needed a job and sponsorship. I found an immigration lawyer in Washington DC who was just starting out his career. His name was Nathan. He did not charge me as much since he was just beginning.

Mrs. Murphy advised us to find a domestic job, and they had to pay my social security and follow the government laws. Also, the employer had to qualify to sponsor me. The job had to be the one no American could do. While I was job hunting Joyce and Bob let me stay with them and helped me find the job and an employer who would qualify as my sponsor. I had to work for one family who had special needs. Joyce knew some church people that needed help, but they could not have the qualifications to sponsor. With Joyce's help, we kept looking at the want-ads. I do

not remember how long it took us to find the right job. Finally, I found one in Rockville, Maryland working for a single mother caring for her three-year-old baby boy. His name was Blair and her name was Gail Linville. I was not driving at that time. Gail came to Virginia to the Mondloch's to interview me. We liked each other right away. Joyce talked to her about sponsoring me; filing for social security; filing for taxes and giving me the weekend off.

In November of 1976, Gail took me to the social security office to get my social security card. She paid her part of the withholding and registered me with the IRS. Now, I was legally working and enjoying my work. The kids at the playground thought I was Blair's mom. Gail sponsored me for my permanent residence. Gail worked at the Commission for Women in Montgomery County. She worked long hours and needed someone she could trust to care for her little boy. She promised to sponsor me for my green card. I was legally working while waiting for my permanent residence.

She too could not afford to pay me what she was supposed to. She made a deal with me to let me clean people's houses while her child was in school to make up the difference in my pay. I did not mind doing that as long as she sponsored me. This was a live-in nanny job. Gail was nice to me. She treated me most of the time as part of the family. I was very ambitious to better my life in any way I could. I wanted to learn to read and write better. I was ready to grab other opportunities that came my way. Gail supported me with anything I wanted to do.

During my time with Gail, I learned to drive with EZ Method Driving School. They took me for a ride because I paid a lot of money for those driving tests, and I failed it four times. The company did not live up to their name at all.

One of my neighbors noticed my problem, and they let me practice driving their car. After all their help, I finally passed. Howard, the neighbor, took me to buy a used car. The first time I drove my car, I ended up getting in an accident with another new driver. Even though we were both scared, we let the accident go because there was minimal damage.

Through the literacy counsel I found a tutor, Eileen, who came to my place twice a week to help me learn to read and write.

I also started taking tennis lessons. I couldn't do anything right. I couldn't keep my eye on the ball.

Before Gail left for work, I would go practice tennis every morning on the wall at Montgomery College. The instructor was so surprised with my progress that he asked me how I improved so much in only one week.

One morning, when I was practicing, a handsome man approached me and asked me if I wanted to hit some balls. I looked at him and questioned in my mind as to why he wanted to play with me. I thought maybe he wanted to ask me out, which I would have liked.

We got to talking, and he told me his name was Howard Leighton. Every morning, we would practice together. He also helped out another woman who wanted to learn to play tennis, too. We got to talking about my education, and he offered to help me with my math.

One day, when he was to come over to tutor me, I called his house, and a woman answered the phone. I didn't know what to do what do or say, so I hung up. When he finally came over that day, he told me someone called his house and hung up when his wife answered the phone.

After Howard and I became friends, he told me about his wife, Carolyn Leighton. They were high school sweethearts and had been married for a long time. They helped me a lot, and our friendship continued to grow from there.

Blair's parents were divorced. Gail Linville, Blair's mother didn't spend much time with her son and give him the love he deserved. She was busy at work and dating. Her way of showing her love to Blair was buying him expensive toys. Men would buy expensive gifts for her and Blair.

For about two years things were good between us. I had my freedom. I learned to play tennis, and I attended night school.

Gail was from Tennessee. Once when she was going to visit her parents, she took Blair and me along. Gail had a CB radio in her car. She would talk to the truck drivers and talk about weather and driving conditions and police cars so she wouldn't speed. She would also flirt with them. She was a wild woman. I did not understand much of what was going on.

I was new to American life. I could have gone to the moon and back and I would not have known the difference. Her parents were farmers her dad would take his grandson on the tracker ride. I did not remember much about the trip once we got to her parents.

Gail was a very strange woman. She would pick strange men to go on dates. One night she came home extremely late after a date. This man followed her home and forced himself in and she could not get rid of him.

She used to rent a spare room to a student. She and the student got rid of him. I heard all about it the following day from the boarder. There were many incidents like that. I thought it was hilarious. She was a pretty blond with curly hair, and good looking. She had no problem finding rich men to date. She was a con artist. These men would give her and her son expensive gifts. She would tell her dates I love this and that thing or Blair would love that toy.

She was nice for the most part. She was nice to me. When I was working for Gail, Bob Mondloch was at a business meeting in New Orleans and he passed away. Gail was nice to give me some time off and drove me to Virginia so I could visit and spend time with the family.

I had weekends off. I could do anything with my free time. I would visit Joyce and her family on weekend. Taking three buses then walking carrying two to three bags one and a half to two miles. I guess I did not know how to pack for the weekend. I guess if I knew what time my bus arrived one of the Mondlochs would have picked me up.

One weekend when I returned home from my weekend at the Mondlochs, Gail had occupied my bedroom with her visiting family from Tennessee. I would not have minded if she had told me beforehand. When I returned on Sunday, night I was upset. She had moved me to her border's room I was not happy about that because she did not tell me ahead of time. From then on Gail, and I did not get along. One time, Blair told me that Gail wanted me to remove my bike from the yard. That made me mad. When I refused, he went and told his mother. She got mad and told me to get out. Shortly after, she put all my things in the yard, and I was without a home.

I guess if it was today, I would have handled it differently, I needed her, more than she needed me. I could have sucked it up. I was so close to getting my green card (permanent residency) and all I had to do was apologize and things would have been same as before and I would have had my residency earlier and not have to go through other jobs.

I didn't know what I was going to do. I got in touch with Howard and Carolyn, and they let me stay with them for a while.

Second Job

Now I was working for a couple with two little girls. I have always loved children, they are so innocent; I can make any crying child happy.

The husband and wife both worked in Baltimore. It was a long commute, so they left by seven or so. Before they left, I had to have their breakfast ready and take care of a four year-old and a two-year-old. I was mostly hired to look after the children and do a little housework. This job too was a live in. Besides taking care of the little ones I had to clean, wash and iron all their work clothes, cook separate meals for the children and later for the parents. No matter how hard I tried I could not please the wife. She always criticized my work, mostly my ironing and made me redo it. I had a separate private servant quarters with one big room. I never got any time to spend there. I had no time for myself, no more tutors, no church, nothing. All my personal life was stopped. It was like being with the Nachmanis.

I thought since they were Jewish lawyers, they would sponsor me and speed up my legal papers. I was wrong.

I found out later they had not filed for my papers they made my life a hell, If I had stayed any longer with them, I would have ended up in mental hospital. I got in touch with my friends, the Leightons. They came and got me one more time and took me to Joyce Mondloch's in Virginia. I did love the two little children, and they loved me. When I was leaving the four-year-old came up to me and handed me a hand full of dandelions and apologized for her mother's behavior towards me. She told me that the women before me took off or left in the night without any notice because of her mother's behavior. I think the job must have lasted about three weeks. I don't even remember if they ever paid me.

My third job and sponsorship for US residency

Sometime in 1977, I was introduced to a divorced cardiologist by one of my tennis-player friends. Dr. Bushback and his family lived in Bethesda, Maryland. He had four girls and an adopted nine-year-old boy, Fred. When I was interviewed, the doctor, he told me that taking care of his son was the most important part of my job. The girls lived with their mother and visited their dad often. Fred lived with his dad all the time. I was hired to take care of him. I guess I was not ready for this job either. Even though the doctor was very nice to me, I found it difficult to handle Fred. The doctor treated me so nicely. He let me paint my room after I arrived so it would

have that homey feel. He would let me have my friends over and would join us and he ordered china plates for me. Trying to handle Fred became too much for me.

Again, I felt like a loser failure and wanted to end my life. I collected lot of sleeping pills by lying to my doctor about not being able to sleep. I took all the pills I had collected wanting to kill myself.

When the doctor came home, he thought I was just sleeping so he did nothing about it. The following day I was still asleep. The doctor must have taken his son to school and went to work. When he came home that evening I was still sleeping and he found the sleeping pills.

After twenty-four hours, my friend, Eline, called to find out where I was. That is when he told her what I had done. My friend Eline and her husband Dave came immediately and took me to the hospital. By then the drug was wearing out. I was kept in the hospital for a whole week for observations. During this time, I had to do lot of group activities and saw the psychologist often. During one of his visits, he told me I should never do it again because I am not good at trying to kill myself, also I may cause serious damage to my brain or other parts of my body. Even though I have suffered depression many times, after that I did not try to kill myself because of what my doctor had told me.

By now, I lost my job. The doctor had already hired somebody else while I was in the hospital. I was happy I did not have to go back to that job. Now I did not know where to live until I found another job. Howard called Joyce and told her of my situation. Even though Joyce was in mourning for her husband Bob Mondloch, she still let me live with her until I found another job. I needed another job and a sponsor. With help from Joyce, I started looking in the newspaper. One day Joyce was reading the Washington Post and found an ad to care for a mentally challenged young man while both his parents worked in the District. I was the perfect candidate.

Once again, I was at Joyce's mercy. Joyce had her own problem dealing with Bob Mondloch's sudden death, leaving her with his eight children. In spite of that she let me stay with her while I looked for another job, Joyce has been my guardian angel ever since I have been in America - fifty years and still going. Had I stayed with Gail I would not have gone through what came after that, also it would not have taken another three years to get my green card. Remember, I had to find someone that was willing and able to sponsor me, for my permanent residency in the US. Every time I changed jobs, I had to start all over again.

My third job and sponsor for US residency

I cannot remember at this time when I went to work for Mr. and Mrs. Chevelia. It may have been 1977 or 1978. This was my last chance. By now the immigration people knew who Catherine Rebello was. My lawyer was getting tired of me changing jobs so often.

Mr. Chevelia filled out all the necessary legal papers I needed for my permanent residency.

They were generally nice to me, especially Mr. Chevelaia. They paid their part of my social security.

They were not a rich family, but they managed. They may have been in their late sixties.

I had all the freedom I could have. When Charlie, their special needs son, was in school, I could find a side job.

I got a house cleaning job, once or twice a week. This was ok as long as I could be home when Charlie was dropped off school bus. I also had all my evenings free once they got home. As I said, my main job was to care for Charlie. After he got home from school, I would have him use the bathroom, give him a snack, take him to the park, and play ball with him or take long walks. He enjoyed it. He was a nice, cooperative, and loving young man. When the neighbors saw us, they would tell me that I did a good job with him that he never listened to previous care givers. After we got home from our walk, I would cook dinner for both of us and feed him. After the Chevelias. got home from work at 7 or 7:30, the rest of the day was mine until 8 am. They fixed their own meals, which left me free to do whatever I wanted to do. Mostly, I would go for bicycle rides or play tennis. I did light housework, laundry and ironing. I volunteered to iron Mr. Chevelia's work shirts as part of my job, so they did not have to send them to the cleaners. Mr. Chevelia complimented me about his shirts. He said that even his daughters could not do such good job. I heard that directly from Mrs. Chevelia. The Chevelias liked the way I cared for their son and did things with him.

I must confess I sometimes got frustrated when Charlie did not listen. If I knew then what I know now, I would have been more patient. Charlie could not talk. He used sign language. I didn't. He did understand when I talked to him. I was trying to teach him to take care of himself. Charlie had been in a group home. With his parents in their sixties, I knew that he would end up back in an institution at some time. I would sometimes get upset because they'd treat him like a helpless young man by doing things for him.

Charlie loved music. He would listen to the same music over and over. There was something about his watch. He stared at the watch. I never understood that. He was a big guy unlike his siblings and his parents.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Chevelia helped me to speed up my INS application.

When all my papers were ready, I found out I had to go to India to get my residency. That was a shock and I was scared. I did not have enough money for the ticket because I had to pay lawyer's fees. I would have had to pay much more if he had not been introduced to me by a neighbor friend. I had a fear of not being able to return to the USA. I did not know why I had to go back to my country of origin. Previously, residency seekers could go to Canada and reenter the USA formally.

I had no choice so I would babysit on the weekends for a few hours whenever someone needed me. I found a few hours to watch a toddler. I put him in his highchair to feed him. While I was feeding him, I passed out. Good thing she had a painter painting the house. He helped with the baby. He must have called the child's mother. I was feeling better when she got home. I don't think she was very happy about what had happened. I wouldn't be either, I think she never wanted to see my face again. I think I fainted because of stress.

Return home to re-enter the US legally

Mrs. Chevelia helped prepare for my journey: getting all the important papers, passport, ticket, and etc.

This was the same year, 1981, of the President Regan assassination attempt. I do not remember the exact month or date of travel. It might have been sometime during the fall.

Before I left, Joyce, my best friend promised me that if for some reason I was not allowed to return, she would come to India to get me. I know she meant it too. Mr. & Mrs. Chevelia drove me to the airport. That was nice of them. I stopped in Frankfurt, Germany to change planes. It was a long wait. I don't remember the details, but I had to go on an Indian airline because we had problems with the original flight.

I landed late at night. I had to stay overnight at the airport because there was no transportation available.

I had made previous plans with Sister Adeline. She was expecting me. Next day I took a cab and went to the convent. Mother Superior did not like the idea of me staying at the convent. She told Sister Adelaide to find me a hotel to stay in while I was visiting. She thought I had enough money to stay somewhere else because I was coming from America. Across from the convent was the hotel Sister Adeline recommended. People at the hotel treated me well. They had room service, which was nice. That way, I could visit her when I wanted to. We visited each other while I was there it worked fine. The day of the appointment with the embassy, a front desk staff member got me a cab. On the way to immigration, I think the cabby was taking me in the wrong direction. I knew where I was. I told him stop. When he did not, I started screaming for help. People came to help me. When I told them what was happening with the cabby, they took care of him. I told them where I was going; they got me another cab. I got to my appointment safe and on time. I had gone prepared. I had everything I needed. My attorney had prepared well. When my number came up the officer called me and was surprised how prepared I was. I overheard the officer telling another how prepared I was and had a job lined up in the USA. I had a few days before my flight to the US. Also, I visited with the Coutinho's, my previous employers. I had a small bank account when I had left India the first time. I had transferred the account to Sister Adeline's name. She gave it back with all the interest it had made. I asked her to keep it, but she had no need for that money. I took the money, then I exchanged it for dollars when I was at the airport.

Sister Adeline had made arrangement with the convent car driver from Regina Pacis to drive me while I was visiting. The driver and his whole family took me to the airport. I gave the driver a big tip of all the Indian money I had.

I had a dice board game (karemboard), Customs were going to charge me extra to fly with it, so I left it with the family who took me to the airport.

Flight Back to the USA

The flight was a long one. I cannot remember where we changed planes to go to New York. Once the plane landed in New York, touching US soil, I was overjoyed. I flew from New York to Dulles airport. I had no problem with my papers. The Chevelias all came to welcome me and pick me up from the airport. I was treated well all through the trip. Once I got home, I had to take care of business. First, I had to send telegram to Sister Adeline in India to tell her I had arrived

safely. Then I had to call Joyce to let her know I was back. After that I had to call Lyman, my boyfriend. He wanted to see me. After that I went to bed, I was jet lagged and slept like a baby the whole night.

Back in the US

After I got back from my trip, I was told by Mrs. and Mr. Chevelia that I had look for another job because they felt they were not paying me enough and could not afford to pay me more. I respected that. Everything happens for the best. Had I stayed and worked for the Chevelia, I would have never met Beth Loker and Don Rice.

Mrs. Chevelia helped me to put an ad in the Washington Post which should have been for the following Sunday.

I was not getting any calls, so we looked in the paper. My ad was not there!

I started looking through the help wanted adds. I think the first ad was Beth's and Don's. I was incredibly lucky to have found them. It was God leading me to them. I will explain later. I called the number and Don answered the phone. He asked me to call them a little later because Beth was not home and she was the one I needed see. I called back as I was told; we talked and Beth asked if I could come for an interview. I was coming from Maryland to Virginia. She gave me good directions; she also told me the house was hard to find so she would meet me at the main entrance, which she did.

We went in and she took me to the dining room and asked if I would like some tea. We sat at the table and just talked with very little explanation about the job. She introduced me to Don, her husband, who was sitting at the kitchen table reading a book. Good thing I did not say anything as I thought he must be another hired hand. He was such a down-to-earth person. This was a live-in situation. I wanted room and board and pay. They paid my full social security, my part and her part and half of the health insurance. I could not expect anything better. After my interview, I used to come every Saturday to do some light housekeeping. I did not move in right away, because Mrs. Chevelia needed to arrange for Charlie's care.

I moved in on January 1, 1982. I started to work for them one day a week so I would not lose my job with the Chevalias. I remember the day I was moving in it was pouring rain.

That day for no reason Mrs. Chevelia wanted me to leave even though it was raining, so I packed all my things. We went in two cars. Mr. and Mrs. Chevelia and Charlie went in their car and I drove mine. I never understood why she resented me and I will never know.

Lawton House:

It was an old historical house where Don and Beth lived with their two dogs. It was built in the 1800's. I had two rooms upstairs with a full bath. I had it made.

Beth gave me very little in the way of job instructions. We worked it out as we went along.

One of the main reasons I was hired was so someone would be in the house when they traveled and would look after their two beagles, Charlie and Maggie. After I moved in with Beth and Don, I felt so relieved and free. Sometime later I took Sam for dog training. Maggie was jealous because she wanted to come with me.

I never had to grocery shop, which I hated. I made my own schedule to do what needed to be done; they were pleased with my work. Most of the time Beth cooked. I only cooked when they wanted Indian cooking. Don used to make a special dish for himself, smoked ham hock, when Beth was out of town. He did not want to be bothered while he was at home. Beth would call me when my dinner was ready. I took it back to my room so I could watch TV at the same time. They both loved Indian cooking, especially Don. He told me when he was in the service in England, he used to eat Indian cooking and he liked it very much.

They did not ask me to join them at the table; I do not think I would have been comfortable eating with them; after all I was their housekeeper, and I knew my place.

They were both vice-presidents at the Washington Post.

Don and Beth traveled on vacation quite a lot all over the world.

Beth also traveled a little on work related assignments.

She tolerated my depression. I think she knew I was suffering from it. It would suddenly hit me. She never stopped me from participating in any sports or pursuing my education. Before I came to work for Don and Beth I had been taking GED classes. I worked at Roy Rogers, a fast-food restaurant, during the same time I was working for Don and Beth.

In Falls Church, VA. I continued the GED classes at Marshall High School. They were only two or three-hour classes twice a week and only math & English. Most of the time people talked and did not take the classes seriously. I had the same teacher I had in Maryland, "Dolly

W.?! I was surprised to see her, after about five years. We did recognize each other right away. The classes were held in a little trailer at Marshall High in Fairfax County. I felt I was not getting enough knowledge. These classes were good mostly for someone that had basic education. I did not have that. When I was in the Convent of Jesus and Mary, I did attend school but again I had started in 8th grade. I memorized everything. I had two nuns tutoring, one in math the other in English with homework.

Going back to the GED, I felt since I did not have the basics, I needed to learn other subjects, so I spoke to Dolly about a more extensive program. I felt I did not have enough education in other subjects like history, science, etc. I talked to her about attending full day school for adults. She introduced me to the ESL counselor, Miss Doel. She told me all about the classes with adults. The classes were held five days a week from 8:30 to 3:30. I needed sixteen credits to graduate. I asked Beth if it was ok for me to attend classes all day, she did not object.

Beth thought it was too much for me to handle. She advised me to quit Roy Rodgers. She said I was burning the candle on both ends. She was right. She always looked out for me, and I trusted her. I had more time to concentrate on my studies.

I made sure I was not taking advantage of their kindness.

When I needed help with my homework, Beth would help me while she was cooking, she also helped with my research papers. She wanted to see me succeed and one day be independent. I still had free time for myself to do whatever I wanted to do. I played a lot of tennis, biking, hiking with the Ski Club of Washington, went to tennis camps, and even joined the church choir. I never got good at tennis. I always wanted to win. For me it was like a kid doing everything for the first time. Beth never ever stopped me from doing anything.

I finished most of the hard courses in three years. During my summer vacation I would do all polishing: silver, copper and brass, and clean windows and glass. One year they were in Europe, I cleaned all outside the house with plain water just using the sprinklers. I could see how clean it was looking so I cleaned and cleaned. I went crazy and cleaned around the whole porch. When they got back, they could not believe their eyes. That saved them from painting for one year. In my final year of school, I had few credits to finish. After I graduated from school, I took some college classes but did not make it as it was not interesting.

When Beth was shopping at Giant Food grocery, she saw a help wanted ad for the bakery department. She wanted me to apply. I said to her that I did not know one bread from another.

She said I will learn. Again, if it was not for Beth, I do not know where I would have worked. She wanted to help me prepare for my future so I could have my own place. I wanted to have a professional job. So I turned out, I worked for twenty-six years four months and some days at Giant Food.

A few years after my graduation, I started to wonder if I could afford to buy a condo. I asked Beth; she helped me figure out my budget then we decided how I could afford it. All those years I had worked, I had saved enough money to pay all at once. I was able to save the money I'd earned because I received food, room, and board on top of my salary. Beth had to help me to bargain with the man on the final price.

I did have a real estate agent, Kate, she was recommended by a mutual friend.

I told Kate what I was looking for and where. My schedule at Giant grocery store was irregular. Kate worked with me around my schedule to show me the condos. We looked at a few in different locations. Finally, she took me to Dover Park condos. I liked it right away. It was just what I had in mind. It was on the second floor, one bedroom, two closets, one being a large walk-in closet, a laundry room with washer and dryer, a big living room, long hallway, dining room and a good size kitchen with a pantry. The balcony overlooked the parking lot, that was simply perfect. Beth was concerned that I may not be safe on the second floor. I convinced her it was okay. She had helped me throughout the entire process of finding a place to live.

I had the luxury of moving my stuff slowly. That way I could bring a little stuff back to the condo whenever I went to work for Don and Beth. I do not remember how often or how many days a week I went to work for them, but I did work for them until Don and Beth retired and moved to Southern Maryland. Don had retired much earlier than Beth. After they moved, we kept a up a long distance email friendship. I would visit them occasionally.

Meeting Bob?

After I retired in 2011, Bob and I bought a house and moved to Indiana. Bob's birthplace, St. Edward's, was in the city of New Albany. We also had our good friends, the Bowers, who live not too far from us. Bob's mother and brother, Jim, lived in Frankfurt, Indiana and his mom was getting old so we could get to see her often. That did not happen, within two years of us moving she passed away. Bob's sister Barbara also lives in Indiana.

From this point on, make chronology consistent. #

The Coutinhos were my favorite people I had worked for in India, and I remained in touch with them. After I came to America, Karen Coutinho, one of the daughters I had cared for, and I used to write to each other after she got married.

I had not heard from the Coutinhos for a long time. Suddenly, I got a call from Rohini, Karen's sister. She was visiting one of her college friends who attended Penn State; she also wanted to visit me. At the time I was living with and working for Don and Beth. Beth was such a nice person; she did not object to my friends visiting me, especially ones from India whom I had worked for.

Rohini was coming in that night around 9:00 p.m., and I had prepared dinner for her. When she arrived with a guy, I was surprised. I had no idea what was going on. They wanted to spend the night with me, but I could not let them because it was not my house. Also, I thought it was strange she had brought a man with her. I managed to find them a motel not too far from where I had lived.

The next day, I picked them up from the motel, and we had breakfast. After breakfast, the two of them left to go sightseeing in DC. I don't think her parents knew she was friends with a male college classmate. She didn't want anyone to know she was seeing him. I was also surprised when I found out she wanted to marry him. His parents would not like it because she was Catholic and he was Muslim. Maybe that is why she has never married. All three of her sisters got married and had a family.

Again in 1995, she visited with three of her college friends. During that time, Bob I each owned a condo, so they all stayed with us. I slept in Bob's condo, so they had all the house to themselves. One day, they went to Washington to go sightseeing. I ordered a pizza, but they told me they had already eaten. The next day, when I saw them, they were eating the pizza I had ordered last night.

We took the metro to Washington to go sightseeing again. They were with us for about a week, and we had a good time together. They felt right at home. All three of her friends were Muslim, and she told me not to tell anyone about her boyfriend. That was when I put two and two together. Even though his parents would have objected to them marrying, I do think her dad would not have minded. A lot of his patients were Muslim. Rohini became a dentist and owns her own business. At this time she still lived with her parents.

The day they were set to leave, they were trying to call information, which was 4-1-1, but they accidentally called 9-1-1. The cops came to the condo, and the girls told them they called the number by mistake. But the cops came in and told us they had to look around. After they had left, all three girls said how handsome the officers were.

When Bob and I visited my family in Mangalore in 1997, Rohini invited us to come visit her, and we did so on our way back home. We had a good time together, and they treated us well. One of her friends had picked us up at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport. There was a massive blackout because of loss of power the day they were taking us to the airport. That was the last time we saw the whole family. Since then, Dr. Coutinho passed away. Now, we only keep in touch via Facebook every once in a while. They send me their family pictures, and I love looking at them.

My brother lived in Mangalore, India. For fifty years, I had no family, and I thought I would never see my brother. But God had plans for me; He brought us together when I was ready. I don't think I would have traveled by myself; Bob made those trips to India possible for me.

Move this

I don't remember what year I went to work for the Coutinhos or what year I left, but it was a great experience for me because they were the first people I worked for who had shown me kindness. I had high expectations for myself, and I wanted to work in an office or maybe operate a switchboard. I thought I would qualify for the job, but that was a big mistake on my part. Who would have hired me with my lack of education and experience?

During that time, I was roommates with another woman, but it got to the point where I could not pay the rent; she might have been charging me too much.

Constance Page 50

I struggled with depression for many years because of the oppressive conditions of my work, situations in India, and the USA. As a result I attempted suicide at least three different times. Dr. Nachnani wanted me to see a psychiatrist, which I did. But I did not tell the psychiatrist everything.

The last episode of severe depression was in 2011-2012. At that time I was in Wellstone for psychiatric care. I am much improved now and better know how to respond.

Dr. Quinton has been able to give me medicines that work well for me. For this, I am grateful. She also told me to get involved in helpful and enjoyable activities. WHAT!!!

Before Bob and I moved to Indiana, I found out Beth had a rare type of blood disorder. Over the years her disease progressed. We would see Beth whenever we visited Maria, Bob's daughter, and her family in Cambridge, Maryland. Beth and Don did not have children of their own, but she loved children. She considered all her nieces and nephews her children, including her second cousin, Jef. She looked forward to her older nephew, **Martin and her niece**, Bess, getting married and having babies so she could enjoy them. Her dreams were fulfilled. After Martin graduated from college, he was married to a wonderful girl; they had two children. Then Bess completed her law degree, met a nice young man married and had two children also. Beth hosted her wedding. Beth got to hold the first three children, and love them. She did so much good in the world; lived a full life. She had lived a good life; had all her dreams fulfilled, everything she wanted to do in life, traveled a lot to several countries. She was a very generous person. When Beth came back from her travels, she would always bring me a doll from where she had visited. She also got them for her niece.

Among all the men I had dated, she liked Bob the best.

One day Bob and I had gone on a bike ride on Nellie Custus bike trail and I lost Bob on the trail, I must have gotten off the path and got lost. It was getting dark and I panicked. I did not know where I was so I called Beth to come get me. I was so furious with Bob for leaving me. Beth could tell I was angry. She advised me not to say anything that night. I almost always listened to her, but not that night. I had to get it off my chest. She told me I could have handled that better. Beth liked Bob. She saved our relationship with my future husband. She was the matron of honor at our wedding.

The last time We saw her was the year she passed away 2015. I was not there in her last days but she was surrounded by her family and friends of many years. She emailed all her friends with all her doctor's reports once she could no longer write. Beth made sure that her sister kept us informed on her condition. I had never found a nicer employer in all those years I worked as a domestic. She meant a lot to me she even let me entertain my friends when they were traveling. After they moved away to Maryland, we kept in touch remained good friends, also she did my taxes every year as before. I would visit her once or twice a year until they moved even further away. Bob and I moved to Indiana after I retired from Giant Food and bought a house. Then it got harder for me to visit unless Bob took me to see her. Beth was my dear friend; she

was also my mentor I trusted her so much. I would say Beth could do no wrong, once I said that to my teacher. She said “yes she could”. She and Don hosted our wedding rehearsal dinner in her 1700’s house in Pomfrey, Maryland.

For Christmas or my birthday, she used to give me the best gifts. Everything I wear or touch I remember her. She will always be in my heart forever.

I struggled with depression for many years because of the oppressive conditions of my work situations in India and in the USA. As a result, I attempted suicide at least three different times. Dr Nachnani wanted me to see a psychiatrist, which I did. But I did not tell the psychiatrist everything.

The last episode of severe depression was in 2011-2012. At that time I ended up in Wellstone Psychiatric hospital. I am much improved now and have learned not to say words that get me in trouble with the doctors.

Finding a psychiatrist in a new community is difficult. I finally found Dr. Quinton. She worked with me to get on the proper medicines.

REWORK ALL THIS

For many years it used to hit me every year like a brick. I had no control over it. When that happens, I used to get very scared because I could not function.

Sometime in middle 1991 or 1992. That is what has gotten me in trouble.

Even though I continued to take my medicine I was not seeing a Psychiatrics. My physician was filling my prescription. sometimes the medicines stop working. When that happens my family doctor cannot change the med. I must have to seek psychiatric help. To find one takes a long time mean while one can end up in the hospital.

I had another attack I think was in middle of 2000s It happens so fast I don’t even remember what I am depressed about. Part had to do with my work.

At that time the psychiatric I had was not treating me with the right drug or the drug was not working she kept on saying it will work for me. It was a weekend and the doctor left for weekend.

I remember I was at work. I just could not function. I left work walked into the doctors office This was a Friday afternoon. I told the receptions I had to see another doctor. They could tell I was very depressed.

Maria, Dr. Goldstein's assistant got me an appointment the very next day in Maryland that is where the doctor lives, but practices in Virginia. Bob took me the next day, which was Saturday. The doctor put me on Cymbalta. It took a while to get adjusted to the medications but I have been free of depression for the most part. I hope and pray that I may never again go into that. It is a disease that no one should have.

DEPRESSION

All my life I have suffered from depression' but I did not know that is what I had until about 1978. I have also tried to suicide several time because I felt hopeless and a loser I felt I had no reason to live because I was a failure. I wanted to end my life.

I think God had a reason for me to live and be healthy and help others.

Now I am happy and pray that I may never, never get in that situations again. My life has turned around for better. I am happy that I am living I see many reasons to live for.

First time I tried to kill myself was in summer of 1976 I was working for the Nachnanis.

SUICIDE ATTEMPT YEAR & DATES.

1975 SUMMER

77or 78 fall

95 summer

2004?

keep as an outline, not a (poem) Mother left with me.

Mother came to live with a farm family

They gave us a room with no door

Mother would go to work for the farmer

I would be left alone.

My mother got married again and she has my brother.

We moved to my stepfather's house.

Then they send me to work for a family - The rebello's

They take all my money

Rebello's bring me to Kannada Kudru to marry me to a farmer

I refuse to get married

They sent me to Bombay to work for their son & his family

I run away and am brought back

I escape Rebello's to join the convent they took her

The nuns sent me to Bombay to be sent to Banaras to their Mother house

Those nuns sent me to Regina Paces convent, Bombay

The nuns find me a domestic job

I had not given up the idea of joining the convent

I worked a few years and saved some money

I went to join the convent of Jesus and Mary in Poona.

I received some schooling there before I joined the novitiate

Two years later I entered the novitiate

One year later I was told I had no vocation (Mother Superior decided)

I returned to Bombay to Regina Paces

The nuns found me a job with the Coutino family

Natalie Rebello tried to take me back to their farm in Kannada Kudru

I refused to go

3rd JOB repeat?

This job in Bethesda Maryland was working for a single parent, Dr, Bushback.

He was a well-to-do physician. He and his wife were divorced. They had four girls. Three girls lived with their mother. One, the oldest, and an adopted nine-year-old boy lived with their father.

The doctor was rich and had a big house in the city. I met him through his secretary who I used to play tennis with. I was hired mainly to take care of his son Fred. That included getting him off in the morning, getting his breakfast and driving him to school, picking him up from school, giving him snacks, cooking dinner for the family, keeping the house clean, and also grocery shopping and laundry. Most important was to handle Fred, his son. Fred was a brat. He was very difficult to handle. He would not listen to me and call his father at work to complain all the time I guess I was not very experienced in handling someone like him.

The doctor treated me very well. I had my own separate big bedroom and a bath, and half of the hallway. I had it made. When I first moved in, he asked what color I wanted to paint the room and bought the color I wanted. One time I wanted to have a party for my friends. The doctor paid for my groceries and even rented the china, silverware, and furniture. He was really good to me.

I just could not handle his son. Once again I felt like a loser and did not know how to get out of this. Yes, I could leave the job and look for another. Time was running out. Every time I changed jobs it took a long time to find an employer that would sponsor me. The time I had with other employers did not count. I had to be in one job at least for two to three years to qualify for the green card. It's a big hassle so I felt like a failure. I did not want to be a burden to my friends any longer.

That is when I took a whole lot of sleeping pills to kill myself. I guess when the doctor came home and saw me asleep, he just let me sleep. Being a doctor he should have known something was not right. He took care of Fred and went to work. He picked Fred after work. I was still asleep. That night I was supposed to go to my friend Elin's for an English lesson. She called to see where I was. The doctor told her I had been sleeping since the night before. I guess by then he realized I had taken sleeping pills to kill myself. Eline and her husband Dave came and took me to the hospital. I did not know what had happened to me or why I was in the hospital. When the nurse got me up, I guess I was still drugged. They sent me to take shower and I fell in the shower. I guess I was okay from the fall. I have no idea how my hospital bills were covered. I don't remember paying anything. When I was recovering Elin or Howard Layton might have

kept in touch with Joyce Mondloch about my situation. I was fired from my Job had no where to go.

When I was released from the hospital, Howard picked me and we got my belongings from Dr. Bushbuck's house. Howard then took me to Virginia to Joyce's. Joyce helped me to put an ad in the Washington Post. I finally found a job in Bethesda Maryland working for an older couple, the Chevalias. It was a full-time, live-in position caring for their mentally challenged teenage son. Mr. Chevalia worked for the USA News in the District of Columbia. Mrs. Chevelia also worked in in the District for a Lawyer. They were very nice to me. They filed all my papers that needed to be filed for my permanent residency. They were my first employers who did everything by the book to help me.

I had to take Charlie to school in the morning and pick him up after school.

I would give him snacks, take him to the park to play, and make him walk and play ball with him.

I would fix dinner for him and me We always ate before his parents got home from work.

I had my weekends free and evenings free to do anything I wanted to do.

Two nights I would attend the GED classes. Other nights I would go play tennis until ten or eleven or even midnight. The Chevalias did not mind what I did when I was not on duty. When Charlie was in school, I even did some extra job such as cleaning houses. I now had a lawyer to help file immigration papers. I had no experience with mentally challenged people before. It was not so difficult to take care of him.

He was a loving young man but at the same time he was very stubborn and I would get frustrated.

I would make him do things: take him for long walks; take him to the playground; and play ball with him. I would let him bathe by himself and clean himself. His parents undid everything I did with him.

In 1979 my papers were ready, but there was a big problem. I had to travel to India to get my green card. When I heard this news from my lawyer, I was devastated. I was afraid that if I went to India I would never return to the US. I did not have the money to travel to India.

Mrs. Chevelia was very nice to me to arrange my travel. ???

Before I left for my trip Joyce, my best friend, promised me that if anything happened and I could not come back to USA, she would fly to India to bring me back. I know Joyce would have done it too.

Luckily the business went well in the Indian embassy.

I returned to America with my green card/Permanent residency. I was overjoyed to land back in US soil, a free person. The Chevelias were extremely nice to me when I needed their help the most.

After I returned, the Chivalias broke the news that I should look for another job because they could not afford to pay me as they should. It was a mutual feeling. They also gave me a deadline of when to leave them.

While I was still living with the Chevelias, I started looking for a live-in domestic job. I had limited choices because of what I could do. First, I had no education, second I had no place to live. The only job I knew how to do was a live-in domestic. I ran an ad in the Washing Post. I also answered an ad in the Washington Post. My ad did not get put in the post till the following day. The ad I answered happened to be Beth Loker and Don Rice. Husband and wife, they both worked for the Post. They worked long hours, in Washington. They had two dogs that needed tending during the day. They also lived in a big historic house in the city of Falls Church, Virginia They also traveled a lot on business and on pleasure. They needed someone they could trust to be around.

05/01/2025

When I called about the ad around 10am on that Sunday, Don answered the phone and told me to call back because Beth had gone out for a while. The second time I did get to talk to Beth and she asked me to come for an interview that same day. She also gave me good directions. She met me out on the street close to her house because the house where they lived was in a secluded area.

Beth was so nice to me. It was a good first impression. Beth asked if I wanted something to drink. She made tea for both of us. We sat at the dining room table and talked and got to know each other. Don was in the kitchen reading his book. Both of them were down to earth people. It was love at first sight. What a change from what I had gone through for almost six years! Beth never talked about work to me. I guess she had confidence in me from the start that I was trustworthy and dependable, unlike the attitudes of my previous employers. Finally, I had to ask

Beth about my duties and ask her about what she expected of me. The job descriptions was brief and the pay was satisfactory. Our interview was short. This was in December 1979. I was to move in with them in January of 1980.

In order to keep the job I agreed to come on Saturday on my day off and clean her house. That worked out for us. Chevelia??

At last, I was free and legal. I was happy to come to work for Beth and Don. It was mutual. Everything fell in its place. I did everything that needed to be done without being asked. Just as I would do as if it was my own house except with room, board, pay and lot of spare time on my hands.

I continued to go two days to my GED classes. I even got a second job working for the Roy Rogers fast food restaurant. I also continued with my tennis and had all my social life.

Pets.

Don and Beth had two beagle dogs, Maggy and Sam.

Taking care of the dogs was an additional duty to my housekeeping job. I was very fortunate to work for them.

I had never had a pet or a baby to call my own. I asked Beth if I could have a cat. She had no objection. Beth helped me to find a local person with kittens. The one I liked was a striped tiger. She was named Tiger. The name fit her. I brought her home. We all loved her. She was just cute as a button. She seemed content and got along with the dogs. The dogs and the cat grew together. Tiger did not know if she was a cat or a dog. I kept her indoors but let her go out when I was home. When she went out, she climbed trees and got into trouble. I got acquainted with veterinarians. One time she was out with Sam. She was hiding in the flower bed and was stalking him. She jumped on him. He was such an easy-going dog he did not mind.

Sometimes I would come home late from work. She would meet me at the door to greet me. Before going to bed, I would make sure she was in. Sometimes she ignored me, but when Don would call her she would come. One time during Christmas time, Beth had boxes of chocolates to take to the office for gifts. Tiger got on the counter and knocked off all those good chocolates. The dogs had a feast and got sick. Beth had to purchase more chocolates. I had Tiger for fourteen years. She had a thyroid problem. I spent lot of money to help her but she got worse in 1995 and I had to put her to sleep. Move this?

I was not satisfied with the GED course. I asked my teacher if it was possible to attend a full day school so I could all study all subjects. She recommended that I should see the counselor at Pimmit /Marshall High. Pimmitt was ESL and adult ED classes as well as a regular school. I could get my GED certificate and get a high school diploma. Classes were from 8: 30 to 3;30pm. I asked Beth if I could attend. She had no objection to me attending school full time as long I did my duty around the house. In fact, she encouraged me to go to school. She helped me with my homework and my research papers. Beth encouraged me to complete my high school studies. At this time I was working two jobs and going to school full time. I was finding it very difficult to get enough sleep. Probably, I was also neglecting my main job. Beth never stood in way of my education. She saw how tired I was. She said “I was burning the candle on both ends.” Beth knew what was best for me. Instead of working two jobs and going to school, I quit Roy Rogers so I could concentrate on my school and one job. I also had my tennis and other social life. I always trusted Beth’s judgment, so much so that according to me Beth could do no wrong.

Much of the above is duplicated – sort out later

When I started full-time school I was in my forties. As much as I wanted to complete my high school it was difficult to study. I knew I had to do it if I wanted to better myself. In spite of my age I had a lot of physical energy.

I worked for Beth and attended full time school for four years. In the Summer of 1985 when school was off, Beth saw an ad at Giant Food for a bakery clerk. She encouraged me to apply for the job. I had no confidence in myself, again Beth told me that I would learn and could do it. In those days it was not easy to get a job at Giant food. I used to shop there and the store manager knew me. I filled out an application. The manager told me that he would be in touch. When I did not hear from him in reasonable time, Beth encouraged me to keep bugging him until he hired me.

I started to work for Giant Food on June 20th, 1985. I was hired into the Haycock Road store in Falls Church, VA. When school started the following year, I had a few credits left to graduate, so I asked to work less than full-time until I graduated from school.

At first, I was having a lot of difficulty remembering different items and the codes. The department manager and some other employees were not very helpful. I always smiled at my customers. That got me on the good side of the customers. The customers would write letters of appreciation about me to the company. This got to the department manager and other coworkers.

After that I was treated worse than before by the department manager and the same coworkers that did not like me in the first place. I think they were threatened by my personality and that I was not American (over the years, Giant became very diverse with a large number of Pakistani, Indian, Chinese, and other ethnic employees.) I was hired by the store manager instead of the employment center, so even the regional office became aware of Cathy Rebello. I just kept on doing my best.

There this guy working in the dairy dept. He would encourage me not to quit “he said I was not a quitter.” After I graduated highschool I could use more hours. The department manager tried hard to give me the least hours. . After I graduated, I had more time on hands and could work more hours. My manager refused to give me the hours. The bakery manager in Vienna needed help so I was sent there when I was not needed in my own store.!

Judy, the dept. manager from the Vienna store, often needed help. I would go and work in that store. The bakery manager and the store manager both liked my work also I liked working in that store because they appreciated my work. I asked for transfer Vienna I worked there for thirteen and half years.

I didn't know if people gossiped about coworkers. Still it was not so bad. I was insecure and felt I was not fast enough. fast enough. Over the years I have worked a lot off the clock. I felt I had to finish the task I was working on. I could have been fired. Giant was a union company. I continued to learn about my work and get familiar with the product. There was a lot to learn.

Four years after graduation from Adult Education, I happened to run into my teachers. I began to tell my life history.

After they listened to my story, they asked if I could tell my story to the school board. They would help me to write my speech. They wanted to convince the school board to fund the adult education program.

I lived and worked for Beth and Don. I was also working for Giant food. I saved as much money as possible. Beth and I both knew that someday I would have to have my own house. Also, they would be retiring and moving away from the Washington area

I was working part-time. Giant guaranteed part-timers 20 hours a week. With that came health benefits and pro-rated paid time-off. I had an offer for full-time I turned it down without thinking. I asked Beth If I should take full time. She never stood in my way to better my

situation. In fact, she encouraged me. Then when I did ask to be full time, the store manager gave me a hard time. When I was on vacation, the department manager called to tell me I had been made full-time. I did not know at the time that it was hard to get full-time. Also, I was still working for Beth and Don at the time.

Making me full-time guaranteed forty hours and better benefits.

I trained newcomers. By this time, I was doing most of the department manager's duties. Some co-workers suggested that I try to become a department manager. At that time, I did not think I would qualify. I also would require support from the department or store manager.

After I got my full-time job in August of 1989. Somehow, I had difficult time with the department manager. I went through several managers. I have no idea why we didn't click. For one thing I told them what I thought. I have trouble respecting the managers or anyone that did not respect me as a human being. One-time dept. scale kept. Breaking when I told the store manager 'He said come it only breaks for you' I told him when things get old it breaks, people get old they die. I told him, "If you were a good manager, these things would not happen." He said I was being insubordinate & took me in the back to talk to me I told him he has no respect for me how does he expect to get one. (pull or rewrite this) I was told by store manager that I would never make department manager. I worked even harder to prove them wrong and reach my goal in the company. It took a long time, and so many things happened in between. When I did finally get a manager's position, it was a big deal for me. I am not sure at this time what year it was, but it was not too long before I retired. I reached my goal in my company. treat my people with respect and give my time in training them. Bakery staffer was paid the least on the second tear and the first tear were making double and triple. In spit of that I loved what I was doing & I had gotten good had lot confidence in myself. (out of order -rewrite)

I did not want to change the dept in order to make more money and be miserable.

Things got worse in that store I finally transferred. Once a person gets bad reputation it goes with you. A good manager will judge for themselves instead listening to the gossip.

After I left Vienna, I went to several stores They liked my work but not my character.

My district managers always liked my work one day I mentioned I wanted to train for dept Manager. The way that works is to travel from store to store to fill in for dept. managers when they are on vacation.

I did that for a while. when I got in my car I did not even know which direction I was heading that's how I was confused.

One day, we were having an inspection in the bakery department. The department manager had taken off. I was the second person, the next in charge. I ordered things from the baker, then had the bakery staff box and fill all the tables. The district manager was very pleased with my work and transferred me to a small store as the department manager. She also transferred the assistant store manager to the same store. Initially we had problems. He likely brought the prejudices from the old store with him. I respected him as my manager and eventually he was very pleased with my performance. We had the same attitude toward customer service and providing fresh food. Most of the dept. mg don't even know what is in stock so they just order more. I have no idea how they got they inventory accurate. While I was cleaning & stacking with fresh food in my dept. store Mg

Was taking care the rest of the store. . (delete)

When. The general manager came for inspection she was pleased with big change. Some department managers would rush when they heard the general manager or the health dept were on their way. My theory was always keeping the department clean, product out in a reasonable time with no need to run around like a chicken with a head cut off correcting things, I was not always perfect, but I always tried my best. If something not to the satisfaction to the managers I tried to do better next time.

The district manager was pleased with me and transferred me to a bigger store near my house. That was the store where I was working when I retired. I found the best store manager in my last years and I did anything he asked me to do. We got along well. I would have worked till I turned seventy. I was physically able, but the technology was hard for me to handle. One day I came home and told Bob I was retiring. I gave my notice so they could work on my paperwork. The store manager thought I was just kidding. It was about two months before reality struck him. I trained my second person for the depart manager's job and recommended her to the store manager.

THIS IS REPEATED OR OUT OF PLACE

Later I did regret the opportunity. Few years later I was ready to buy myself a condo and wanted fixed income, I requested my store manager for full time, He gave me the run around. Finally, I

did get the full-time job. By this time Don Rice was getting ready to retire. From the post I knew eventually they would move away from the DC. area

They also had bought their retirement house in Maryland and were renovating. I knew they would soon sell the Lawton house in Falls Church, I did not want to look for another live in job. I also knew that I would never find another family like Beth & Don.

I asked Beth if I could afford a condemn she did a retail budgeted figures I could make it from what she was paying plus another cleaning job that means I would work full time @ Giant, work for Beth & Don & another cleaning job.

Beth was more like a family then my employer.

House hunting:

I already knew what I was looking in a condo. how much I could afford. the location.

I wanted a garden apartment with big walk in closet. Dryer Washer in the condo and close to both my work

Once again Beth was helping me make my budget. To see if I could make it on my own. She really cared about my welfare, like I was part of her family & I depended on her a great deal One of my friends introduce to her real estate a friend of hers Kate.

Kate showed me lot of houses more house for less money. I had my mind set & knowing what I wanted I stuck to it.

Finally, after almost a year, Kate found my dream house right in Falls Church.

The condo was spacious with big rooms lot of light big walk in closet overlooking the parking lot as supposed to the courtyard. I liked the setting because I used to work late or go to work early as early as five am. I could park my car where I could see and plenty of light. Beth was concern about my safety & wanted me on the third floor. The only thing available @ the time & the place was the second floor also convent for me to carry my bike up & down. When I was buying the place, I thought I would be living there forever. I was nearing my fifty. I never thought I would ever meet a man of my dream and settle down. But I had not given up hope. I was very happy with my accomplishment.

Beth helped me through the whole legal process of buying and settlement of my condo. I could have never done without Beth's help she guided me in the right direction.

We settled in December 31, 1990. Even though my moving day was first of January 1991, I did not move in right away because I wanted to paint and clean before I could move in. Fortunately,

I had the luxury of moving out slowly. I did not pack any boxes like movers do. Every time I went to Beth to work, I brought little of my belonging. Beth didn't mind that. After all painting & cleaning was completed, Tiger my cat & I move to our own home I continued to work for Beth three days a week, Full time to Giant food. Besides that I kept my social life such tennis, biking, bowling and even joined the community gym. I got a free membership for volunteering at the four hours a week.

Meeting Bob (redundancies end)

Bob Sterrett was my next-door neighbor. I lived at 2842 Dover Lane #204 and Bob lived in # 202.

Who would have thought that I would fall in love with my neighbor and marry later? For long time we were just neighbors. We would greet each other just passing by.

One day on my day off, I was riding the Washington and Old Dominion bike path. Bob was also on the on the path , resting with his good friend, Dick. I was going the opposite direction I said "hi Bob" and kept going.

One summer evening, Bob asked me if I wanted go for a bike ride. After we got back, he asked me if I wanted to go across the street and get some chili. Bob doesn't change his clothes several times a day as I do. He called me clothes snob. We went just the way we were in our biking clothes. It was casual date, I guess. He was a real gentleman. I didn't think much about it. I don't remember whether we did anything after we went out for the chili, we could have taken some hikes and got to know each other? The very first time I invited Bob to my place was for my 50th birthday. I think by this time I had a crush on him. I also invited Beth and Don my best friends and another couple who I thought were my best friends at the time. I had been talking about Bob so much, I thought it would be a good opportunity for my friends to meet him. I had even bought a sexy outfit to impress Bob. During dinner I hinted, something like I have no honey to do the dishes. After my friends left, Bob stayed back to help me clean up. When I do dishes, I always rinse first then put them in the dishwasher. Bob filled one sink with soapy water, rinsed them good then put them in the dishwasher. I knew then and there that he was the man after my heart. I wanted to give him a big hug. I was afraid to show my affection. had to control myself. Love is

crazy, for me to feel the way I felt about Bob. After the dishes were done, Bob went back to his condo. I don't remember whether we even shook hands before he left.

This was February 14th, 1992. I don't remember where we even saw each other from the day of my Birthday to New Year's eve 1992. We could have called each other in between. I remember him telling me that he was going for his Grandmother's Birthday, in Indiana in November. When he was visiting her I called her house and asked for Bob. It was funny when she told me he had passed away. She was referring to Bob's dad. I then told her I wanted to talk to Bob Jr.

Again, I don't remember whether we saw each other between Christmas and New Year's. I remember him bringing me a nutcracker ornament for my tree. He said he would call me between Christmas and New Year's Eve, but he never called. New Year's 1992. I vaguely remember talking about getting together for New Year's eve. I had not heard from Bob until he showed up at my work about seven or eight o'clock and asked me if I wanted to go for Chinese. I guess I liked him so much I did not refuse his last-minute offer. He asked me what time I got off and said he would see me when I got home. Bob does not make plans ahead of time.

That evening Bob took me for dinner to a Chinese restaurant, which was just around the corner. We had a good time, and picked up a movie on our way home. We watched a movie then waited for the ball to drop. Just before midnight I asked him if I could sit next to him on the couch. He said, "Okay." Then, the clock struck midnight. I thought at least he would hug me. I was wrong.

I had invited Bob for dinner on Sunday March 14th, 1993. I used to work late Saturday nights so I decided to make dinner on Saturday before I left for work so we could have spent more time together on Sunday. That Saturday it started snowing heavily. No matter what, the Giant Food never closes. I was getting ready to go to work when the department manager called to say not to report to work because of the snowstorm. By ten or eleven am there was about ten inches of snow and it was still coming down. All businesses were closing down, including Giant Food. When I found out I did not have to go to work I called Bob to see if he wanted to come over that day. I did happen to catch him home so he came over we decided to walk to the Blockbuster to rent a movie. The distance is only may be half a mile. Because of the storm it was hard to walk without falling on each other. I knew something in the air. While we were watching the movie, we started hugging and holding hands and caressing each other. Shortly after, we made out on the couch. After that, we went to the bedroom and made love.

The next day, there was so much snow outside. All the cars were covered with snow. People were digging their cars out. Bob went outside and dug my car out.

After that night we were inseparable. I let Bob move in with me. I was comfortable living in my own house. Before this day I sometimes would see women in Bob's house going in and out. I used to wonder who they were. At the time, I didn't know that it was his mother or his sister. After March 13, Bob told me more about himself. After the snow, we snuggled together on the couch. Bob is not a big talker, unlike me.

I think Bob introduced me to his daughter Maria, It was sometime time late morning Maria was visiting her dad. Bob just came into my house and did not knock at the door. I remember Maria saying "dad?", for not knocking. One by one Bob introduced me to his family and friends. Bob has two children by previous marriage. When we met he had been divorced for twelve years. One year Bob took me to meet his mom and his family in Indiana. I had heard so much about his mom and talked to her on the telephone. I felt like I already knew her. The day We arrived in Frankfort it was late, around midnight, and his mom was waiting for us. I did not know how to approach her. Bob said you were longing to meet her what is wrong now. Mom gave me a big hug and made me feel right at home from the very beginning. When we got back from Indiana, I asked Bob if I might address his mother as mom. He told me to ask her. When I spoke to her next, I did ask her. She said yes! Ever since then I have addressed her as mom, she is the mother I never had. I am so fortunate to have Bob as my husband. He has taught me so many things and introduced me to so many new experiences and places. He is a remarkably interesting person.

END OF APLIED EDITS – PROBABLY TAKES 15 MIN A PAGE!!

AT LEAST 20 MORE PAGES TO GO

1997 we even traveled to India:

to visit my brother and his family. I had not seen my brother for twenty-three years.

Lot of changes since we parted India in 1974:

Our mother had passed away. He was married, had two children, retired from his job overseas and had bought a piece of Land built his own house in Mangalore (City) had electricity and modern plumbing. I was surprised & proud of my brother for his accomplishing without any education.

During this time, we hardly kept in touch because he could not read or write. My sister-in-law could not read or write in English. I could not read or write in any Indian languages I used to speak because I had forgotten them. I had forgotten because after I came to America, everyone spoke English. They did not know any of my native languages: Kannada, Concoy, Hindi, Maurtei, and a little bit of Tulu. He had to depend on someone to write for him. Whenever I got a letter from him the address different, so I really did not know where he was, I thought I would never see him again. I would have not gone on my own if I had not met Bob and if he had not agreed to travel to India with me. It was a long trip for such a few days part of the time goes on flight changing plans waiting in between flights etc. That trip was learning experience for us & prepared better for 2019 trip. What a blessing it was to see my own family that I had thought I did not have. God is great I do believe that He has always helped me. We had already planned to stay in a hotel because I did not know where and what

Condition he was living in. He sure surprised me I could not be any happier for him.

Had We not gone I would never found out anything about my niece & my nephew. My niece is really the one who kept in touch, even though my nephew went to English school from the beginning. My niece had only started learning English in the fifth grade, so it was a little harder for her. That's when she started keeping in touch with me. We wrote to each other, but not too often, because of the cost of postage. We talked more frequently after the internet. One night, she called, and I was surprised because of the cost of long-distance calls. I used to call because we had a service where we could make so many calls. If we ran out of our allotment, we had the option of buying more service.

When we were in India, we visited some other states and saw some beautiful temples and Mosque. On our return we stopped in Bombay to visit an old friend of mine the Coutinho for couple days. On the day of the flight the whole family took us to the airport that was the last time was the last I saw Dr. Coutinho. He passed away in 2016.

We returned; Bob knew more about India than I did.

After we got back from India the same year one of Bob's bosses had moved his business to Florida. Bob was working for Carlos's company contracting. so he moved there for few months. Before Bob left Maria had lost her restaurant job and she had a job that would be closer going to work from here dad's in Falls Church. than from her mothers. She moved in in Bobs apt. While

Bob was in Florida, he found out that Maria was pregnant with Paloma. When Bob told me that she was pregnant, I said, "Oh, no." He told me not to say that to her.

While Bob was in Florida, he got us a ticket for a day cruise and sent me a plane ticket.

I someone drop me at the airport after I checked in instead of taking the shuttle, I just sat there thinking that; s where I was boarding I waited for my flit finally I asked a man who was taking tickets said what a mess. One of the attendances put me on the shuttle & directed me boarding place meanwhile Bob was in panic because I had not arrived on the plane that I was supposed to be on. I do not know how I had gone to India & back on my own. Back to my story to Florida Bob knew what had happened. I had taken a long weekend off from work.

We had a lot of fun Bob took me to several interesting places in Florida. besides taking me on the day cruise.

On the cruise, when Bob was taking a nap, I went up to find the casino. At the time, they used quarters. I won a bucket full of quarters. I was so happy. I went back down and woke Bob and told him that I had won. I took a nap for a while and then went back to the casino again.

Bob had also rented a private cabin that was very romantic we wanted to be close to each other as much as possible since we were a part for a while, and we would also be apart for a while after.

Next day Bob showed me around also took me to the beach one of the places on the beach we went was end of USA. We had someone takes our picture standing on the tip of USA. We went on a boat ride in the swamp and saw alligators and snakes.

Another day, Bob took me to the alligators' breeding ground. We also took me to a casino, where there was another swamp, and we saw some more alligators.

Someone who lived there gave us the ride. When we got back from the ride, the driver would feed the alligators. We would stand back far because we didn't want to be close to the hungry animals.

Bob and Carlos and some of the colleagues and coworkers went to Nicaragua on a day off. I was back at home, so Bob went to back to work.

Bob finished the contract returned home for Christmas. I was excited to have him back.

While Bob was away, tiger my first pet got very sick she thyroid problem she got worse I talked to the her doctor about putting her down. That was the hardest decision I had to make I did not wanted for her to suffer. After the doctor gave her the short she went quietly I was very sad.

Bob was still in Florida when I put her down. I stayed in the vet's office and cried for a while. I did not like that she gave her a shot without calming her down first. I did not know it at the time. I missed Tiger so much I talked to Bob about getting another cat. Bob wanted me to Wait until he got home so he could see the kitten grow up. I went ahead & started looking in the post found out a farmer in Maryland cat had kittens six weeks old. It was a Sunday, after work in the night in the rain I drove to Maryland. I didn't know the area, so I got lost. I got two kittens I had gone to get only one Kitten but all the other kittens also wanted to go with me so I did end up getting two of them they were so cute just six weeks old I did not know what to name them I decided to name with tiger strips cat Tiger two. I asked Bob what to name boy cat and I described to Bob his color Bob named him this was all done on the phone. Bob came up the name Rufus that means red. He we loved all our cats but most of all we loved Rufus the best They were born in Sept. 5th 1997. Every time I had a free moment I plaid trained them to use kidder litter in my bedroom When I was cooking, I would make them a little bed in the kitchen so I could watch them I tried to spend a lot of time with them when I could. It was fall in the court yard there was red maple tree I took them out let them play in the beautiful colored leaves also I let them climb the tree. Rufus loved it. some children came to play with them & someone told me to teach them trick when they are kittens A few things I thought is to fetch, watch animal movie also to bat ball tig did that. Once Bob got home from Florida he spoiled them he would sit & hold them one on each harm. When Bob got home from work in the evening he would jump on Bob shoulder then jump on the door. In the morning before I left for work I would come to the kitchen to get something to eat he would climb on the cabinet and run from one end to another. He made all kinds of happy noises.

I started to do things with them when they were kittens like bathing, clip Claws clean their ears & brush them with no problem.

Rufus had some skin problem he would itch all the time we took him to specialty spent lot of time & money finally he outgrew. He lived for fourteen years with us. But his sister T2 had stomach cancer we tried everything we possible could finally we did not want her to suffer since they cannot tell us we have to decide every time we have to put our pets down brakes our hearts they give us so much love & happiness. Now Rufus was all by himself we got him a companion cat named Duncan. Her mother was rescued from the railroad tracks just before she had her kittens by a animal lover she was again tiger strips tabby that that was our two previous

cats were. She was also a good-natured cat she was already given the name Duncan she had to leave her sibling and her mother behind. Rufus being such a good cat he & Duncan bonded right away.

Couple days before we moved to Indiana I notice Rufus did not look himself he always loved Bob's shoes & sleep on it he was so active I guess he knew something was going on because we were packing & moving. Next day I had to work early Bob took him to the vet. She did some test and sent him home the next day he looked worse Bob took him again to the vet she found out he and wanted me to come to the hospital right away

When I got Bob & the doctor gave me the sad news, we had no choice but to put him down. It was so sad I did not have any time to moon I to go back to work I even Bob had tears in his eyes this happened just few days before we moved. Duncan was missing him she did not know what had happened to him. Our moving day was oct 28/2011 Bob drove all night Duncan, heave load & pulling my car. When we got here about 2or 3pm we brought Duncan in she went all overlooking for Rufus.cc

Bob and I decided that we should not keep two condos. It was costing us too much money since he never used his place except to do some work on the computer and for Maria living there rent free, we had already been living together for five years. I asked Bob to sell his condo and move in with me. Two reasons he could not sell his condo, a he was in partner with Frank O'Leary He had too many computers at his place. After much thinking I decided to sell mine or rent. The housing market for seller was bad. We decided to rent for while till the market went up.

I got lucky to find a renter right in my bulling. I rented for a very reasonable price.

Only to cover the cost of the mortgages and the condo fee I was not making any profit on it. Before I moved with Bob, we had to make sure that Maria would move out first. I know that Maria and I would not get along under the same roof. After she moved out, we replaced the rug in the dining room which was ruined by her cats urn, also I wanted the all of the condo painted to give a fresh look. I also cleaned especially the bathrooms and the kitchen from top to bottom. Including the laundry, Bob built some extra cabinets in the bathrooms, laundry rooms and made it look bigger. Bob also built a pantry in the kitchen and put up a spice rack. Bob & I did a lot of improvement to the house after I moved in with him.

I must have rented it for three or four years. The market was going up a little also Bob and I wanted to settle down. When we gave the renter the notice, we did have some trouble with him.

After the renter got out, we sold the condo. We did not make as we wanted to make. I think about six month later the person that brought from me turned around and sold again and made a big profit.

Trip to Jamaica:

We flew out of Baltimore into Montego Bay and shuttled across the island to the Lost Beach resort. Scheduled for a beach front cottage, we were upgraded into a one-bedroom duplex. The cottage was apparently in disrepair, Lost beach is on the southern coast not far from Negril. We tried a little snorkeling but had no equipment of our own. The water was cloudy from the prevailing southern winds. We rode around the point in a fishing boat to Negril where the water was clear.

The fare at the on-site restaurant was just passable. I haven't eaten jerk chicken since and probably never will again. The place was run by an ex-pat from Chicago (avoiding alimony). The local staff took horrendous advantage of his occasional absence. Locals flocked in and drinks increased in potency.

Roads were terrible. Our ventures off-site were in taxis weaving from side-to-side to avoid potholes.

I did not find the isolation relaxing She had a cold She also got car sick on the return trip over the mountains to Montego Bay.

Some construction was going on. They were pouring concrete walls 5 gallons at a time! Techniques were much like we observed in India in 1997.

Trip to Virgin Gorda, British Virgins

We flew out of Virginia into San Juan. We boarded a small prop job and flew into Roadtown, [Tortola](#). From there we were taken by boat to Spanishtown, Virgin Gorda.

I don't remember how we got the car or who gave us directions to the one-bed room villa.

Driving on the wrong side of the road was no problem given the meager traffic. Goats were another problem. They didn't yield the right-of-way.

There were a number of restaurants on the island. There was even a small bakery. Bob managed to surprise me with a heart-shaped valentine's/birthday cake.

I did some snorkeling. After Jamaica, he had purchased some prescription googles. Bob got a terrific sunburn. I stayed near the shore. I used to worry for Bob when he got so far out; I was

afraid something would happen. I told him that he shouldn't do that again without having another person with him.

We never met another tourist! The island has a couple of exclusive resorts. Perhaps they stayed close to home. I've thought it would be nice to go back Tortola Better beaches and more of them More people too.

Marriage:

Before we even discussed about marriage, we had known each other for ten years and lovers and best friends for eight years. I had built up my trust in him. I knew he was the one I wanted to spend the rest of my life I felt strong about him about him.

Bob and I had been to gather at least ten years and I did want to get married even though Bob didn't want to just live to gather I would be more comfortable being married. Bob had already been divorced for twenty some years before we met also his ex-had already remarried.

We Took our time making the decision before we agreed and set the date; he still did not want to get married. I had to really push him. Bob did not have health insurance at the time. To have private health insurance would have cost him a lot of money. Because we were not married, I could not include him on my health insurance, and I had good health insurance from my job. That was another reason why I wanted us to get married. After we got married, I did not have to pay anything else to include him on my health insurance. I wanted Bob to inherit everything of mine, as I did not want it to all go to the state. Bob did not want a big wedding I wanted at least fifty people. We set date according to our friend's schedule. One of my best friends Beth hosted the rehearsal dinner & Bob's longtime friend & business partner & his wife hosting the reception in her house. Linda, Frank's wife (Bob's business partner) helped with a lot of the arrangements. I had to schedule the wedding according to Linda and Beth's schedule.

We only had about two months to get ready for everything. Besides working full time.

We set the date for Saturday 13th 2002. I already knew who I wanted to invite and who was going to be the best man and matron of honor. I was going to invite total fifty guess immediate family few longtime friends. Linda O'Leary would host the dinner as long as I could fit her schedule, then I also check with my matron of honor of the date. After We settled that Linda decide on the menu for what she was going to fix I left it to her about the dinner also she volunteer to make invitation cards on her computer write, address & send it out that saved me some money that helped me a lot since I was working & had to get ready in two months. Getting

the dress, shoes, ordering cake, decoration, flours. Linda also prepared the meal and made arrangement to rent tables chairs plates silver were glasses & champagne I gave Linda the money she needed for the expense. We also asked her to higher servers for few hours for serving & cleaning. On the day of the wedding Brain her son pick up the cake & the flowers.

Our wedding was at the Arlington treasure house in their back yard. Bob didn't want a church wedding especially not a catholic wedding. I had to go along with it I wanted to be legally for the rest of our lives and making Bobs family happy was important to me. We got a minister to marry us. We asked Jerry Bower if he would be Bobs Best man. I asked Beth my best friend to be my matron of honor they accepted. Paloma our only granddaughter at the time was our flower girl. She was only five years at the time.

I asked Pam our neighbor if she would go with me to pick my wedding dress, wanted someone to tell me what looks good on me without have to spend harm and a leg.

Beth lived in Maryland an hour and half from Virginia. She hosted the rehearsal dinner she cooked the meal and ordered a beautiful cake. All our family and close friends visiting us from out of town loaded up in different cars and went for the rehearsal dinner. It was a nice evening we enjoyed it. Jerry only eats the same things all the time. Every time he went out to a restaurant, he would order a wedge of lettuce. He ate only meat, bread, potatoes, and green beans. He didn't like anything with spices or extra flavoring. I guess Jerry didn't get his wedge of lettuce sorry Jerry.

The O'Leary's and their friends Hain's also gave us a surprise wedding gifts. Ride in a limo To Marriot hotel over night with breakfast. As we got in the limo it started to rain heavy. When we arrived at Marriott still had my wedding dress. I thought when we got to the room Bob would lift and carry me in. Wrong, it was a disappointment night. Like any ordinary night Bob turned on the TV. I was too tired, changed and went to sleep. That was our honeymoon. Linda also made us beautiful cross stich artwork with the date of our wedding and our names.

O'Leary's Frank and Bob had a company. novares.com, Bob worked as a computer programmer and consultant. By the time I met The O'Leary, Frank had moved to politics He was the treasurer of Arlington county.

Bob carried the company name for many years that is how he got all his contracts programmer or consultant for different private or government companies.

Bob was self-employed that means when he work he made good money. I have never been comfortable with that. Me having a full-time job with all benefits paid I felt secured. I know I would not have what we have today if it was not for Bob. Together we are financially secure also Bob did not have to pay alimony to Karen his ex since she had already married. Even though we are retired we will be ok by the grace of God we will make it. We are not big travels when we went to India in 1997 the first time to meet my brother' family and again in 2019 that was after 22 years to meet my four grand nieces and nephews also we are getting old so it may be the last trip.

Romance

Bob is romantic & generous but does not show.

Every year for our anniversary wedding he would surprise me with the traditional gifts.

This went on for six years after that I asked him to stop. First year It was paper, I came home from work went to change to go on our cruise to dismal swamp North Carolina. I came to the living room & saw this a big red rose. I still have the rose in our basement. I had saved all the wedding and anniversary gifts he had given me. I had never seen anything that big in all my life. I had for gotten the paper gift. Every year since then I have gotten such as cotton roses, leather roses, fruit roses 5th? Sixth and year iron.

Wedding anniversary travel.

First year, we went to Decimal swamp it is a large swamp located in in the coastal region of SE VA & NE costal North Carolina between Norfolk VA Elizbeth city in NC It is located in the parts of southern VA.

We lived in Fairfax county falls church, so we traveled the day before and stayed overnight on the boat. The boat took off the next day with rest of the passengers. We went down the Elizbeth river to decimal swamp.

It was a great experience for me. I really did not know much about trip all I know I had wonderful trip. Traveled by a small Bonny Blue replica of an intra-costal steamer. The Voyage was fun. The cabins in this boat were small & cozy it had two small beds & a tinny shower. But it did have a big dining room, & a large lounge had a large piano. We were only eight friendly couple & crew got to know each other felt comfort talking and sharing stories.

I had the biggest story to shar because we were since it was our 1st anniversary @ age sixty Most everyone wanted to hear our romantic love story. (Friends & family) who know I am like an

open book. I can talk a lot; I shared my love story anyone that wanted to listen. I guess it was interesting I even got my story in Richmond local newspaper.

The water in the river was like tea color. On our journey we saw some wild animals & birds.

After We arrived at our destination we got out of the boat and toured the city.

2ed anniversary.

Bob took me to an Elegant restaurant to celebrate.

Active :

I have always been active taking advantage in learning sports that I did not have growing up.

Played tennis, biked, hiked with Bob.

Back problem:

in 1990s I was having terrible back problem, that pain had gone through my leg. Someone recommended to swim or at least walk in the water. Only way I could do that year-round was to joined county recreation center, Once I joined, I realized that I could get free membership if I volunteer for four hours a week. I signed up and got the job within a week or so.

At first, I worked in the fitness room for a long-time showing customer how to use machines greeting them and cleaning the fitness room and all the machines. I enjoyed what I did but was getting tired of cleaning all the time. I asked to be transfer to another department. Front desk. I thought this may be an opportunity to learn something new. I was greeting customers checking them in that involved handling some cash. I was having some problem learning to operate the computer. At The end of each employees shift they had to count the cash draws were and it was coming out short. The county decided the volunteers will no longer handle the cash. My challenge was gone, and I was getting bored just waiting for customers to check in. I quit and started paying to use the facility. I noticing the plants were not doing so well. I did not know the person that attended the plants had passed away and the person that replaced him was not doing such a good job therefore the plants were dying. Plants one of my favorite things. I asked one of the managers if she needed me to volunteer again and take care of the plants. She was very pleased that to have me back. continued to volunteer taking care of the plants for very long time. Till I almost retired from my paying job. 2011. I loved the plants and they loved me. Couple summers I spent my own money and planted some perennials in the yard and one year I even planted some vegs.

I would get lot of comments from the patrons.

Couple of times I was even recognized by the management. I even got fifty-dollar gift card for a restaurant.

My husband and I retired and have moved Indiana 2011 October Bob helped me find a episcopal church right in the city. I very pleased with members of the church they very much welcoming congregation I am involved in severely, ministry such as soup kitchen serving the less fortunate than we are some of them come for company. In each ship, there are two cooks. I serve & clean up every seven weeks.

Relocated to Indiana

After we got married I wanted to move out of our condo and get a house in falls church or Fairfax city. We looked at few houses nothing in our price range. We knew we could not afford one in Virginia at lease where we wanted to live. I gave up on the idea. Bob kept looking. Bob loves to look even though we are not going to purchase, he likes to get ideas I on the other hand feel it's a waste of time.

I had given up on finding the house we wanted in Virginia. I had turned my attentions to when we retire where we wanted to live. Bob told me to choose any State I wanted to live. Bob even took me to Chattanooga; Tennessee I think in 2010. Bob also took me to Chickamauga the battle of Sept.18-20,1863. Bob is a history lover. He never gets tired of reading, sightseeing and watching on television. We also went on a inclined railway and beautiful caves underground boat ride, live fish how they are fed. It was all interesting tripe. Everything we saw and visited was awesome.one thing We saw was ruby fall that was breath taking. Tennessee a beautiful State I enjoyed and didn't mind living there.

Bob also didn't mind living in New Mexico, and Ohio Cincinnati. That would have been alright. I thought I didn't want to live where we had no family, and we are getting old. I wanted to live near his family and his college buddy and friend Jerry & his wife Linda. If my family were here may be I would live near them but unfortunately they are not here. My brother and his family are in Mangalore India. They are happy and doing well where they are.

I chose to live in Indiana near his family We could have lived in Frankfort near his mom and his brother and his family or we could have lived in Monticello near Bobs sister.

Bob didn't want to live there because it's a prairie. I also wanted to live in the City. All my life I have lived in the city except for twelve years when I was a child. Bob wanted to come back to the city where he was born in St Edwards hospital New Albany and had lived for four years. He wanted to live near the Bowers. Jerry was his college roommates and buddy. Bob wanted to live in New Albany Indiana where he was born. Even though I had traveled several times I still did not know much about Indiana the locations. One thing I knew for sure that I too wanted to live near the Bowers. We used to travel once or twice to Indiana Frankfort to visit his mom and family. Every time We visited, we would stop for few days on our way in or out Once Jerry even said If we didn't stop by when we were in town, they would feel bad We almost all the time made the effort to visit them.

During these visits I got to know both Jerry & Linda more and more, especially the last two years from 2010 to 2011. I think a great deal about them they are most down to earth people I love them very much. They are the friends we can count on. After we bought our house, we could not move immediately we were concern. Jerry stopped by almost every day picked up any mail or checked the house. We know Jerry and & Linda are busy, but they made time for us. When we seriously starting house hunting. We were at the Bowers at least once a month or every six weeks whenever I could get off work.

retirement:

I had worked for my company Giant food twenty-six years four months and two days on October 21,2011 I was sixty-nine. I had also fulfilled my dream of being a department manager before leaving the company. I had seen it all and done it all where my company was concern. That was a good feeling. I had trained lot of my coworkers and I too had learned a lot from them but, the hard way. I trained one of my good workers to take over as manager once I retire.

On July 13th our 9th wedding anniversary I was @ work Bob sent me flowers that was the first time I had ever received anything in public from Bob. I could not believe

My eyes.

Move

We made our final move on October 28th2011.

Settling down in our new house in New Albany IN.

Bob and I both moved into our new home in October 30th, 2011. After a week Bob flew back to Virginia to train some people in state department for his job for couple of week also take care of old business. One of Bob's nieces lived in Indianapolis. He wanted his niece's husband to take him to the airport so he could fly back to Virginia. We were at his niece's house to celebrate someone's birthday. I needed to get going because it was winter and getting dark outside. I drive Mom to her house, and I wanted her to stay with me until Bob got home. While Mom was there, she helped me unpack some things. Mom was talking to me while I was driving, and she got mad at me because I told her I needed to concentrate on driving. By the grace of God, we finally made it.

I didn't want to be alone in the big house all by myself. That was a interesting visit I had with my mother in law without Bob.

I didn't do much with her or take her to too many places, because I my self was new to the area.

Couple of time I took her to see her sister in Sellersburg nursing home.

As homeowners we have had few unexpected expenses, Water in basement, drain blockage and tree limbs. Some of the things We had planned to do before the winter of 2011 fell through. First, we were holding two mortgages condo fee two house utility.

Thank God We finally sold our condo in Virginia. That was a big burden lifted of our head.

We have unpacked and put away most of the stuffer, but Bob has boxes that are still not unpacked I doubt they will ever get unpacked mostly they are papers and books some even from grade school. Now he is involved in the community such as historical society he is now the treasurer of the historical society & vice-president of the genealogical society . Bob has revised our community book for the third grade. The first year when he did it took him hundreds of hours now; he adds each year the changes as they happen. .He also has picked the genealogy where his mom left off. He has gotten several first family certificate. Bob also attends city & county council but now we are in limbo since the corona 19 started. Bob & I have plenty to do staying in during this lock down. I ear people complying they are board because they have nothing to do. We have a lot to do inside & outside the house. I run out of time before I accomplish my days list for one thing since it is spring/ summer I plant variety of flows that blooms early spring to late fall anybody that loves flowers like I do they know how much tine it takes to care for them and I love nature: all varies kind of

birds, butter flies rabbits surely baby rabbits & my favorite bird is hummingbird I get so excited when I see one but we do not see many early in the year but few end of summer when they get ready to go back. I ear stories about how they buzz & sit on hands I would like to see one close to me.

I have so many feeders all around the house one in while I see one here & there. house around them. Slowly we are furnishing our house. We didn't have too many fortunes since we lived in a condo. We are taking our time looking around for bargain. Bob is good at it since he has time on hand, he shops once he finds something, he 'll come and get me to get my idea. We have discussed that we will not buy anything without discussing with each other. One of our main projects was to build our sunroom I had talked about it when we were looking for house. In Jan.2012 we contracted with American window since the house already had the American windows. The company was fast they did a good job. When the project was going on some of our neighbors were curious wanted to know what we were doing, that was one way to get to know the neighbors one of the neighbor, behind our house Madonna Sappenfield also another neighbors Ann Eiler,

Whose mom & sister had built our house the same time her house was built Ann is now 95 by the time I complete my book she may be 100 plus. She was the first person to welcome us. We have been friends with her ever since. We keep an eye on her, help when she needs. On wed. is our date night when I make dinner, make extra for her, after dinner we play cards (hand & foot) Ann tough us how to play? I have heard now more & more people playing that game especially in Florida I enjoy the game very much even better when I win that don't happen often, mostly Bob & Ann win.

That July I invited most of my neighbors for Bob's birthday so that they could see the Sunroom also get to know each other they had a good time. Next day I was working my flower bed & one of my neighbor Madonna, came to tell that she had a good time. She mentioned that the neighbors had not known each other even though they had lived here for a long time. That was a good feeling also I wanted to get to know lot of our neighbors, When I lived in Virginia I did not have chance to meet lot of neighbors because they were always coming and going.

1. We have done lot of improvement to the house since we moved. Fix the leakage in the basement, put two drains in order to stop the puddles in the yard. Bob has filled lots of the low spots by

putting dirt every year. In 2019 just before our trip to India, sue in the basement flooded we had that fix not completely yet it's an ongoing project when one owns a house. I love nature looking & talking with nature I have planted lots of flowers all around the house I even planted a rain garden and planted butterfly bushes. Every year I promise myself I will not spend money on plants that does not happen.

Bob and I did some hiking, biking when we got here first some boating in rubber boat I gave that up. For one thing I cannot get in & out easily then, it wobbles that makes me nervous. I have joined the Y. I used to go three times a week and work out I also got back to

Playing tennis my favorite sport. I finally gave that up because the group I was playing with didn't like me for whatever reason. I found new sports bowling through a parishioner From mu church and got to meet some good people I was never good at it they were nice people and they enraged me, but I was disappointed @ myself so I gave up. While I was bowling one of the team members introduced me to pickle ball which was fun & as more & more people started to play, they got serious. Again, I always wanted to win but I was louse player, so I gave that up too.

I was working out three days a week @ the YMCA, Till the whole world hit this coronavirus & everything lock down.

The coved 19 got started in Wuhan region of China in November 17th, 2019.

Clines scientists think the virus could have originated by bats. A 55-year-old man from Hubei province died of the various. The Chines Doctor reported to the officials, he was jailed because they thought he was spreading false news (face news?) This disease quickly spread around the globe. Later the Chines Doctor who reported died of the various.

Today 06/ 25/2020 the Global infected stands 8,400,320. & death told 450,435 & recovered 4,109,183 Global.

USA IN.2,221,216. Death...119,912. Recov.695,166(41,375) .

Indi.Inf.41,438. Death.2,396. Recovered 0.

Floyd County where we live. 339case,43 death recorded & still getting worse worldwide. This caused lock down schools, business, churches, Restaurant all government offices anything & everything. Restriction was in order:

Wash hand with soap & water do not touch face eye wearer mask when going shopping for essentials Etc.

Some professions can work from home these are fortunate one's others are not so fortunate.

Some are front line workers like the nurses, doctors, police officers, ambulance drivers and medics. They must be at work saving lives. Some of them are even mothers, these workers do not get to see their family for days. These people are putting their lives online to save other lives. Other workers in retail, cooks, waitresses school bus drivers all the manual labors are without jobs.

There are others especially young people do not care if they go to the bar drinking & socializing as a result the number keeps climbing then they bring the various home give it to their grandparents. As a result activity is slowed down some people that live pay check to paycheck even put meal on the table they are losing they homes. America is one is the richest country it sure do not look like a rich country now.

Then we have/had the US president Donald Trump who should not have been our leader. People were so confused not knowing who to believe the doctors & the scientist tell us to take all the precaution we should take to stop of the various. On the other hand, the leader of our country tells us just the opposite. Such as open business, shopping centers hair/nail/massage parlors, schools, universities etc. In the middle of this we have another problem in USA. That is:

Racial discrimination within blacks, spinach, other minorities by whites' police, but mostly the blacks and the whites. That is because of the slaves in America. The slaves were captured from Africa & brought to US by the whites in the 16th hundred to work the tobacco & cotton fields these slaves were the property of the whites.

The slavery ended in 1865 when Abram Lincoln US 16th President passed the emancipation proclamation. (freeing the slaves) But Slavery continued; they had no freedom.

Martin Luther King's peaceful freedom march to Washington to deliver speech for human Right to end racism & rights to jobs.

After two hundred years racism exists & the blacks are treated badly by law enforcement white officers. Lately there have been too many black lives lost because of police brutally also white men killed a black while he was jugging for no rhyme or reason.

The latest killing by three police was of George Floyd on May 26th in Minneapolis for twenty-dollar counterfeit that he had given to the shopper keeper.

One police hand cuffed him and held him down putting his full body on his neck while George cried "I can't breathe" then he called for his dead mother. The police held him down for eight minutes till he stopped breathing. All the three officers were fired the one that held George down was put in jail at first, but the protesters wanted the rest of them to put in jail. The African American's have had it, so they protested on the street calling for justice & peace. This time the protester was out of control burning police stations destroying business, burning police cars the riot is uncontrollable by the law enforcement even the national guards have no control. This has been going on almost for a month. Since the protests started, more & more states joined in. this has gone as far as other countries also other minorities has joined the march. They are trying to get the messages out to stop the police brutality especial the white police. Just as we speak it's still going on. Because of this the white carps have a bad rep, not all of them are like that, But the law getting difficult for other police to arrest the ones have committed serious crimes.

With all the things going on in the world virous/ police brutality in us I am grateful we and our family is ok I am thanking full to God for His protection. I prayer for the world to heal & bring peace to all.

Bob helped me to find a small church in in New Albany I like it very much. The priest and the congregation are nice and welcoming. Bob too goes to church often more than he did in Virginia I am really pleased with that. I have learned more about God & spiritual then when I was catholic for forty years. First lot of things about Christianity I also thought it was an obligation to attend church on Sunday & holidays also learnt some catholic are judgmentally & condom if one is not living according to what they believe. One of my good catholic family disowned according to them I was living in sin because I was living with Bob before we were married. Another time I went to confession & the priest would not give me absolution again because I was living with my future husband @ age fifty. Either him or can't receive communion which is one of main part of my service. Many reasons I choose Bob & dropped out of catholic church. After that I was trying to find a good church, I attended couple of different denomination church that did not feel right

We were married by a minister in friends back yard.

Finally, Bob helped me find an episcopal church in Virginia which is similar to catholic. After moving to Indiana again Bob helped me find St Paul's Episcopal church New Albany. First Sunday I went to church they were friendly & welcoming. I had found my church. I have grown in spiritually at the time I came to St Paul's they had an interim priest, they were in search for a regular a priest.

Father Rick Kautz was hired in 2012. We all love his sermon he is funny during the sermon and he gets the message across & he keeps me awake never a boring sermon he is not stuck up or judgmental he is our friend. He has led me with his example. He is my spiritual director he has guided me to grow. We all are sad because he is retiring after thirty-five years of priesthood we will miss him. 2020 02 22. Will be his last day Parish is giving him a big send off.

I volunteer in various little church ministry in church such as: Alter guild, ushering, greeting. Healing service soup kitchen, three to four times a year I host coffee hour along with another parishioner.

For fun: I go to the YMCA in New Albany three times a week & work out. I meet lot of people & smile get to know other people. When the weather is good, I take a long walk through the neighborhood.

My favorite project is growing flowers from early spring to late fall. When we first moved, I had to prepare the flow beds, soil in Indian terrible lot of clay and then in one of the beds all gravel it was used for outdoor fire in winter. We had some flowers and ornament trees in front of the house. The following earl spring I started Digging that rocks and take most of the rocks out making place to for flowering plants. Little by little built the beds. Bob built me a little veg. garden, I tried to grow few different veg. It was not worth the effort. Now I grow tomatoes, cucumber this year I am growing garlic I use lot of garlic in my cooking it is expensive to buy also they are not that good. For couple years I have been buying from one of my prisoners. It is lot of work I have fun doing it. I get to be in the nature watching all sorts of birds and animals my favorites bird is hummingbird. I have several feeders with homemade sugar water they like fresh food it fun watching them I am

amazed see these little God's creates travel the long distance .if God can care for those creatures how precious are we to Him. I would like to be free as a bird.

I enjoy the beautiful butterflies too even have planted couple of butterfly bushes for them to feed on today when I was working my flower garden I saw a monic butterfly land on one of my lily eating nectar.

In winter I have in door flowers mostly in sunroom they get a lot of light, but I have bad luck growing violets but year moved them to SE window I had them bloom That is the first time I got them bloom since we have been in Indiana. During winter we can enjoy indoor flowers even have several orchid plants that are blooming.

When I was in Virginia. I could never get the orchids to bloom. When the grocery store marks them down, I buy them take good care it blooms it is one of the hardest flowers to grow, In Virginia, I could not get them to bloom.

Before the 2019 trip Bob & I traveled to India in 1997.

To visit my family brother & his extended family. I had not seen my brother since 1974 that is when I came to the stats also I had not kept in contact with him because he cannot read or wright & my sister in law could not read or write in English. I could not read or wright in any other langue. I kept in touch with my mother ashram which was run by the Somehow my mother knew I was in the stats. I keep in touch with her through the nuns and sent money until she died in 1991. Three months after she passed away the nuns sent me a letter with some funeral pictures that looked horrible that's when I cried to see her body skin & born. I never wanted to remember her that image, so I got rid of those pictures. they always wanted me to send them money I have no idea whether the nuns ever used the money towards my mother's health.

Going back to my trip. I did not want to travel by myself, so Bob came with me. He knew an Indian coworker he gave us some tip about our travel. This guy's father in law had owned a hotel in Bombay he made arrangement for us to stay overnight before we flew to Mangalore to visit my brother.

The next day we flew to Mangalore. Brother & his family came to the airport to take us to his house. That was our reunion in eighteen years, I could not recognize him, when I left India, he so young & handsome, being in united emirates in the desert for sixteen years he had turned dark. I had hard time recognizing him. I was meeting my Nice & nephew for

the first time. Saritha was the same age as my grand niece was 1n 1997. I was excited to meet his family for the first time. I was also proud of my brother how well he had done. He had built his first house from his earning and giving his children education.

We stayed in his bedroom while he his wife and daughter fore. They made us feel comfortable. My sister in law shopped Daily for fresh fish and meet fixed Indian meal every day best of all was my Indian tea. One day my brother wanted me to fix his favorite dish biryani that is meet & rice dish he was barging how his sister could make the best. Biryani. I had no idea how he knew about that. They all enjoyed, and it has become family's tradition, now they make the Biryani every special occasions Now my niece makes it. The first time she prepared she was so proud of herself she emailed me to tell me.

This time I visited I made it for my nice birthday & my birthday (Feb.14).

That year when we visited, we did not do much or see much also it was first time for Bob he had not done lot of research about sightseeing. The locals have no time to get out of town or they are not interest. Anyone traveling to India for pleaser should have a tour guide also someone with experience ones recommended by a Indian travel agent that was our mistake not planning the tripe. My main reason of going to India was to see my brother whom I had not seen in twenty-three years also had not met his family. Most local do not travel for pleaser or they have never been on a plane all their life they do not have need to fly the only places they go is market, church once in a while to cinema that was before they had television. I had never flown until I came to America @ the age thirty-two, I had no need even though I did travel from Kannada Kuduro to Bombay, several time all by train, bus or ship. Once I traveled to Poona also by train & also, I had no education in India I did not know about places in India at that time I knew more of America than India.

By the time we returned home Bob knew more about India then most natives.

Feb. 2019 Trip to India,

This trip I had been thinking for a long-time planning and collected information from two Indian family I had met @ the YMCA. One of the couples I met was from my birthplace Asha & John while I was planning the trip. Asha was from my birthplace, and it was amazing I got to meet

her. What were the odds of that? Nina Thaker who I had known for a long time referred us to a travel agent that they had used. I wanted to visit my family in India one more time before we get too old and world not be able to.

Bob and I planned this trip for long time almost for a year. We gathered lot of information from friends that travel all the time, especially from two of my Indian friends. We wanted to do some side seeing in India and in Europe since we were taking this long trip twenty-four hour. We know we could not fly that long non-stop. We decided to divide the trip into multiple parts. We also had a knowledgeable travel agent who also happened to be Indian, he was recommended by my Indian friends who had used him. He did a good job in putting together our trip.

We I had not seen my family in twenty-two years. Lot had happened since my last trip.

My niece had married and had two children, my nephew also married and two children.

I had not met their spouses and my grandnieces and my grandnephew. Their ages run from 16 to 4 years it was the right time for them to remember Bob and I. Another dream I had was to find my sister, and any of my Hindu family without they last name it was impossible this was my last chance.

Everyone treated us as royals, especially my family. We stayed my niece and her family. We got to know Saritha (my niece's family better) than my nephew and his family. My niece had taken off work for few days so that they could spend the time with us.

We were gone for twenty-eight days out of which we spent ten days with family.

I had some concern about our travel because of what has been happening in the air and on the ground high jacking plans, suicide bomb. It was a safe trip no major deserter, but the flight was very tiring because of the seating, arranging sometime our seats was in between two other passengers we could not move at other times Bob and I were separated, and I did not like that. Some passengers slapped all through the flite I could sleep at all. I watch movies when I could operate the tv. Bob tells me that we flew in eleven plans.

The trip itself

Amsterdam

The trip was well planned. our trip was [Sat.Jan.30 @6pm](#) Jerry Bower drove us to the Louisville airport to catch our flight to Atlanta airline. from ATL to AMS.We Left ATL @6:15 Wed. Jan 30 arrived in AMS on Thu. [Jan.31@8:30Am.](#) We took a cab to the hotel (Apollo museum hotel). We had breakfast, took a long nap, then we walked along the canal. The following day, Feb 1st we went on a bus to the countryside guided tour. we did a lot of walking in rain and little snow. Despite rain, wind, cold & snow we did not miss the sightseeing. The countryside was interesting. We saw the sawmill with crankshaft most interesting part of the sawmill was the movement of cutting blade, cutting 1mm.for each movement. The machine was run by wind power. The blades could saw at times any with required, bord there were 10 to 12 blades in the saw. We also visited some shops then we went to some cheese factories and watched them make chase they gave us some samples, some of us sampled all different ones I guess we hungry. I parched some cheese to take to my family in Mangalore. the most exciting part of AMS the bicycles everyone rids, rain, snow, night, day, men, women seven hundred cycles. Our room faced the bike path. One night, I could not sleep so I looked out the window about one PM and there were riding I was amazed to see them that time of the hour.

Amsterdam to India.

We left Amsterdam. On Feb.2ed for Jaipuri, We arrived Jaipuri, Rajasthan on Feb. 3rd it was a long twelve hr. flight the hotel driver was waiting at the airport to take us to the hotel with a sign, that red Sterrett. Bob had arranged our tripe carefully through the travel agent before we left home so we may have a safe tripe. We stayed at Sarovar Premiere, after we checked in we had breakfast, then took a long nap took shower, then our tour guide picked us up to tour the city. We toured the Pink city which is no longer pink, the paint has faded, and it is no longer as it used to be, we were told. After we returned to the hotel, we napped again since we had not slept for 12 hours I was so tired I did not know whether it was night or day because of change of time. Bob woke up and went downstairs to check what was on the menu. When he saw a big buffet was set up. Bob had not seen that much verité of Indian dishes.

Move some of this

They had dishes from different regains That was how I had felt when I first came to America, and the Nachanis took me to Disney World. The next morning, they took us for breakfast. I never

seen so much food in my life in India I did not even know what all the food was. I think I was full only looking at it also I did not know what to do with all that food. Doctor Nachnani asked his wife what was wrong with me why I was not eating. I wish I am that way now I would not have this weight problem I am having now. Getting back to my story, I was so tired from the flight I did not want to go for supper. Bob said I may not see that delicious & variety of dishes again; I knew they would serve similar dishes for Breakfast in the morning. The hotel served particularly good meal it was worth money we had paid for a good hotel service through our agent. The agent was from India, so he knew all the good hotels. We did not mind paying little extra since we were going to see my family in 22 years and may be also last trip.

Our driver and the tour guide picked us up after breakfast for sightseeing. The guide was deeply knowledgeable. She recommended some of the interesting things to see. She took us to lot temples and palaces. After a while they all look alike but it was a learning experience about India which I had missed when I was growing up in India. On the third day, the driver and guide picked us up early. They drove us to Ranthambore National park. A tour guide from the national wildlife sanctuary picked us up in large van. the wildlife sanctuary it is known for Bengal tigers. We were little early to be picked up by the park tour guys. While we were waiting our tour, guide took me to a fabric place I was faceted to see women and men sitting on the floor making pretty quilts. They were the employees of shopkeeper .Once the shopkeeper found out we were tours he had several people attending to us getting out all sorts garments such as Cashmere quilts salivary camas (slacks & long dress with slit on the side), I ended buying a large beautiful quilt with elephants. Now I have been back since Feb 2019 And don't know where and how I make use of it, it is too pretty to make into table cloth or bed spared so it has to be a hung on a rod and find a place to hang ,this will be our winter project then came the covert 19 so I am still have not decided. Finally, the safari driver picked us up in a large open truck, the road unpaved so it was a hard ride to the park to get to the sport where the tigers were sported. Lots of tours waiting to see the tigers. We waited about four hours in the hot humid weather, no sign of even one tiger We did see few other animals & birds. It was waste of teeming and money. We were told the tigers were mostly seen in Nov & May. Oh well, I will just be happy seeing them in the zoo or my own tiger (Cats).

Udaipur, Rajasthan

On Feb. 6th we flew to Udaipur. So, we could see other places, In India.

Arriving on the same day it Short flight. Again, our hotel was already reserved by our agent. We stayed in Ramya resort & Spa. It was a nice hotel service was excellent. Our rooms were cold because Udaipur is to the north and mountain area. The Hotel did not have heat also it was newly built they also did not have internet service therefor the hotel manager let Bob borrow his laptop in the night, he also gave us a space heater.

Food It was even different kind of Indian food not all regains eat same food. The cooks, managers & servers wanted to bring us hot meal, I guess they gave us special treat because Bob gave them good tip. They are not used to the tips. While we were there, they were some Young Indian tours from Deli vacationing, one morning after breakfast I went & talk to them, we hit it off right away. They were having a party that night they invited us old fate. drinking, dancing eating, we just stopped by to see what was going on. Once we got they did not let us leave, we do not dance Bob & I did not dance even for our wedding, there we were dancing that's the first time I have ever seen Bob dancing. They were fun group. The next day, our driver & the guide picked us up at the hotel for sightseeing to the lake city. It founded by Maharana Udi Sing & it was named after him. This place is locked in the middle of the lake. It is also surrender by beauty full blue lakes with white marble gardens, shrines & numerous bodies of water. It is amazing city perfect blend of beauty & history. The following day we went to the monsoon palace while waiting for guided tour we saw large monkeys we were told not to bother them if we did, they would not leave us alone. The monsoon palace was mainly built to watch the monsoons clouds it's also said the monsoon palace was built by Maharana to get a better view of his ancestral home previously owned by the Mewar family.

To our main destination to Mangalore to visit my family.

We left Udaipur on feb.9th, flue to Bangalore to Mangalore arrived in Mangalore in the night. What are union. I or We were seeing lot of my family for the first time it was like I had already knew them. What mordent tact can do. My niece and nephew drove us to see my brother, we visited with him and his extended family, had dinner, & my nice & her family drove us to their house.

I was so excited to see them all. My nice & her family treated us like the royals. When we went upstairs to their apartment, lot of shoes were just outside the door, so we took out our shoes too. (house rules) There had three bedrooms W two baths they don't have much but they made us

comforts in every way. My niece had taken off from work for few days to spend time with us. When the family were @ work & kids in school, Rakesh my nephew in law had his friend drove us around in his auto. We went to lots of beaches, but not in the water out of receipts for the locals. We stayed in Mangalore for ten days. When I was in Mangalore, I wanted to look up for my own family (Hindu) it was difficult to find them without knowing their last names. The next thing I wanted was to see the house I grew up in (Kannada Kuduro) the house surrounded by island even though we went to the place I did not get to see the house. I was surprised to see how much the place was improved in sixty some years. They have built a bridge between the two islands, have electric, church roads. The last place I wanted to see was the church I was baptized Ganguli, It was reinvented it looked very modern I could not believe it was the same church. One night I took my three grandniece & grandnephew close shopping since I had not taken any gifts from USA. They had a ball looking & trying on close, except for the sixteen years one, we had to make special trip to shop for her While we were shopping my niece got sick & had to take her to the doctor, nothing serious she had UTI, the doctor gave her some med. We had to bring her home to rest.

We still had not shopped for Rochelle so again we took her to shop, we went to this one place, she could not find what she was looking for, so we had to take her to a bigger shopping center. Finally, she found a dress for Easter she was happy so was I. When we were there some of the Rebello's wanted to see us & invited for lunch sinner it was nice to see some of them. One day when my family was at work, we walked up the hill took a rickshaw to go to this big library it was closed that day we just walked around. Bob wanted to have lunch find a pizza place it's hard to communicate with the local when we don't understand each other, finally somebody told us of this fancy restaurant. everything on the menu we ordered they did not have. finally we ordered what they had it took them so long I had to go in the kitchen to see what was taking them so long. We fingered the place was more of a hotel then a restaurant.

On a Sunday, My grand took us to an interesting pottery museum it reminded me of some of the earth where I grew up with. Then she took us to see saint Aloysius college chapel in Mangalore. Witch she attends. the chapel was hand painted in detail by Antonio Moscheni SJ It is so beautiful, I had never seen anything like that in all my life. It is said that it took him a little over two year to cover the walls and ceilings of the chapel with frescos & oil paintings.

On Feb. 14th my niece & I celebrated our birthday. We both are born on the same day different year. She turned 40 in 2019. We had all our family and some extended family. It was very nice to be able to celebrate with family. I got lots of handmade greeting cards from my grands with sweet messages. We also attended my niece in law's parents 50th wedding anniversary in the house. One custom they have in India is feeding cake to each other. If they have a big family that can take forever & taking pictures of anything and everything, we were so hungry by the time the dinner was served.

The next destination to Paris. Most our flights & hotels were booked by our agent, but we were flying to Bombay to Paris. In Bombay we had a long lay over, so we wanted to get a room at the Air port to sleep a little before the 12 hour flight. Bob was trying to book it from Mangalore, my niece do not have a internet only the lap top. Bob was having trouble in booking the room, so my grand was helping him he finally got it. The room was awfully expensive. When my grand realized she was surprised how much it cost. I would too if I were in her shoe.

We landed in Bombay in the evening our luges went to the room we got the room key went to bed. I get a phone call from my niece to talk, I was fast asleep & she woke me up after that I could not go back to sleep.

We left Mumbai (Bombay) several days after the Kashmir bus attack. The news on television country was under threats. We then proceeded to fly over Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, just south of Ukraine and then Turkey. Bulgarian airspace suddenly seemed relatively safe! Pakistan closed its airspace two day later, causing much longer flights from the middle east. Other than being extremely uncomfortable, the flight was uneventful.

Flight to Paris

got up in the middle of the night showered got to the airport checked in got on the plane to Paris. We got to Paris in the morning of the next day. We were so confused I could not tell what day it was. We did land in the morning, so we had breakfast, Bob was happy to have his bacon. We took a long nap shower & were going sightseeing. The floor in the bathroom was very new and slippery I got out of the shower fell and twisted my ankle I still wanted to go so the hotel had transport service. The driver dropped us off. While we were at mall, we saw a night dinner cruise we got tickets. We had plenty time to kill we were walking, my ankle started to swell and hurt. In the same place there was doctor's office we signed up and

watered in the watering room, it was getting late to get to the boat and we miss judge the distance, I was really having problem walking and Bob was pulling me because we would miss the cure ship I saw a bicycle carriage only a short distant to go I did not care we got on it he had to peddle hard going up the hill he really saved us from missing boat.

The boat was big & fancy. All the dinner tables set up in such a way that everyone could see everything. Just before we got in the boat, we Noticed the Eiffel tower built in 1889 height (320 meters) @ the time. I had no idea that's what it was. Dinner four or five course meal & wine different glasses for each wine, water & champagne for every course We could not drink any of it all we had was one glass of champagne & water and lot of ice for my swelled ankle never the less I enjoyed the ride and the beautiful scenery. I must talk about the French meals & the wine. I will not say that I did not know about how the French dine. One year I went to my French friends for Christmas eve dinner & was similar

My friend's mom did all by herself changing plates & glasses for each core they do dine fancy. After the cruse we took a cab to the hotel, the cab driver charged us arm & a leg when Bob question he gave us a bunch of bs like the night rate is high.

The next the day I could not even walk Bob had my breakfast brought up. They brought me a big meal on a table with fancy tablecloth, they gave me extra attention after hearing

I had slipped & fallen on the bathroom floor. After breakfast, the hotel manager sent me a wheelchair & had they personal drove from the hotel to take us to the doctors. We had to wait for a while before I got to see the Doctor When the doctor asked what langue I speak I said, "I said I do not speak English" I really meant to I don't speak French. He examined, had x rated, found I did not break a born that was good news. He gave me some pain pill & told me to ice it, get ankle brass keep my ankle raised. The hotel driver came back & picked us up. Good thing we had done all our sightseeing the day before. We rested the rest of the day for my swelling to go down & iced it also rested whole day then we went to the dining room for dinner with my walker. We did have a simple dinner as supposed to the various course meal. Good thing I rested & by night my swelling went down & was able to move little better. I was right about siting crunched in in between two seats very uncomfortable the fellows on either side were moving in order to find comfortable position and I had a difficult time operating movie, screen so I had to bother one of the guy for help. Bob was on a different isle. I made the best of the flight watching movies after movies to keep my mind occupied from pain

PARIS

We flew from Paris Charles DE Gaulle airport to Atlanta. After a short turn-around we got into Louisville.

Jerry picked us up @ the airport & brought us home. The trip was nice most important seeing my family where I may never get to see them again & all my grands will remember us. Also, Bob got to get to know them.

Christy Anderson from St Paul's baby sat our cats & Madonna checked them once a day gave them treat. They were

well taken care of. The house was still standing. We enjoyed the trip but happy to be home, that was the longest trip

we ever took. Later that same year started the coronavirus in china then began to spread like wildfire to the world

soon after that the travel ban went into effected it has been ten months now, still the numbers are going up in most

states also in other countries. We are happy for traveling see my family in 2019 if we had waited any longer, we may have never made it.

With so much going on in the world and USA we are Ok also our family, friends church family relatives everyone we know. We must have done something good to deceive this blessing.

I have been blessed in my life journey by friends. They have been good influence in my life that was that was in my early thirty even though Natalie Rebello rescued me from don't know what my life world have been without N Rebello. Some of her family were not good influence on me when I was growing up. Once I left the Rebello family, I learned few good things from the nuns especially from two nuns one was the Irish nun sister Iren and the other was my very best friend who helped me to choose the right country when I was planning to leave India in 1974 was sister Adeline from Regina Pacis convent. She arranged the pro & cans with the American family My very first family/ friends in USA were the Mondloch (Bob & Joyce) Before I met the Mondloch family I did not know anything about family life. They had eight kids they were like my brothers & sisters even though I am their mother's age. Joyce and I have been friends forty-six years we have been through lot life changes.

Working for Giant/AHOLD

Prior to 19?? the only thing job I had in corporate America was working part time at the local Roy Rogers. My work up to that time was working as a nanny, caregiver and housekeeper. Now that was and is real work, but it is different from working in an organization with a structure and multiple co-workers.

I was still working as a housekeeper for Beth Loker and Don Rice. I had gotten my green card, become a citizen and finished high school. Beth supported all this. She had urged me to quit Roy Rogers to concentrate on school. That accomplished, she urged me to respond to a call by the local grocery chain for workers. I was still working in their home. She convinced me that I could do this.

There were two major grocery chains in the Washington area, Giant Foods and Safeway. Giant was the creation of the Feldman family. Through two generations they grew to be a major player in the retail food business. There was a store up the road. I walked into the store and applied. My relevant experience was buying groceries! The job was part-time. I later learned that this was extraordinary. Hiring was usually done through the employment center down in Annandale. There I would have been interviewed and tested and probably not hired. I got the job! What was the local manager thinking? Did he see something in me or was he just really in need of help? Giant Foods at this time was still a family corporation run by Isadore (Izzy) Feldman. It was a progressive organization. Part-timers were guaranteed twenty hours and those working twenty hours were provided with healthcare. The corporate culture was to provide quality food with cheerful service. I was an enthusiastic recruit.

It wasn't easy. There was a lot to learn. Hundreds of product codes, pricing, product rotation, customer service and sanitation issues were but a few. I somehow survived the probationary period.

I became full-time. I worked as a bakery clerk in several stores. I actually met Izzy. He would visit the stores. If he didn't like something, he might take his cane and sweep the offending shelf clean. Someone who didn't know who was, might protest. He would say "Honey, I am Giant!" Izzy died. His family members weren't interested in running the stores. They sold to the Dutch mega-chain, Ahold Delhaize. Things changed slowly. AHOLD eventually spun off delivery operations, closed the central bakery, and contracted out some services.

Diversity

The population in the DC-MD-No. VA area is diverse. Giant hired them all. They hired women. Women work cheap! They hired blacks, Chinese, Filipinos, Turks, Muslims and at least one Indian. I don't remember meeting very many other Indians. All could progress to higher positions. I worked for black and Chinese bakery managers. I was brown-skinned in among a variety of light-skinned and dark-skinned co-workers. It seems to me that I was different and suffered because of it. I wanted the job! I was delighted to be working. I slavishly followed the rules and had contempt for those that didn't. This created some tension. I once removed a half-eaten chicken leg from the donut case. A co-worker was very disturbed about it. Some of the staff cooked in the store (not allowed) with ingredients collected from who knows where. I got "written up" a lot (insubordination!), unfairly, I thought. I smiled a lot in spite of the

surroundings. Customers would ask for me. Old ladies, firefighters, cops and others wanted me to wait on them. I liked the attention. This was also a source of tension with my co-workers, but much appreciated by some managers.

The Union

All Giant employees below the store manager and assistant manager were members of a union. As a bakery clerk I was a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union. Meat Cutters had their own union. By the time I joined Giant the union had lost some its power. There were two tiers of wages. New hires were on a different wage and benefits schedule. This would get worse after the sale to AHOLD. The company got concessions in pensions, health care and wages. Fortunately, I was locked into tier two.

The union managed the healthcare and pension systems. UFCW also provided life and accident insurance. Spouses were covered at no extra charge!

There was a degree of cooperation when Izzy was in charge. Under AHOLD things tightened up. There were still rules. Duties were defined. No working off the clock! I am driven to complete the task I'm working on – so I frequently violated that rule. The union was fairly good about keeping even lazy people from being dismissed except for good cause. The union did not get involved in many internal matters even when there were contract issues at stake.

Management and Managers

When Giant ceased to be a family operation more management levels were introduced. There were District managers and Regional managers. In addition there were departmental representatives. The bakery had a representative at corporate. This worked fairly well for me. If the in-store situation was not good, I had a contact outside the store chain of command.

Promotion was mostly from within. I became a second person in the bakery department. The extra pay was pennies per hour. The second person was in charge of the department when the department manager was away. I had to learn new things. Unfortunately, there was no formal training. The things you learn from a bad manager did not necessarily help when you had to step in. This was true in all departments. People management was uneven. I once overheard a store manager listening to a tape from the anonymous complaint line. He was trying to figure out who the caller was instead of addressing the complaint! Store managers were often promoted from the grocery departments. They knew how to put cans on the shelf but often had much to learn

about overall store operation. I was cross-trained in the deli. I didn't like that very much although there would have been more money.

As a second person I would be asked to cover for my department manager. I was also sent other stores to cover for their absent bakery managers. The district bakery manager got to see me in a variety of situations. I learned to handle receiving, inventory and was in charge of the staff in those stores. It took me a while to realize that under the union contract, I was entitled to bakery manager pay! This was 6 to 7 dollars an hour. Store managers didn't like to pay. The district bakery manager was very helpful in getting me paid. Ultimately, I was promoted to bakery manager. I finished my twenty-six years with Giant at a store very close to home.

It was a long and rocky road. Mostly, I suspect, my fault. I never once was nominated for employee of the month. I have a small pension. The first tier workers were given health care in retirement. I did get a lump sum "severance" payment of around \$8,000. My friend Beth made me invest heavily in the company 401K. The company did match some employee contributions. Compounding is magical!

When I came to America, I had never driven a car, scooter or any motorized vehicle. I had limited experience even riding in a car. I had ridden in buses, trains, boats and horse carts. The Couthinos had a car. I sometimes ridden with Mrs. Couthino and the kids. I became aware of some of the rules of driving. Driving on the right was not a rule that would help me in America! Anyway, you can't be an American without a car. But first, I had to learn to drive and get a license. By 1977 I had been freed from by bondage at the Nachinani's and had worked for over a year. I walked everywhere or rode my bike. I took driving lessons from EZ-Method. I spent more money than I wanted to spend in driving school. Still I failed the driving test at least twice going with the EZMDS, because I was nervous. Finally my good friend Howard Leighton who I had met on the tennis court while I was practicing tennis on MC college campus .When I mention to Howard about how many times I had failed my driving test, he offered to take me in his car to practicing. I finally past my driving test when one of my neighbors took for the test. Again, Howard helped me buy my first used car, a Dodge colt. My first accident on the first time driving with my car with a teenager she too was a new driver. I have no recollection of what we did about accident I since it had a miner scratch, We did not exchange information. My next driving was on the beltway 495. Elin another friend went me to show I get to Joyce Mondloch's in Virginia. When Eline's husband Dave found out that she went with me inexperienced driver on the beltway he was upset with her. One day when I was visiting the Mondlochs, Rick wanted to go for a drive in the neighborhood he gave me some tip on driving. I guess I will never be able to take any experience driver in my car because they correct me on my driving especial Bob my husband. Any one riding with will only let me drive only once the next time they say I will drive.

Getting a second colt?

Buying a Hondai. Help from a friend.

Getting a Mercury Sable

Getting a Ford Focus

Accidents, repairs

Moving to Indiana. Getting an Indian license.

Moving up from a Ford Focus to a Fusion .

Driving lessons again.

Parking by ear.

My Speech

I enrolled for basic computer classes at the very same school, and I saw my English teacher. I told her I would like to have her over for dinner. Because it wasn't my home, I had to wait while my employers went on a business trip or a vacation, which they often did. When they were away, they gave me permission to invite my friends over if I wanted to. My employers were taking a trip to Europe, so I asked them if I could entertain some guests while they were gone. Beth didn't mind because she trusted me very much. Then, I made arrangements to fix some Indian food. A few of my teachers and fellow students showed up.

I wrote my first and only speech for the Pimmit H.S. on November 1st of 1990, I did a great job speaking. I gave the speech in order to help the school get money from the

administration. Back when I was living at the Lawton House, I had some fellow students and a couple of teachers over for dinner. At some point, I began telling stories. Shortly after, the teachers talked about my stories, they suggested I write a speech. They offered to help me, so I took them up. The auditorium was packed full of people numbering from 300-500.

After the speech, I knew I had done well. All the students told me how impressed with my work they were. And the students said to the teachers, “We want to be just like her.” And the teachers came back and told me what the students said. Not only were they impressed my accomplishments, but they wanted to know my story, as well. The speech also served as a way to explain how I wished to continue my dreams. The most important thing I wanted to accomplish was to complete my high school education so I could eventually get a professional job.

Great Accomplishments

Inspiration

Follow Through My Dreams

How Did You Get Here?