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Holly Urbanc for Wright State University Oral History Course 685

Elaine Wallace
Holly Urbanc

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Family Background

I was born in Cleveland December 26th, 1948. I was born the day after Christmas, and my real name is Mary Carole—my nickname is Holly. My grandmother Corinne, my mother’s mother, wanted to call me Poinsettia, but I am very glad she didn’t. My parents are Marjorie Killene McGrath, and Phillip McGrath. My dad’s family was very large, there were eight in his family, and my mom had two sisters and two brothers, and they both had Irish backgrounds.

My dad was a distributor for Budweiser at Cleveland. He ran the warehouse for many years until it burned down. My mom was a teacher, but she also gave birth to nine of us, and she stayed at home for that, and took care of us. After two children, she stayed at home, which was a full-time job being a mother. We lived in Cleveland on Lakeshore Boulevard, and were two houses from Lake Erie. I really love to be near water—It’s my spiritual time. I grew up in Cleveland, and went to grade school at St. Anne’s for two years. Then we moved over to Euclid, Ohio—I went to Holy Cross Grade School there, second grade through eighth grade, graduated eighth grade there. And from there I went to St. Peter’s High School in Cleveland; it was in a downtown area. I went there because they had Notre Dame Sisters. I had to take a bus ride for twenty-five minutes to downtown, but it was a wonderful location because I worked after school part-time at a couple of office jobs, and that’s where I learned a lot about business, and taking courses and everything.

I lived in Cleveland, on Lakeshore Boulevard, and we were two houses from the lake (Erie) so it was quite an experience. I really love to be near water—it’s my spiritual time. Even now, when I go back to my family home, my brother’s there with his wife, I love to walk along the beach—I really enjoy it. It’s just beautiful seeing the sailboats and the Regatta’s on Sundays. We had a big park there, and many Sundays and Saturdays we’d have picnic baskets and go down on the beach. We had to get all our chores done, and she was very big on reading, and you had to join the Summer Reading Program, so that had to all be finished before we left at ten o’clock in the morning (laughter) for a day at the beach. She (mom) really enjoyed that.

My mom was kind of the neighborhood life-guard; she would pack jars of peanut butter and jelly and bread, and all of us had to take a turn and fix lemonade or Cool-aid, and here we’d all have to hump this stuff, carrying it in baskets down to the beach, which was just at the end of our road. We ended up with all the other
neighborhood kids; we would make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and have to sit out and rest an hour so we wouldn’t get cramps after our lunch, and play in the playground. But she would watch all of us and be the lifeguard, and that was ‘til about four o’clock in the afternoon.

About my Father

My dad worked very hard, sometimes two jobs; he wasn’t around a lot, because he was working and taking care of nine children. He also had a bad drinking problem, and almost committed suicide. Those are very bad times in my life, but we all grew together, and took care of the younger ones. The younger ones probably don’t remember some of the things that went on in our lives.

He took a salesman’s job working at Budweiser, which probably didn’t help him. He was a wonderful salesman because he was so full of ‘Blarney’, being an Irishman. But that was the start of it, and I just admire my mom, because she stuck with him the whole time-through good times and bad times.

Well, my dad’s problem starting off with social drinking, and got worse and worse, and he left the house one day-my mom took him, and she came back alone, and we didn’t know where he was. I was fifteen when this happened, and she said he was in a hospital in downtown Cleveland. He was in the ‘Alcohol Department’, or section, where they have them dry out, and they kept him in there until he felt comfortable coming out. Well, then he got out of the hospital, and did OK, and he had the salesman job. Then one day, the man that owned it, Mr. Bob Erb, I remember him because he was a friend of the family, came in and said ‘everybody go pick a car out, because this is the last day of your job’. My poor dad was just devastated.

He went to a relative’s house that had a gun, and the relative called my mom, and I remember being home this day, and mom asked us older ones to take the little ones down to the basement, and dad came home with a gun and locked himself up in a room and was going to commit suicide. But my mom had gotten a priest, who was a friend of the family, my mom, and my older brother, who really got the brunt of caring for us, had a big responsibility. They got the gun away from him, but then he tried to jump from the second floor window, but they stopped him and pulled him back by just the end of his shirt. From there he went back into the hospital, depressed. He stayed in there for a little bit, but then he came back and pulled himself together.

We never had alcohol in the house ever since. He never went out, and he was really crabby for three years. My mom was a real trouper through everything. When things were real bad we couldn’t have friends over, because we didn’t know how my dad would be when he came home. My mom had told him, either it was all nine of us and her, or his drinking problem. And I just admire him, I know it was a very hard job for him, but he did it and I’m very proud of him; he realized what he put my mom through.
From there he kind of retired after this business, and that’s when they bought the Card and Gift Shop on Euclid Avenue, and it was OK, it was a means to get by and put food on the table.

**Romance and Marriage**

I met Bruce Urbanc, my husband of twenty-five years, through a friend of ours, Mike Fitzpatrick. Bruce and I went out on a blind date to dinner and dancing in downtown Cleveland, and it was wonderful. At the time Bruce was at John Carroll University, and working at Richmond Heights Hospital as a physical therapist. I did not know his dream was to become a doctor, he kind of just never told me. We dated, and I remember our second date, it was his birthday, July 13, and we were going to the zoo, and he was so cute, he came over in the ‘blue dragon’ car—it was this big old car, and he wanted to clean it to take us out on a date. This was our first big date, the two of us alone, and he was in the car-wash going through, and the window wouldn’t roll up, so the inside of the car was all wet, and when he came to my door to get me, he asked me to bring three towels, *(laughter)* so that I could sit on them. So that was our first big date, and it was so much fun.

We dated for a while, that was in 1976, and then he got a job, through my brother’s help, on the Great Lakes—my brothers worked on the Great Lakes. He came home one night, and he had my very close friend Susan that I went to grade school with, and her fiancé at the time, Bruce Lowe, who was also from England, which is where my husband is from, and said ‘why don’t you come over, I have called Bruce and Susan to meet us’, and I thought ‘Oh that would be fun’. We went down and met at McIntyre’s Tavern in downtown Cleveland, and he asked me to marry him there, but he had to leave in about ten hours, so between these ten hours he had to ask my dad-kind of talk quick plans, and then he had to hop back on the boat, and I said a quick goodbye to him and he was off on the Great Lakes again. Which gave me time to do all our wedding plans.

I think my father was happy to get rid of me, and said ‘yes you have my blessing’. At the time, Bruce’s mom lived in Florida, and we got to go down and meet her in Florida. So we got in the car, and he’s this one traveler, likes to keep going and going, and we surprised Elaine, *(potential mother-in-law)*, like two days early, for which I felt real bad, but it was nice being with her, and we were there for Christmas—it was very different, I had never been away from snow, or been on the beach area for Christmas, so that was a real change, but it was really wonderful, and of course being with Elaine, and meeting her, that was wonderful also.

We got married on August 12, 1977, in the chapel at John Carroll University in Cleveland. It turned out to be a nice day, the sun was shining, and I loved having it in that chapel, because Bruce had gone to college there. It was a beautiful setting with all the greenery and the ivy on the walls of the buildings. We had ordered flowers for the chapel, but also earlier that day, a priest had passed away, and his funeral was in this chapel. Well, they left more flowers, so it was just
gorgeous—the chapel was absolutely beautiful, just filled with all different kinds of flowers. And afterwards we had our reception right across the way, and we had Jack McGearry come, and he played the bagpipes, and led everybody into the reception, and that was wonderful.

We went to Toronto for our honeymoon, and Bruce and I had never been to Toronto. What a clean beautiful town! While we were there we read in the paper that there was going to be a parade; it was the Scottish Bagpipes Convention, they do this once a year, and have all these bagpipers come in from all over the world. We thought that would be wonderful, as we had just had them at our wedding, and here we are on our honeymoon. So, we hopped this bus to where the parade was in downtown Toronto. While we were on the bus, this reporter was there, and we were telling him we were on our honeymoon, and we’d just had bagpipes, (at the wedding) well, he interviewed us, and here we were in the Toronto paper about being on our honeymoon and going to see this parade of Scotsmen, and we were pretty excited about that.

Medical School and the USAF

Bruce was in the military then, and from there (Toronto) we went to Missouri, Kirksville, Missouri, so Bruce could start medical school. Poor Bruce was trying to break into medical school, and trying to set up a home for us, but we did it.

Kirksville, Missouri was this little town, really the whole town was the school itself, without the school the town probably wouldn’t be there. But it was a nice town, we got to know the people, we lived in this mobile home, and this neighbor across the way, Mildred, who has since passed away, just loved us, we were like her children. I mean, if we were out until twelve-thirty or one o’clock at night, she’d say to me the next morning, ‘I heard your car come in pretty late’ you know. And when we would go somewhere for a weekend to get out of town to go visit, she would keep track of our mobile home, and she was like our little watch dog over there, but she was wonderful. She got us to meet a lot of the people in the town, and that worked out fine.

Sarah (our daughter) was born in Kirksville in 1980, and Bruce graduated from medical school in 1981. When we went in to (the hospital) to have Sarah, Bruce had started his rotation in OB that night, so he was running down the hall to check the other babies, but he’d come back to me while I was in labor. She was the joy of our life, just a doll baby.

Tragedy Strikes

From Kirksville, we were on our way to England, to be stationed over there with the Air Force, and she (Sarah) came down with a bad cold. By the time we had got to Dayton, Doctor Warner (at Wright Patt. Base hospital) wanted to see her in the emergency room. So we pulled in there (WPAFB), and at this time Patrick, who was born in 1983, was dropped off at a friend’s house, and we went to the
emergency room at the Base Hospital. The pediatrician-neurologist looked at Sarah and said ‘I would like to run a CAT scan with her in the morning, she might have like a meningitis, or it could even be worse than that’. So I stayed in bed with Sarah because they wanted her up all night to watch her every hour to look at the back of her eyes, and check her blood pressure and everything. Bruce went to my friends house with Patrick, who at the time was eighteen months, and he stayed there to see to the baby, and I stayed with Sarah; they were going to call him if anything happened.

The next morning they gave her (Sarah) a sedative, and they brought us down to the X-ray room. Dr. Warner, her doctor, was over in the clinic, but they had a radio to talk back and forth to him. He told them (the radiologists) to look at the brain scan, and check her brain out. So they checked the brain, and he (Dr. Warner) told them to go over to the right to the brain stem, and here they found a Glioma brain stem tumor.

From there he (Dr. Warner) wanted her opened up and check that right away. His best friend, that he would recommend in Dayton, was on vacation, but he had another friend up in Cleveland, and we knew if we could get her to Cleveland, Patrick would be safe with our families up there. So they got her X-rays together, and they got a line open to run IV’s all the way. It was a three and a half hour trip from Wright Patterson Air Force Base to Cleveland Clinic Hospital, and they had said ‘they will be waiting for you in the Emergency Room’. Off we went and sang songs all the way, and it was the longest three and a half hours of our lives. We had Patrick in the baby seat, and Bruce up front driving with Sarah, and we had to stop one time to make sure the line was still open, so she wouldn’t have to have another shot when she got into the Cleveland Clinic.

We pulled into Cleveland Clinic, and it was probably about eight-thirty at night. While we were signing in, her surgeon decided her surgery would be at ten-thirty the next morning. My sister took Patrick and she left, and it was just Bruce and I and Sarah, and we just slept in her room, and they kept coming in and checking her during the night to check her IV and everything. She was pretty well sedated so she slept a lot, which was good, so she was comfortable. Then the next morning they came up to get her ready for surgery, and when they took her they said it would be a four to five hour surgery. I remember going down for lunch, and there was somebody there from the operating room, (digresses) Bruce and our families stayed upstairs, and I said ‘How’s everything going?’ and he said ‘I think you need to go back upstairs they probably will want to talk to you’. In the meantime Bruce was on his way down to get me. They had opened her up and found that it was in a place that it could not be removed because it was by the nerves and would do a lot of damage to the brain and nerves, and they closed her back up, so it was a very short surgery.

We recuperated in Cleveland about three and a half weeks. In the meantime, poor Bruce had to scramble for a location for a home. We had no furniture; it was in a
warehouse to be shipped to England. Fortunately, they (USAF) did put a hold on that before it had left the states.

So we finally got to go back to Dayton (WPAFB), which was the closest place to our families if they came down to help, or just to be there, they could come and visit. We rented a house in Dayton, and Sarah went through radiation, and I remember it was during the winter, and she lost all her little hair, and her little appetite was so thrown off by the steroids and all her medication.

She (Sarah) didn’t get any better, she pretty much stayed the same. At this point, with Bruce taking this job at the Base, one of the stipulations was that he had to test a lot of the equipment, so he had to go to different hospitals, and fly and travel. It was just as hard for him, being away, as it was for me being there all the time, but at the time all I lived on was cigarettes and Pepsi; one cigarette after another, it was a terrible diet, but I didn’t have any time or take the time for me, it was for Sarah, because I knew my time was short with her. But also, I had to take time for my little buddy there, Patrick, and have some toy time with him and get those two together so he’d remember Sarah; he was pretty young, but he does remember her through stories.

She did not get any better, she had had a rest between Radiation, and we were going to talk about Chemo when she took a turn for the worse, and I was feeling pretty well drained, Bruce was gone, the cleaning lady was there taking care of Patrick, and Sarah was napping—I had been up with her all night; she had got to the point where we had to stay with her in the bedroom, because she was scared, and I can understand why she was scared. But I sat on the edge of my bed that day, and I had two cigarettes in my mouth that I had lit, and I thought ‘this is ridiculous, I don’t even know what I’m doing here’. The Doctor had always said ‘Holly, we are here so you can get rest’, but I was just a super-mom and thought, ‘No, I’m gonna do this’... he had said ‘all you have to do is call and say it’s time, and just bring her in and rest, or you go home and rest or sleep in the hospital there’, so with these two cigarettes I thought, ‘it’s time’.

I called Dr. Warner, and said ‘it’s time’, and he said ‘I’m home right now, do you have a way to get in or do you need an ambulance. Bruce wasn’t at home, but I did actually call him to say I was taking Sarah to the hospital. And that’s the last time she came home. I did go back (home) because I wanted to be with Pat, and I did sleep. The baby sitter—I think I asked her, or maybe somebody came and stayed with Patrick, and I slept for, it seemed like two days, but I know it probably wasn’t that, and then got back to Sarah at the hospital. While Sarah was in the hospital, we watched the gradual ‘shutdown’, as they call it, of the liver and the kidneys and the body, which was very hard.

Sarah died on April 28, 1985. I remember her last breath, but all I could think of was ‘it’s time for her to go; children should not have to go through this’, because we were at a point where for her lungs to stay clear, they had to sit her up and clap her back, and she just would cry, because I’m sure they were doing it to make her...
comfortable, but she wasn’t comfortable, she was in pain—you could tell. But poor Elaine had gotten a call in Cleveland, and drove up here, and had just arrived as Sarah passed away, so she was there with us. But I prayed, and I never thought I would pray like this for a child, but it was like ‘God, take her now, there is no reason she should live like this; she has lived her life, and was such a unique child’. I can understand why He was short of angels, because she (Sarah) was one. I mean this little girl was just unbelievable, just a joy. Anyway, when she passed away we went back to Cleveland, and I knew our family would be there for us during the funeral.

Life Goes On

So you go through your grieving, and Bruce being a Flight Surgeon, continued flying a lot, and testing equipment, and here I was with this little frisky guy Patrick, who was born August 3, 1983. I had friends that came over for play groups, it’s not like he didn’t play; my close friends knew I felt comfortable there, or they would take Patrick for play group at their house for the day. It was pretty much a year after Sarah had died, and I looked at him (Patrick) and I thought, you know, here God gave us this little cutie pie that has just been a gem. Because of what he went through when Sarah was ill; different babysitters, different family members, traveling on the roads back and forth, and hospitals; he was so little, and he adjusted fine.

But my biggest fear was, ‘will Patrick live to his fifth birthday, will he get to his fifth birthday’? And I remember what a relief it was when his fifth birthday came, and I thought ‘O my God! He’s going to make it! he’s going to make it! Please God, don’t take him, we’ll take good care of him’. And, you know, I could get stronger, going through my grieving as Patrick passed his fifth birthday. I looked at him this one day, and I thought ‘let’s go’, so I started my trips out to the park one day for a few hours, and the next day. I kind of let him go a little bit more, you know, I was this over protective mom, that if he fell on his head I’d think ‘O my God, he’s going to have a tumor’. If he threw up, ‘O my God, he has a tumor’. Bruce was wonderful, being a physician, he has always told me to go with my gut feeling, if I feel I need another doctor anytime to check, please do, which I thank him for, not that I would ever doubt him, but being so close to the situation I didn’t know if he would see if there was a problem. But anyway, a couple of times I took him (Patrick) to Children’s, (Hospital) because his hearing was kind of bad, but he has little tiny canals, like Sarah did, and he’s fine, he’s a healthy, almost twenty-year old today. But I could see when he turned five, it was just a wonderful day, and as he turned five and a half and six I let him go on his bike a little bit farther, and I was spreading my wings as he was spreading his wings, it was kind of neat.

For Bruce and me, I don’t think there’s a greater pain. I’ve lost my mother, I’ve lost my father, but there’s something about… I remember when Sarah died and my father looked at me and said ‘I don’t know what to say, I never thought I would have to bury one of my children’s children’. We all felt the same way, you
know, everybody was so wonderful in helping us going through our grieving period.

But like I tell people, it has really taught me to reach out to quite a few people here in town who have lost a child, I know one through a gunshot wound, one through a terrible illness. And for some reason, it has taught, or helped me to reach out to them. I get them a card and a rose, and tell them ‘I am here for you’, and I don’t bother them for a little bit, but I will call them, like a month later. The words I tell them, ‘you’ll never get over this, everyone tells you it will get better, but it doesn’t, you live with that pain. That heart is like ripped in half, I visualize this heart with a big crack right down the middle; but I am living with that heart, you know, which is OK, you’ll learn how to live with it’. That’s what I tell people.
A Taped Interview with Holly Urbane

I am interviewing my daughter-in-law, Holly Urbane. This is for my Oral History class with Dr. Marjorie McLellan, February 19th, 2003.

Elaine. Alright Holly. Start wherever you want to.

Holly. Growing up?

Elaine. Growing up, yes.

Holly. I was born in Cleveland December 26th, 1948. My mother was at a holiday party with her physician there, when she went into labor, and they left there and they delivered me. I was born the day after Christmas, and my real name is Mary Carole—my nickname is Holly. My grandmother Corinne, my mother’s mother, wanted to call me Poinsettia, which I am very glad she didn’t.

My parents are Marjorie Killene McGrath, and Phillip McGrath.

My dad’s family, there was a very large group of them, there were eight in his family, and my mom had two sisters and two brothers. They have both passed away now, (mother and father) and they both had Irish backgrounds.

My dad was a distributor for Budweiser at Cleveland. He ran the warehouse for many years until it burned down. My mom was a teacher, but she also gave birth to nine of us, and she stayed at home for that, and took care of us. After two children, she stayed at home, which was a full-time job being a mother.

I grew up in Cleveland, and went to grade school at St. Anne’s for two years. Then we moved over to Euclid, Ohio—I went to Holy Cross Grade School there,
second grade through eighth grade, graduated eighth grade there. And from there I went to St. Peter's High School in Cleveland; it was in a downtown area. I went there because they had Notre Dame Sisters. I had to take a bus ride for twenty-five minutes to downtown, but it was a wonderful location because I worked after school part-time at a couple of office jobs, and that's where I learned a lot about business, and taking courses and everything.

So, after I graduated High School I worked for Addressograph-Multigraph in secretarial position. It was a wonderful job, you started off lower-I started in the mail room there to get my summer job there, and then I went in, *(full-time)* and moved up the ranks there. We went on strike a couple of times while I was there, which I enjoyed because I was single, and lived in an apartment with some girlfriends, so we would always enjoy that time off, but we did feel very bad for those families who had children and homes and had to make do.

Then they closed up and I went to work for Blue Cross/Blue Shield in downtown Cleveland in secretarial work, which was totally different from Addressograph-Multigraph. Learning the insurance business is quite an ordeal, and all the different insurances with the Medicare and Medicaid, so it was a learning experience.

Elaine. How long did you stay there, Holly?

Holly. I was there for five years. Five years at Addressograph, and five years at Blue Cross/Blue Shield in Cleveland. The job was on East Ninth Street, and my parents owned a card and gift shop after my dad retired from Anheuser-Busch,
right down the street from East 9th Street, so I would walk down the street and have lunch with my sisters or my mom, and that was kind of a fun thing. Also I worked... whenever you worked—if you got up and went to work at Blue Cross, whenever you put your eight hours in you could leave. It was this new testing procedure and it was wonderful, because I would be on the bus at six, and I’d be finished work at two o’clock, and at home or relaxing on the beach relaxing and have the whole afternoon. So that was fun.

Elaine. Oh, you lived by the beach?

Holly. I lived in Cleveland, on Lakeshore Boulevard, and we were two houses from the lake (Erie) so it was quite an experience. I really love to be near water—it’s my spiritual time. When I get hyper-active I just like to walk along the beach; even now, when I go back to my family home, my brother’s there with his wife, I love to walk along the beach—I really enjoy it. It’s just beautiful seeing the sailboats and the Regatta’s on Sundays. We had a big park there, and many Sundays and Saturdays we’d have picnic baskets and go down there on the beach. My mom was kind of the neighborhood life-guard; she would pack jars of peanut butter and jelly and bread, and all of us had to take a turn and fix lemonade or Kool-Aid, and here we’d all have to hump this stuff, carrying it in baskets down to the beach, which was just at the end of our road. We ended up with all the other neighborhood kids; we would make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and we’d have to sit out and rest an hour so we wouldn’t get cramps after our lunch, and play in the playground. But she would watch all of us and be the lifeguard, and that was ’til about four o’clock in the afternoon.
We had to get all our chores done, and she was very big on reading, and you had to join the Summer Reading Program, so that had to all be finished before we left at ten o’clock in the morning (laughter) for a day at the beach. She (mom) really enjoyed that. We all have stories of them, (days at the beach) and we look back at them, the different bathing suits; the bikinis and other styles, and that’s when I learned how to swim. My brothers took me out on a pier and pushed me in the water, and said ‘now get back in’. But I did learn how to swim, and I do love water, and that’s probably from growing up so close to it.

111 My dad worked very hard, sometimes two jobs; he wasn’t around a lot, because he was working and taking care of nine children. He also had a bad drinking problem, and almost committed suicide. Those are very bad times in my life, but we all grew together, and took care of the younger ones. The younger ones probably don’t remember some of the things that went on in our lives.

Elaine. Do you want to talk about your dad’s…?

120 Holly. Oh sure. He was just this little Irish man, working at Budweiser, probably didn’t help him. But that was the start of it, and I just admire my mom, because she stuck with him the whole time-through good times and bad times.

125 He took a salesman’s job, and he was a wonderful salesman because he was so full of Blarney, being an Irishman. He had a wonderful job in Willoughby, which was a little distance away from our home. But again, his wish was to keep us all in the Catholic Grade Schools, and High Schools, and that was expensive at the time, having nine of us in the school system. So it was a big stress to him, but my
mom would work part-time jobs, or go in and sub, (*substitute teach*) and I remember during Christmas-time my dad got a job at the Post Office; it was Christmas through Tax time separating the mail, downtown Cleveland. And the older ones would take care of the younger ones and just have to work out cooking and cleaning and everything.

Well, my dad’s problem starting off social drinking, and got worse and worse, and he left the house one day—my mom took him, and she came back alone, and we didn’t know where he was. I was fifteen when this happened, and she said he was in a hospital in downtown Cleveland. He was in the Alcohol Department, or section, where they have them dry out, and they kept him in there until he felt comfortable coming out. Well, then he got out of the hospital, and did OK, and he had the salesman job. Then one day, the man that owned it, Mr. Bob Erb, I remember him because he was a friend of the family, came in and said ‘everybody go pick a car out, because this is the last day of your job’. My poor dad was just devastated. He went to a relative’s house that had a gun, and the relative called my mom, and I remember being home this day, and mom asked us older ones to take the little ones down to the basement, and dad came home with a gun and locked himself up in a room and was going to commit suicide. But my mom had gotten a priest who was a friend of the family, and my mom, and unfortunately my older brother who really got the brunt of really caring for us, my father and my mother, he had a big responsibility. He did not pull the trigger on the gun; they got the gun away from him, but then he tried to jump from the second floor window outside, but they stopped him and pulled him back by just
the end of his shirt. From there he went back into the hospital, depressed. He stayed in there for a little bit, but then he came back and pulled himself together.

We never had alcohol in the house ever since. He never went out, and he was really crabby for three years. I’m sure it was going through everything in his system, but he did great and I admired him. My mom was a real trouper. I grew up for a few years there, when things were real bad; we couldn’t have friends over, because we didn’t know how my dad would be when he came home. We had a pub at the end of the street, and he really got to be friends with all of those people, unfortunately, and there were many nights he would park his car there, sit up there for a few hours and then walk home. Thank God he didn’t drive. But then in the morning we’d have to get up and get a car, he sent one of us to go get the car. So it was a convenience for him at the corner pub.

He sacrificed a lot, but he came to reality I think. My mom had told him, either it was all nine of us and her, or his drinking problem. And I just admire him, I know it was a very hard job for him, but he did it and I’m very proud of him. Then we’ve had other family and friends, and it was wonderful, because they would come to my dad to ask him to help take care of them. To go talk to them, and that was really unique, because the more he got involved in that, the better he felt himself, and the more he realized what he put my mom through. I don’t feel he put us through major, because we were all so little, and my brothers and sisters hid that from us. From there he kind of retired after this business, and that’s when they bought the Card and Gift Shop on Euclid Avenue, and it was OK, it was means to get by and put food on the table. The rent was high being on Euclid and
East Ninth Street in downtown Cleveland, but he had a chance to buy it and did it, and it was a good income for the both of them.

When I worked at Blue Cross/Blue Shield, I met Bruce, my husband of twenty-five years; I met him through a friend of ours, Mike Fitzpatrick. Bruce and I went out on a blind date to downtown Cleveland. The bar/dance hall isn’t there any more, but Crate and Barrel it was called, and we had so much fun that night, it was wonderful. At the time Bruce was at John Carroll University, and working at Richmond Heights Hospital as a physical therapist. I did not know his dream was to become a doctor, he kind of just never told me. We dated, and I remember our second date, it was his birthday, July 13, and we were going to the zoo, and he was so cute, he came over in the ‘blue dragon’ car, it was this big car, and he wanted to clean it to take us out on a date. This was our first big date, the two of us alone, and he was in the car-wash going through, and the window wouldn’t roll down, so the inside of the car was all wet, and when he came to my door to get me, he asked me to bring three towels, (laughter) so that I could sit on them. So that was our first big date, and it was so much fun. We went to the Brown Derby, in Cleveland Heights, and I had a wonderful dinner—it was really a nice date.

We dated for a while, that was in 1976, and then he got a job, through my brother’s help, on the Great Lakes—my brothers worked on the Great Lakes. When you have eight brothers and sisters, everybody has different mix and match jobs all over. But my brothers got him the job, and he made a lot of money and was gone a lot, but he came home one night, and he had my very close friend Susan that I went to grade school with, and her fiancé at the time, Bruce Lowe,
who was also from England, which is where my husband is from. (digresses) He met me after work, I was working at Blue Cross/Blue shield, and said 'why don’t you come over, I have called Bruce and Susan to meet us’, and I thought ‘Oh that would be fun’. We went down and met at McIntyre’s Tavern in downtown Cleveland. I came after work, and Susan came after work, and met Bruce (Lowe), and Bruce (Urbanc) there. Well, he asked me to marry him there, and it was so cute, but he had to leave in about ten hours, so between these ten hours he had to ask my dad-kind of, talk quick plans, and then he had to hop back on the boat, and I said a quick goodbye to him and he was off on the Great Lakes again. Which gave me time to do all our wedding plans.

Elaine. So, he did it the conventional way, asking your father

Holly. Yes he did! I think my father was happy to get rid of me, and said ‘yes you have my blessing’. (digresses) So, we went to the house and told my mom and dad. And at the time, Bruce’s mom lived in Florida, and we got to go down and meet her in Florida, which I loved Florida. So we got in the car, and he’s this one traveler, likes to keep going and going, and we surprised Elaine, (potential mother-in-law), like two days early, for which I felt real bad, but it was nice being with her, and we were there for Christmas—it was very different, I had never been away from snow, or been on the beach area for Christmas, so that was a real change, but it was really wonderful, and of course being with Elaine, and meeting her, that was wonderful also.
We got married in August 12, 1977. It was a very nice day, it rained in the morning, and my mom and I were driving. I had those big pink curlers in my hair, and I had this old ‘bomb’, and we were driving, my wedding dress in the back; we were going up early so I could get dressed, meet the bridesmaids and Elaine, and all of us were at the church, that’s where I changed, because we had a reception right across the hall from the chapel we got married in. But we were going up there, and I was just zooming, and here come the tracks (gates) coming down from the side of the train tracks to stop us, and I went through both of them, and my mom was like, ‘Oh my gosh! You’ve got to get to your wedding, but slow down here, and be cautious. We had a beautiful wedding that day, which turned out to be a nice day, the sun was shining, and I loved having it in the chapel that we had. We had ordered flowers for the chapel, but also earlier that day, a priest had passed away, and his funeral was in this chapel. Well, they left more flowers, so it was just gorgeous—the chapel was absolutely beautiful, just filled with all different kinds of flowers. And afterwards we had our reception right across the way, and we had Jack McGearry come, and he played the bagpipes, and brought everybody into the reception, and that was wonderful.

Elaine. Where was the chapel Holly?

Holly. At John Carroll University. I’m really glad we got married there, because Bruce went to college there, and it was just a beautiful setting—the greenery and the ivy on the building. It was just a nice location.
From there we went to Toronto for our honeymoon, and it was wonderful. Bruce and I had never been to Toronto, and we drove up there and stayed. What a clean beautiful town! While we were there we read in the paper that there was going to be this parade; it was the Scottish Bagpipes Convention, they do this once a year, and have all these bagpipes come in from all over the world. We thought that would be wonderful, as we had just had them at our wedding, and here we are on our honeymoon. So, we hopped this bus to where the parade was in downtown Toronto. While we were on the bus, this reporter was there, and we were telling him we were on our honeymoon, and we’d just had bagpipes, *(at the wedding)* well, he interviewed us, and here we were in the Toronto paper about being on our honeymoon and going to see this parade of Scotsmen, and we were pretty *excited about* that.

Bruce was in the military then, and from there *(Toronto)* we went to Missouri, Kirksville, Missouri, so Bruce could start medical school. The way he told me about going to medical school was that he had a dream about becoming a physician, and I knew he had worked at Richmond Heights Hospital, but he was out on the Great Lakes boats when he applied, which I didn’t know to school at Kirksville. He had a friend that was going to school there, and he called me one day on a ship-to-shore phone call, which meant that everybody on the boat could hear what was being said, because they were stranded on the ice on Lake Michigan. So he said to me ‘Holl, I made it into Kirksville for medical school’, and I said ‘Oh, that is so exciting’ and he said ‘pack your bags, we’re going to get married and move out to Missouri’. Well, everybody was cheering on the boat.
and so excited for him. So that’s when we packed up our little red car, a Chevette, and headed up to Missouri with whatever we could. Now our furniture that we had was being shipped, we got a furniture company to move that. Well, we get down to Missouri, and we had already purchased our mobile home and, one week—no furniture, Bruce had to start school. People lent us a blow-up bed, and I went to Wal-Mart, I didn’t want to buy a lot because our furniture was coming. Still, our wedding gifts, we hadn’t opened all of those yet, so we went out and bought a couple of little benches and varnished them, then the next week here again, no furniture. The weather was nice, we just picnicked a lot, and we bought a grill, (laughter) so we grilled out a lot. It was kind of nice, because a lot of the friends we had met through the Freshman Orientation, some of them had just got married around when we did, but they had furniture. Finally the furniture came, and poor Bruce trying to break into medical school, and trying to set up a home for us, but we did it and got through it, but that was a real experience.

Kirksville, Missouri was this little town, really the whole town was the school itself, without the school the town probably wouldn’t be there. But it was a nice town, we got to know the people, we lived in this mobile home, and this neighbor across the way, Mildred, who has since passed away, just loved us, we were like her children. I mean, if we were out until twelve-thirty or one o’clock at night, she’d say to me the next morning: ‘I heard your car come in pretty late’ you know. And when we would go somewhere for a weekend to get out of town to go visit, she would keep track of our mobile home, and she was like our little watch
dog over there, but she was wonderful. She got us to meet a lot of the people in
the town, and that worked out fine.

Elaine. And wasn’t Kirksville a lot like Sidney?

Holly. Kirksville was a lot like Sidney, the town square, the people, the Farmer’s
Market on Saturday. You have to drive an hour, an hour and a half to the bigger
towns, the art museums. I think Sidney is a little bit bigger, but the town reminds
me a lot about Kirksville, that’s probably why we enjoy living here.

Elaine. Is that where you started your family?

Holly. No we were at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, and that’s where we had
our daughter Sarah. Sarah Ellen was born on May 27, 1980. She was a big baby,
a nine-pounder... No wait! I’m sorry! Sarah was born in Kirksville in 1980, and
Bruce graduated from medical school in 1981. When we went in to have Sarah—I
was very big with Sarah, and Bruce had started his rotation in OB that night, so he
was running down the hall to check the other babies, but he’d come back to me
while I was in labor. I had friends there that were helping me, then he’d run back
down the hall when they called him, and then come back to our room. At one
point when we first went in, they went to prepare a heart monitor and said ‘Oh,
my gosh, there are twins! and we both looked at each other and said ‘Oh no! We
have to go and get another crib for the bedroom and all that stuff’. But no, it must
have been an echo from her, and it wasn’t a twin, she was just a beautiful nine-
pound baby girl. She was the joy of our life, just a doll baby.
From Kirksville, we moved to Wright Patterson. As we moved to...really we were going over to...let me see now, how did that go...we were on our way to England...Sarah passed away April 28, 1985. We were on our way to England...she came down with a bad cold, we were in Missouri and we had packed her up, she was taking antibiotics. By the time we had got to Dayton,(digresses) on our way to Cleveland to say goodbye to Elaine and my family, as we were going over to England to be stationed over there with the Air Force...by the time we got in to Dayton Dr. Warner wanted to see her in the emergency room. So we pulled in there (WPAFB) I dropped Patrick (son) off at a friends house, (digresses) at this time Patrick, he was born in 1983, and I dropped him off at a friends house, and we went there (hospital on base) to the emergency room, and the pediatrician neurologist looked at Sarah and said 'I would like to run a CAT scan with her in the morning, she might have like a meningitis, or it could even be worse than that'. So I stayed in bed with Sarah because they wanted her up all night to watch her every hour to look at the back of her eyes, and check her blood pressure and everything. Bruce went to my friends house with Patrick, who at the time was eighteen months, and he stayed right there with the to see to the baby, and I stayed with Sarah, and they were going to call him if anything happened. The next morning they gave her a sedative, and they brought us down to the X-ray room, and Dr. Warner, her doctor, was over in the clinic, but they had a radio to talk back and forth to them. He told them (the radiologists) to look at the brain scan, and check her brain out. So they checked the brain, and he
(Dr. Warner) told them to go over to the right to the brain stem, and here they found a Glioma brain stem tumor.

Elaine. What did they call it?

Holly. Glioma brain-stem tumor. From there he (Dr. Warner) wanted her opened up and check that right away. His best friend, that he would recommend in Dayton, was on vacation, but he had another friend up in Cleveland, and we knew if we could get her to Cleveland, Patrick would be safe with our families up there.

So they got her X-rays together, and they got a line open to run IV’s all the way. It was a three and a half hour trip from Wright Patterson Air Force Base to Cleveland Clinic Hospital, and they had said ‘they will be waiting for you in the Emergency Room’. Off we went and sang songs all the way, and it was the longest three and a half hours of our lives. We had Patrick in the baby seat, and Bruce up front driving with Sarah, and we had to stop one time to make sure the line was still open, so she wouldn’t have to have another shot when she got into the Cleveland Clinic.

We pulled into Cleveland Clinic, and it was probably about eight-thirty at night. I called my sister to pick up Patrick, and so she got to see Sarah. While we were signing in, her surgeon decided her surgery would be at ten-thirty the next morning. My sister took Patrick and she left, and it was just Bruce and I and Sarah, and we just slept in her room, and they kept coming in and checking her during the night to check her IV and everything. She was pretty well sedated so she slept a lot, which was good, so she was comfortable. Then the next morning
they came up to get her ready for surgery, and when they took her they said it would be a four to five hour surgery. I remember going down for lunch, and there was somebody there from the operating room, (digresses) Bruce and our families stayed upstairs, and I said ‘How’s everything going?’ and he said ‘I think you need to go back upstairs they probably will want to talk to you’. In the meantime Bruce was on his way down to get me. They had opened her up and found that it was in a place that it could not be removed because it was by the nerves and would do a lot of damage to the brain and nerves, and they closed her back up, so it was a very short surgery.

She (Sarah) kind of recuperated from that, but how do you explain to an almost five year old that she has this thing, this tumor, this bad thing in your brain. It’s hard to explain, I knew she wouldn’t understand, and I wanted to be honest with her. We just explained to her that ‘you have this tumor, but we are going to make you as comfortable as we can so you don’t hurt’, that was my biggest, my main concern for her. ‘We hope maybe this tumor will go away, and we are going to do these different things to help take this tumor away’.

From Cleveland Clinic we recuperated in Cleveland about three and a half weeks. In the meantime, poor Bruce had to scramble for a location for a home. We had no furniture again, that was in a warehouse to be shipped to England. Fortunately, they did put a hold on that before it had left the states, but it was still in the warehouse, so that was no big deal, we could have lived in a hotel.
So we finally got to go back to Dayton (WPAFB) which was the closest again to our families if they came down to help, or just to be there, they could come and visit. We rented a house in Dayton, and Sarah went through radiation, and I remember it was during the winter time, and she lost all her little hair, and her favorite treat was... (digresses) she was on steroids to help keep the pressure down, and she gained a lot of weight, she was very heavy to carry, but it was worth every energy to carry her. When you are on steroids, you mention a food and you think about that; at least when you are four and a half, almost five you do. Someone would mention chip dip, and she would think of chip dip for that day, that whole day was a chip dip day. You would try to throw in carrots and broccoli so that she could dip it in the chip dip to have something healthy for her. Her little appetite, and she was a wonderful eater, was so thrown off by the steroids and all her medication.

So we moved to Huber Heights, and Patrick was busted out of his crib at this time. We had to hire a cleaning lady at this time, and I had to take Sarah to her radiation treatments down in Kettering. Well, it was December, and some days the roads were real bad, but we made it, and got through the winter months. She (Sarah) didn’t get any better, she pretty much stayed the same. At this point, with Bruce taking this job at the Base, one of the stipulations was that he had to test a lot of the equipment, so he had to go to different hospitals, and fly and travel. It was just as hard for him, being away, as it was for me being there all the time, but at the time all I lived on was cigarettes and Pepsi; one cigarette after another, it was a terrible diet, but I didn’t have any time or take the time for me, it was for
Sarah, because I knew my time was short with her. But also, I had to take time for my little buddy there, Patrick, and have some toy time with him and get those two together so he’d remember Sarah; he was pretty young, but he does remember her through stories.

She did not get any better, and we were talking about Chemo (therpay); she had had a rest between Radiation, and we were going to talk about Chemo when she took a turn for the worse, and I was feeling pretty well drained, and I was sitting on the edge of my bed, Bruce was gone, the cleaning lady was there taking care of Patrick, and Sarah was napping—I had been up with her all night; she had got to the point where we had to stay with her in the bedroom, which was fine, because she was scared, and I can understand why she was scared. But I sat on the edge of my bed that day, and I had two cigarettes in my mouth that I had lit, and I thought ‘this is ridiculous, I don’t even know what I’m doing here’. I called the Doctor, (digresses) because he had always said ‘Holly, we are here so you can get rest’, but I was just a super-mom and thought, ‘No, I’m gonna do this’ and I called, (digresses)… he had said ‘all you have to do is call and say it’s time, and just bring her in and rest, or you go home and rest or sleep in the hospital there’, so with these two cigarettes I thought, ‘it’s time’. So I called Dr. Warner, and said ‘it’s time’, and he said ‘I’m home right now, do you have a way to get in or do you need an ambulance. Bruce wasn’t at home, but I did actually call him to say I was taking Sarah to the hospital. And that’s the last time she came home. I did go back because I wanted to be with Pat, and I did sleep. The baby sitter—I think I asked her, or maybe somebody came and stayed with Patrick, and I slept
for, it seemed like two days, but I know it probably wasn’t that, and then got back to Sarah at the hospital. While Sarah was in the hospital, we watched the gradual shut-down, as they call it, of the liver and the kidneys and the body, which was very hard. I remember her last breath, but all I could think of was ‘it’s time for her to go; children should not have to go through this, because we were at a point where for her lungs to stay clear, they had to sit her up and clap her back, and she just would cry, because I’m sure they were doing it to make her comfortable, but she wasn’t comfortable, she was in pain-you could tell. But poor Elaine had gotten a call in Cleveland, and drove up here, and had just gotten there as Sarah passed away, so she was there with us. But I prayed, and I never thought I would pray like this for a child, but it was like ‘God, take her now, there is no reason she should live like this; she has lived her life, and was such a unique child’. I can understand why He was short of angels, because she (Sarah) was one.

From the many people she had touched, to being a child of ours, disciplining and caring for her brother-I mean this little girl was just unbelievable, just a joy. Anyway, she passed away and we went back to Cleveland, because all the family was there, and I didn’t feel they were all coming here for the funeral, and I knew that’s who would be there for us during the funeral would be our family Elaine. When did she pass away Holly?

Holly. She died on April 28, 1985, right before her fifth birthday, because she probably would have gone to school, and she really wanted to go to school—I’m sure she got to go to school. And in the meantime I had this little guy, Patrick
who was born August 3, 1983, and I remember being home with Bruce, we were
stationed now in Dayton, and stayed there.

Elaine. This was at Wright Patterson?

Holly. Wright Patterson Air Force Base—yes! And Bruce was a Flight Surgeon,
and continued flying a lot, and testing equipment. I remember going through my
grieving. I guess, I kept this little guy in, and I remember one day, it was probably
like a year after Sarah passed away, it was close to May, and I remember looking
at this little guy, and it was a beautiful day... (digresses) and really I had been in
the house a lot, or if we went out it would be just quick as I didn’t feel I wanted to
explain things to people why Sarah passed away—I mean we were in a couple of
situations that we walked out as a family, Patrick, Bruce and I, to the park, and
someone said ‘did you know that little girl that just died up the road’. It was like,
‘Bruce, I’ve got to run home and take care of this’ (something) She probably
didn’t mean anything, but it was like, ‘Yeah that’s our child, but we really don’t
want to talk about it’.

So you go through your grieving, and Bruce traveled a lot, and here I was with
this little frisky guy. I had friends that came over for play groups, it’s not like he
didn’t play; my close friends knew I felt comfortable there, or they would take
Patrick to the day for play group at their house, which was awesome. It was
pretty much a year after Sarah had died, and with me enjoying the outside, and I
looked at him (Patrick) and I thought, you know, here God gave us this little cutie
pie that has just been a gem, adjusting so well, and that is probably why Patrick is
so easy today, because of what he went through when Sarah was ill, different babysitters, different family members, traveling on the roads back and forth, and hospitals, but he was little, and he adjusted fine.

I looked at him this one day, and I thought ‘let’s go’, so I started my trips out to the park for one day for a few hours, and the next day. But my biggest fear was, ‘will Patrick live to his fifth birthday, will he get to his fifth birthday’? And I remember what a relief it was when his fifth birthday came, and I thought ‘O my God! He’s going to make it, He’s going to make it! Please God, don’t take him, we’ll take good care of him’. And, you know, I could get stronger, going through my grieving as Patrick passed his fifth birthday. I kind of let him go a little bit more, you know, I was this over protective mom, that if he fell on his head I’d think ‘O my God, he’s going to have a tumor’. If he threw up, ‘O my God, he has a tumor’. Bruce was wonderful, being a physician he has always told me to go with my gut feeling, if I feel I need another doctor anytime to check, please do, which I thank him for, not that I would ever doubt him, but being so close to the situation I didn’t know if he would see if there was a problem. But anyway, a couple of times I took him to Children’s, (Hospital) because his hearing was kind of bad, but he has little tiny canals, like Sarah did, and he’s fine, he’s a healthy, almost twenty-year old today. But I could see when he turned five, it was just a wonderful day, and as he turned five and a half and six I let him go on his bike a little bit farther, and I was spreading my wings as he was spreading his wings, it was kind of neat.

Elaine. It was kind of a changing point for you.
Holly. Yes, it was! It was for Bruce and me. I don’t think there’s a greater pain. I’ve lost my mother, I’ve lost my father, but there’s something about...(digresses)

Now remember when Sarah died, they gave us a plot, a family plot, and my father looked at me and said ‘I don’t know what to say, I never thought I would have to bury one of my children’s children’. Which we all felt the same way, you know, everybody was so wonderful in helping us going through our grieving period. But like I tell people, it has really taught me to reach out to quite a few people here in town who have lost a child, I know one through a gunshot wound, one through a terrible illness. And for some reason, it has taught, or helped me to reach out to them. I get them a card and a rose, and tell them ‘I am here for you’, and I don’t bother them for a little bit, but I will call them, like a month later. The words I tell them, ‘you’ll never get over this, everyone tells you it will get better, but it doesn’t, you live with that pain. That heart is like ripped in half, I visualize this heart with a big crack right down the middle; but I am living with that heart, you know, which is OK, you’ll learn how to live with it’. That’s what I tell people.

Elaine. Do you need a break Holly?

Holly. Yes, I do, I just need a sip of water...(continued)... My mom passed away January 30, 1990, she was sixty-nine years old. She died of Colon Cancer, which has made all of us aware of getting tests, and taking care of yourself. She had signs of Colon Cancer there, but chose to ignore it, unfortunately, as she’d still be here today, but it made us all become better at taking care of ourselves. My dad passed away February 23, 2000, at eighty years old. We had a wonderful mass for him; we even had a toast to him after, which I am sure he would have enjoyed.
I have eight brothers and sisters-each one is unique. Phil, the oldest, he’s fifty-five, he’s divorced, and has three children. Phil took the brunt of everything along with my mom, he had a very tough life. He was the first one to graduate from High School—he went to Viet Nam, had a very ugly experience there, and came back took care of, at that time, a bit of a dysfunctional family, with an alcoholic father, and worked two jobs, helped take care of us; he had a lot on his back. He became a detective; which didn’t help at all with his problems, I think it really took him for a loop. He’s retired now, and divorced; he chooses not to talk to anybody but myself and the rest of the family, and there’s a lot of reasons why, but it’s OK, he’ll work things out; at least he’s keeping in touch.

Then I have a sister Corinne, we call her Queen, and she is the ‘Queen’, she’s always been the ‘Queen’. She rules the roost, everything has to get approved by the Queen. Even though my parents are dead, she’s still the Queen, they all check in with her. She’s wonderful, and raised five wonderful boys who have been roll models for all our children—we always tell her that. Three of the boys are married, and she has had her first grandchild. Pretty level headed. She also took care of us along with my brother Phil, but not as much as Phil did. Has a good attitude on life, and has just quit smoking, which is a new adventure for her.

The next in the line-up is myself, Holly, I am fifty-three, and I’m the third one in line. I do a lot of volunteer work here in the Community of Sidney. Caring at Christmas that we have been running for hospice, and that we have now raised a hundred and seventy thousand dollars in ten years for Wilson Hospital. They just had a dinner for us—it was wonderful! It’s just this little mom and pop team, four
of us, we've all had hospice in our lives that we had to use. We ask people to
donate instead of buying Christmas cards here locally, we ask them to donate the
Christmas Card money and stamps, and we take that money and donate it to
hospice, and we probably raise $25,000 a year. We get all the names of the
people, and do a 'Seasons Greeting' in our little Sidney paper. But it is really
unique, and our first year we started out, we did $5,000, but now we are up to
$25,000, and we even have someone who donates $5,000, and hands me a check
every year. This takes care of all that your insurance doesn't, having your nurses
come in throughout the night. That's a lot of hospice time that the nurses take
care of for the families.

Elaine. That is wonderful!

Holly. It is. Then I am on the board at Clear Creek Farm, and Clear Creek Farm
is this hidden secret in Sidney; they asked me to be on the board two years ago,
and I absolutely love it. It is out on Fair Road, and it's this home for children. It
is two beautiful homes from the Robinson family, who started this years ago.
They built these two beautiful homes, and they have eight children in one home,
and seven children in the other. There are two children, brother and sister, and
mom and dad were killed in a train crash, and grandma and grandpa had them, but
they were getting too old for that. So we have them in our Clear Creek Home,
and they have house parents, they go to church, and they are a family unit, and it's
just wonderful. I do a lot of little things in the two years I have been there, and
recently Sidney Gas Company, a friend of mine runs it, got them all ballet tickets.
I have another friend that gives them all baseball tickets. My job, I feel, is to get
them out of the house to go on field trips when I can, and find people to sponsor them. That’s my individual contribution, and I can’t imagine having to be with these children all the time in the home and giving a hundred percent, I believe in anything you can do for these children. There’s another child in there who’s mom is an attorney, and I really can’t go into it a lot, but she just didn’t want this little boy, just didn’t want him. Sends a check, to take care of him.

The Clear Creek Farm is privately funded, and all the monies we get are through donations, which is sometimes hard if you have a bad year, and it has been a bad year, so we might have to change something. But it is absolutely beautiful—it’s on about thirty or forty acres out in the country; deer run through the yard, they have a pond. I have a friend who’s son runs a camp in North Dakota, and she just gave me twenty fishing rods for all the kids for next summer. So I am real excited, just doing these little things. I have people with children who clean out their closets, with the latest Tee shirts, you know, teenagers with the latest Tommy Hilfiger stuff, and I take bags out to the kids, shoes, tennis shoes and that, and it’s kind of fun. Now that Patrick, our only son has left home, I do a lot of work for them, and that keeps me real busy. The last couple of years I volunteered a lot at school, well since Pat was in grade school, and high school. They call me a substitute, but I don’t sub, I usually go in and watch class if a teacher has to leave, or a sick day, but I do enjoy that, so I’m pretty busy, and I have a very patient husband that day to day doesn’t know my schedule, and we just kind of flow in here, we always have, and it’s probably going back many years to Sarah, when you do what you have to do each day. And Bruce’s schedule is real hard too, with
him being on call. Thank God for microwaves to heat the food up and everything.

So that’s me!

Then I have a sweet brother Chris, that’s my closest brother, he’s a year younger than I am. He has a wonderful family, and his wife Linda is a wonderful Italian girl. She has just had a tough year; she has lost a very close grandfather, and her dad; I used to call him Mr. Sinatra, he was just this Italian sweetheart, and I loved him dearly. They have three wonderful children doing very well; they live by my family home in Cleveland, a unique family—very loving and very caring, which all my brothers and sisters are. Then we have Tim, hmmm...

Tim has been divorced a couple of times, has some children. Right now Tim is in Florida, he doesn’t like the cold, so will find some place to live for the winter, and shows up in the spring. Tim is an adventurer, the only way we can get in touch with him is through one of his ex-wives boys, because he has the cell-phone number. Every once in a while he will call one of us, but we are not allowed to contact him. He sells Cadillacs one week and ‘Hummers’ the next week. He just has an adventurous life, but Tim’s also been that child who was a wonderful basketball player in high school, but his report cards would come home and they were terrible, and my dad and my mom would say ‘you are not playing basketball, you’re grounded’. Then the coaches would be knocking at the door saying ‘we need him, he’s great, don’t do this to us’. ‘Ok Tim, go play, you can be grounded the next time’. So Tim has never really had to face reality; he had a little basketball scholarship to Lakewood Community College, but he threw that away.
Tim basically threw his life away, but someday maybe he'll grow up—I doubt it, but if he's happy that's all I care about.

Then we have sweet Molly who is married to Scott, he's an Attorney, and they have four beautiful children. Dad would say to me 'I don't like that guy', I'd go out with him, I liked him. But Molly was the type of girl when dad would say 'I like that guy' she'd say 'Oh I love him'. If dad would say 'I don't like him' she'd say 'I don't like him, I won't go out with him' Molly was a funny girl who always did everything right, was always in time for her curfew, until one night she came in late and I let everybody know about it, and got her in trouble. But that's only the one time I can think of, she is a very sweet sister.

Meghan is married to Marty Cohen for a long time, and I still don't know what he does; I say he's a Financial Advisor, but I really don't know what Marty does for a living. They have three children, two girls and a boy, very active up in Shaker Heights area, between dancing and University School and wrestling. Their children are always busy, busy, busy. Meghan is a very tough girl, she is a year younger than Molly, but more mature than Molly. It's been interesting; Meghan skipped kindergarten and went into school with Molly, so through grade school and high school everybody thought they were twins.

Then there's Greg who's married to Patty, and they have four children, and Greg works for the Society of the Blind. He has always worked for the deaf, the Society for the blind; he worked for a Home. A very kind heart, and so has Patty; she lets him be away at these camps—he works at a camp all summer for the blind.
He gets all the counselors, cooks, and chefs, and is there day and night. Now his children and Patt-y will go and spend a night there in the summer. He is the one in the family who keeps all the trivia. I can call and ask ‘at mom and dad’s forty-fifth wedding anniversary, what color did mom have on?’ And he would know like that; it’s wonderful to have a family member like him. Now, ask him he and his wife’s anniversary, and he can’t remember that. The important thing is family trivia, and he’s very good at that.

Michael is the baby of the nine, and Mike is a sweetheart. Mike’s like a little kid, and he’s married to Joanne. They’re such good friends, the two of them; they got married young, and they grew up together young, they have two children. My mom got sick, and they were living in Florida, and they called every one of us to say ‘can we move back to the family home, and Joanne and I will take care of mom’. And we said that was fine; it was like a relief, because we did not want to put mom in a nursing home yet, and dad was slipping away a little bit with strokes. So they moved to Schenley Avenue, on the lake where we grew up, and took care of mom and dad, and sweet Aunt Elma, she is eighty-two, still living at the family home, and they (Mike and Joanne) are still taking care of her. She is probably going to outlive all of us. Mike and Joanne are very hard working people, who besides taking care of the house, are also taking care of Aunt Elma.

Elaine. What was your one dream when you were young, and did you fulfill it?

Holly. My one dream—first of all was to have lots of children. Did I fulfill it?

Yes I did. I did lose Sarah, but we had sweet Patrick, and I had every one of the
kids in school, all of his friends, and that’s why I volunteered so much at the school. There were kids in his little class that I knew some things were going on at home. There was a little girl in his class that was being abused, and she was my girl; unfortunately the family figured out that everyone was catching on to them at school, that they were watching her, and keeping track of things; they just scooped up one night and left. She would come to school on winter days when it was cold with a broken zipper on her jacket, and I went and bought her a jacket—I just said ‘here we found this in the lost and found, take this jacket’ no hat, no gloves. She had big beautiful eyes! It seems that when Patrick was in grade school I looked for those kids that needed; so I did have all my kids.

I did want to become a singer, you could ask my sisters because I drove them all crazy. Every Sunday I would do a show, I would make them, and I pulled Molly’s hair once (laughter) because she got off on the wrong dance step, I was so mad. But it was fun! When you have eight brothers and sisters at home, it was fun. Snowy days when there was nothing to do, you always had someone to go sneak the Oreos with, or go do tricks on the others. Having a big family had its advantages, and not too many disadvantages, more advantages.

Elaine. You had a built-in audience when you performed!

Holly. Yes, and I loved it and they can all tell you my favorite songs, ‘We were Strolling in the Park One Day’, and they had to kick their legs up, and I would turn around and give them the bad eye if it wasn’t high enough. I drove them crazy, and at family things, especially when all my nieces and nephews were
little, I would take them all, and we would have grab bags, and coloring contests; I would always have that kind of little 'pied piper' going on. So yes, I think my dreams are fulfilled, and I met my knight in shining armor, still there twenty-five years later.

Elaine. When was your anniversary?

287 Holly. August 12th, that was twenty-five years. My husband surprised me; he asked me to propose with him- he got Bruce Springsteen tickets, and my brother had a loge, and we went to the concert in Cleveland. So my brother pressured my husband Bruce, they were drinking beers, and he said when are you marrying her; I remember this, and he said 'I don’t know'! I went to work the next day, I was working at Blue Cross then, and he (Bruce) called me in the morning and said ‘well, will you? And I said ‘will I what? ‘Will you marry me’? I said to him ‘you need to think this one over, and do it the right way, that’s not the right way, sliding down the wall, with my brothers asking ‘when are you going to marry her’, and to call me at work’. So that’s when he got Bruce (Lowe) and Susan together and asked me, he did it the right way, he did it the wonderful way, he did it the great way! So we always laugh and say he asked me to marry him at the Bruce Springsteen Concert.

805 Well, for the twenty-fifth anniversary, he got in touch in touch with my sisters, they got tickets for the Bruce Springsteen Concert; he was just in at the same time as our wedding anniversary. He (husband Bruce) set up a night at the Ritz, it was wonderful! We went to the Bruce Springsteen Concert.
Elaine. Where was it?

Holly. In Cleveland, and the next day we went to dinner with just my sisters. I had taken my wedding book in, I didn’t know any of the plans, and I thought I had better take it in because I don’t know if I will see my sisters, but if we go to Cleveland I always try to see them for lunch or something, if it’s just for a short time. We went to dinner the next night, and they all came up to the Ritz for coffee and desserts, and it was wonderful! I brought out my wedding album and we just sat and went through all the pictures, and it was wonderful. So that was a very nice anniversary, and Bruce took a lot of pictures of everyone, and they took pictures of us for our anniversary, so that was fun.

Elaine. Well, that was very nice, thank you! Thank you very much Holly.