

# the diaspora potrzebie

Alumni Newsletter of the American Community School Beirut

Volume XXXIII Number 1

Our 43rd year of publication

March 2021

## A Message From The President

I am most excited about this issue of the *Pot* which is dedicated to our parents. It was so nice to read everyone's stories about their parents who were such an influence on all of us in Beirut. I hope you too enjoy this issue as much as I did. I want to thank **Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68** for all the editing that we required.

### NEW EDITOR

We are very grateful and excited to announce **Alice Ludvigsen '70** has volunteered to serve as editor of the *Pot*, continuing a 43 year volunteer effort. Watch for Alice's first issue this summer. I encourage alums to support Alice's efforts by sending in a few lines for Alumni Notes telling what you are doing or who you're in touch with. Photos are appreciated too. Contact Alice: [alice.ludvigsen@gmail.com](mailto:alice.ludvigsen@gmail.com).

### VOLUNTEER

Speaking of the *Pot*, **WE NEED A VOLUNTEER**: the final person we must add the *Pot* staff is someone willing to let us use their street address as the return address on the *Pot*. If details are your thing, and you would be willing to send about 200 lines of address changes and "Deceased" notifications in a preformatted Excel spreadsheet to ACS quarterly, we'd love to hear from you. You might spend two hours' time after each *Pot* issue is mailed. Call Linda Handschin-Sheppard 425.883.6197 for more details.

### FUNDRAISING

The fundraising drive for the Malcolm Kerr Endowment was a success! Thanks to everyone who contributed to this cause. **Greg Soghikian '77** donated \$10,000 towards a matching fund. We more than matched it, and I'm still getting donations. Thanks to Greg, as well as **Cynthia Soghikian-Wolfe '72** for their generous contributions. We ended up raising about \$24,000. Our goal was to match the \$10,000. Thanks again.

### NEW HEAD OF SCHOOL

As you all know, the school has been searching for a new Head of School, and that search was complete with the appointment of **Thomas N. Cangiano**, effective July 1, 2021. Taking

*Continued on page 2*

## In This Issue

A Message From The President . . .	1
Alumni Notes . . . . .	3
In Memoriam . . . . .	4
Parent Dedications . . . . .	6
How to Stay Connected . . . . .	23

## The Diaspora Potrzebie

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Linda Handschin-Sheppard '68, Editor 2013-2020

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All correspondence should be sent to AA/ACS, 1922 Rollins Drive, Alexandria, VA 22307. Our legal address is: 3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 8th Floor, New York NY 10017-2303. *The Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut. (AA/ACS) does not take positions on religious, political, social topics, or issues and does not endorse the positions or opinions given from time to time by contributors to this newsletter.* © 1990–2021 Alumni Association of the American Community School Beirut.

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## President's Message Continued

words from Nina's announcement:

*"Tom is a veteran educational leader, with over 30 years' experience. A Head of School since 2007 in both US independent schools and at one of the oldest US educational institution abroad, the American College of Sofia in Bulgaria, Tom offers the knowledge of an American approach to education as well as the administrative skill sets learned by a vast experience working in challenging situations."*

On behalf of the Alumni Council, and the alumni community at large, we thank **Karim Abu Haidar Fac** for stepping in as Interim Head of School while the search was conducted. He brought compassion and competency during a really challenging time that no one could have been prepared for. He was the right person to guide us through those tough times. He will be reinstated as Deputy Head of School and work with Tom to ensure a smooth transition.

I remain grateful to everyone for the privilege of serving this community and school.

My best

Gina Kano '73  
President AA/ACS

## Follow us on ...



ACS Knights



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut



ACS Beirut

# Alumni Notes

**Annabel Shanklin-Perlik '45** remembers very fondly her 11 years at ACS, and recalls that she and the late **Ruth Wharton '45** were the only two members of the graduating class that year, due to the World War II evacuations of many school families. Annabel has stayed in touch with another classmate, **Alice Alter-Watkins '45**, of California. Alice's family left Lebanon for India prior to her graduation. About 10 years ago, Annabel moved from her long-time home to an active senior community in northern Virginia. Growing up in Lebanon was just the beginning of her immersion in and love of world cultures and history. She continued international travel, visiting Syria, Jordan, Japan, Italy, Morocco, China, and Iran in recent years. Still active at age 93, she continues to be in good health and enjoys art, reading, and her family.

**David Kurani '62** wrote to say he was happy to reconnect with *The Potrzebie*. David kindly corrected two points from our note in the last issue: "1. I was in the class of '62, not '61 (We always kept hearing how great that class was from teachers facing us at school year beginnings.) 2. My son who passed away in 2018 was named Amin-John, generally known as Amin, rather than John. I would like to mention his connection with ACS which

he respected - although never a student there. He used to see ACS play productions and frequent the library when he could. He was a full-time instructor in the AUB English Department, beloved of his students and fellow instructors, at the time of his passing, the result of a failed medical treatment. About myself, it is true I retired after 52 years teaching theater and art at AUB and I am glad to be back in contact with the *Pot*. And I wish to greet warmly all ACS students and staff I ever knew, wishing you all the best possible 2021 under these highly interesting and even adventuresome circumstances."

**Neil Dale '68** Geologist, musician, and author, has published a new book entitled *Who Is Earth*. The narrative is a distillation of his journey over the last 20 years, "through an odyssey of scattered scientific studies, searching for glimpses of the greater systems that we inhabit." The book is easily referenced on the web.

**Daphne Issidorides '72** wrote with remembrances of ACS and the little stores in the neighborhood. Her sister **Diana '70** lives in Amsterdam. Daphne stated, "My sister Diana and I were at ACS only in kindergarten and the elementary grades, up until 1960 and 1961. We grew up on the AUB campus; our parents were both teaching at AUB since 1952. Dad taught

for 34 years and he left Beirut in 1986. We moved to Athens with our mother, when our parents divorced, but spent every single Christmas and summer vacation with Dad in Beirut on campus. So our connection to ACS was constant, through our childhood ACS friends. I remember Mrs. **Rose Churchill Fac** and other teachers whose names I have since unfortunately forgotten. I was wondering how/if one can find class group photos of kindergarten and 1st, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3rd elementary grades of those days (1958-1961). We must be in some of them; it would be a joy to have them. Might you know?

**Terry Thomas '74** wrote from Lee's Summit, MO stating, "I would like to register as attending ACS from '64-'67 for the 3rd, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5th grades before evacuating because of the 6-day war. My teachers were **Mrs. Hands Fac, Ms. Richards Fac, and Mr. Frank Ford Fac**. I would be interested in names of any classmates. My brother and sister also attended ACS at the same time. **Russell '70** lives in Creswell, OR and my sister **Leslie '72** is deceased. I would like to be in contact with any classmates. (Please contact the editor to be put in touch with Terry. He specifically remembered the **Churchill** family.)

# In Memoriam

**John Pickard Crawford '47** passed away on December 2, 2019 in Boulder, CO. Born in Beirut in 1929, he grew up on the AUB campus, where his family had been involved with the development of the college since 1857. His early schooling was at the American Community School and his boyhood summers were spent hiking and playing tennis in Ainab, Lebanon and Bludan, Syria, Crawford attended Colby College in Maine and completed a doctorate in geology at Columbia University in 1957. He worked in the oil industry for ESSO in Libya and then for 20 years at ARAMCO in Dhahran. Crawford was civilly minded and enjoyed tennis and bridge, homemade wine and spirits, gardening, and golf. He is survived by his sisters **Molly Crawford-Potter '48** and **Alice Crawford-Nicolson '54** and by Kate, his wife of more than 60 years; his children John, Laura, and Lydia and several grandchildren and great grandchildren. The family has requested that donations in John's memory be made to AUB's Mary and Archie S. Crawford Scholarship Fund.

Submitted by **Joy Martin '68**. Source: AUB publication.



**Elizabeth Smith-Rea '50** was born January 22, 1933 in Beirut, Lebanon. She died peacefully at Wyoming Medical Center on Monday, Jan. 11, 2021, just 11 days before her 88th birthday. She was surrounded by her family and held in the hearts of many who loved her. Liz was a rare Casper gem—a full mix of art student, Beirut beauty, independent western woman, and sophisticated world traveler.

She was liberated, educated, and cool, always welcoming an endless stream of diverse visitors to Casper - from teens to outcasts, two St. Bernard dogs, and numerous cats.

Her mother Alice Bliss Smith had been a nurse during the World War I flu epidemic, and her father, Byron Porter Smith, was chairman of the English department at the American University of Beirut. Her childhood was both sheltered and worldly. She was surrounded by beloved aunts, uncles, and cousins in Beirut's American community. During World War II, her two older siblings were evacuated to Australia and America, and at the time of one especially serious threat of German attack, she and her parents were briefly evacuated to Jerusalem for safety. She became somewhat of a mascot to the

British troops protecting Beirut, as many of them had left behind younger siblings in England. She kept in touch with them as they aged and even visited some of them during her travels. She attended the American Community School in Beirut and became fluent in "kitchen" Arabic, learned from the cooks and maids in her house. Throughout her life she would revert to Arabic when swearing, talking in her sleep, or visiting with cousins. As a young teen, she became interested in art, and her talent was encouraged by her parents. In ninth grade, she left Beirut to attend boarding school in Northfield, MA. Later she studied art at Moore College of Art in Philadelphia and the Art Student League in New York.

She met her future husband, Bayard Dodge Rea of Pittsburgh, when relatives introduced them while she was still a student at the art school in Philadelphia. Both families had ties to Beirut and its American University stretching back many generations. The introduction grew into romance and led to marriage in 1952. They had their first child, Marjory in Norfolk, VA, son Dan was born in Casper, WY, and their third child, Bill, was born in Billings, MT.

Liz had a full social life with many friends in Casper and around the world. She was active in the GeoWives Club; a longtime supporter of the Casper Symphony, a longtime board member of the Fort Caspar Museum, an avid reader and member of book clubs, an active member of the Casper Artist's Guild and the Murie Audubon Society, and an active member of the Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church. She was an early board member of the Wyoming Counseling Center.

She was a Mediterranean transplant in Wyoming and brought her Middle Eastern cooking skills with her. Her kids assumed everyone ate tabbouleh with moose sausage and homemade flat bread. The Depression and World War II gave her a frugal foundation and a generous heart. She had diverse and close friends from all backgrounds. She loved being surrounded by friends and family. She preferred written correspondence, and many in her circle received hand-painted thank-you cards with a memory of something shared.

You could not know Liz without knowing she was a talented artist. A sketchbook and pen were always close at hand and never chronological but filled with everything from landscape to people. She introduced her children to the joy of talking about light and how it is constantly changing. Her watercolors captured the vast Wyoming skies, plains, and mountains. All of their world travels are recorded in her sketchbooks.

## In Memorium Continued

Bart notes that their relationship, because it was first made possible by relatives, has been referred to by some as an arranged marriage. After 68 years of happy marriage he says they would both recommend the blessings of arranged marriages to anyone considering that option. She is survived by her husband, her daughter Marjory, son Daniel, son William, and two beloved granddaughters. She was predeceased by older siblings **Edward Blatchford Smith '40** and **Alison Smith-Goodman '41**.

**Mary Roberts-Craighill '53** has passed away.



**Kirby Edmonds '69** of Ithaca, NY died peacefully on August 22, 2020 in the company of his loving family. He was born on August 17, 1951 in Huntsville, TX. As a youth he was educated in Glastonbury, CT, Nairobi, Kenya, and Beirut, Lebanon. He held two degrees from Cornell University, a B.A. in History and an M.P.A.

Early in his career Kirby set up a drug and alcohol crisis hotline and became a trainer

in prevention and treatment systems. He developed a deep understanding of groups, the dynamics of oppression, and the challenge of getting well in an unhealthy society. He worked on the cutting edge of education and training for people in recovery becoming community-based practitioners equipped to lift up and assist others struggling with addiction. A foundation of his practice in whatever action was at hand was to champion people most directly affected by oppression and inequity.

In 1981, Kirby co-founded Training for Change to support healthy organization development, collaborative leadership, and to eliminate racism and all forms of oppression. Over a 33-year creative partnership in TFC and later DCI, Kirby and Laura Branca built a far-reaching practice and shared mission, true to the taproots of anti-oppression, social justice, human rights, educational equity, cultural competency, and the power of collective endeavor.

Kirby worked with indigenous people in the Northwest Territories and was a co-founder of Human Rights Educators USA. In the 1980s he led anti-oppression workshops for Cornell's Human Relations Training Program. Kirby was bravely willing to go toward conflict situations, as when he mediated a volatile land use dispute in

Ghana for World Vision. He was a close colleague and champion of civil rights leader Dorothy Cotton, co-founding the Dorothy Cotton Institute and doing everything in his power to promote her legacy of non-violent direct action. In 2012 he helped DCI bring a delegation of 23 civil and human rights activists and scholars to Israel-Palestine to meet with Palestinians and their Israeli allies non-violently resisting the occupation in the West Bank. In 2014 his Cornell TED talk was entitled "How we can eliminate structural poverty?"

Kirby was a builder of movements and a peaceful warrior for human rights. He had almost limitless vision, determination, and optimism. He sought and created possibilities for many people, paved avenues for positive change, and drew others in with his quiet, unflappable confidence. He was an exceptional singer-songwriter who had three bands in Ithaca. He loved music, enjoyed dancing, jigsaw puzzles, reading sci-fi, and watching baseball and football games with his son. And in his off hours, he was often painting and renovating houses. He was a valiant leader and a giant in his community.

He is survived by his wife, Judith Scherer and sons, Quincy J. Edmonds and Ramsey M. Edmonds, of Ithac; his mother, Doris Edmonds, his sister Katree Edmonds, and was pre-deceased by his father George Freddie Edmonds.

View full *Ithaca Journal* obituary here: [https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/theithacajournal/obituary.aspx?n=kirby-v-edmonds&pid=196734578&utm\\_source=September+External+2020&utm\\_campaign=September+2020&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/theithacajournal/obituary.aspx?n=kirby-v-edmonds&pid=196734578&utm_source=September+External+2020&utm_campaign=September+2020&utm_medium=email).



**Melinda "Mindy" Joanne Townsend-Ray '78**, age 60, passed away on Saturday, December 12, 2020. Melinda was a Metastatic Breast Cancer Warrior and passed away from complications associated with her battle.

Melinda was born in Honolulu, HI on June 29, 1960 and was a daughter of the late Gaila Ka'awalauole Townsend and Benny C. Townsend of Crystal

River, FL. A native Hawaiian, Melinda kept the spirit of 'Ohana - "Family" - a key part of her life as the daughter of military veterans who served abroad, and a career Federal Employee with the

## In Memorium Continued

CIA, serving multiple tours in the Washington, DC area and 12 years overseas in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Mindy received numerous CIA accolades and awards for exemplary service during her accomplished career. Melinda was a PADI-certified Master Dive Instructor, a certified Sailboat Captain, a Harley Davidson motorcycle enthusiast with her husband Donny, and an accomplished and professional Hawaiian Hula dancer and Kumu - "teacher" - of dance. She shared her passion for Hula and her love of Hawaiian culture performing at prestigious venues including the Kennedy Center, Smithsonian Institute, National Portrait Gallery, as well as many Federal Agencies, VA Hospitals, retirement homes, hospitals, Elks, Moose, and Shriners Lodges. Her extended 'Ohana of "hula sisters" in Northern VA and Asheville, NC were an important and integral part of her life and family, as well as her many friends across the globe who received her gift of Aloha.

In addition to her father, Melinda is survived by her husband of 22 years, Donny Ray; a brother Neal; and a sister **Debra Townsend-Jones '77**. Melinda also leaves behind beloved in-laws, nieces, and nephews who brought great joy to her life.

**Sally Taylor Fac** peacefully passed from her earthly-home in Ames, IA to her heavenly-home on June 5, 2020, culminating a wonderful and rich lifetime of experiences. Sally Anthony was born September 24, 1938 to Ray & Marion Anthony in Norseland, MN. She graduated

from high school at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, MN in 1956, attended Iowa State University, graduating with her BSc degree in Textiles & Clothing in 1960, and her MSc degree in Textiles & Clothing with a minor in education in 1964. On July 4, 1964, she joined Donald C. Taylor in marriage. Sally is survived by her husband Don; their three children: Stacia, Chris, and Terry; eight grandchildren; her sister Joy and her sister-in-law Dotty Anthony. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother, and an infant son.

Sally and Don were greatly blessed to live their 80+ years in roughly equal "20-year" segments: growing up in their respective homes; one-half their professional careers in Asia; in Lebanon, India, Indonesia, and Malaysia; the other half in Brookings, SD; and the final segment of retirement in Ames. Sally had a heart to serve others and was an accomplished cook, baker, and seamstress. She deeply loved her children and was effective in teaching them to be persons of character and talent. Prior to having children, Sally taught elementary school at the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon and later at the International School of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Her husband Don Taylor may be contacted at 3516 Woodland St, Ames, IA 50014.



## Parent Dedications

### **The Allen Family – Barbara '71, David '73, Nancy '74, and Judi '76**

My father worked for the Presbyterian Church as Treasurer for the Middle East. That usually meant handling all the business matters so that other missionaries could do their jobs as doctors, theologians, etc. Both AUB and ACS were founded in part by Presbyterian missionaries and one linkage that was maintained was a Presbyterian representative served on the board of ACS. So, during the years we lived in Lebanon one business matter my father, Rev. **Judson Allen Board of Trustees** took care of was to serve as that representative on the ACS board.

During my elementary school years my father's position had us stationed in Cairo, Egypt, but when the '67 War forced us out of Egypt, the decision was made to move him to Beirut after having

initially been evacuated to Cyprus. To us Beirut was wonderfully cosmopolitan and sophisticated after Cairo. In Cairo most of our diet came from raw food items bargained for in the market. In Beirut there were actually supermarkets where packaged and frozen goods could be bought.

On our first morning in Beirut though my mother Mildred went to the closest corner store and asked, in Arabic, for milk. What she was handed was yogurt. The word *laban* that in Egypt designated milk was used for yogurt in Lebanon. However when we did get milk in Lebanon it was real cow's milk, not the water buffalo milk that we had to drink in Egypt (there is a significant taste difference). There were enough other colloquial differences that my own use of Arabic declined in Lebanon both because of the differences and because in Lebanon we lived in a larger American community that

## Parent Dedications Continued

did not necessitate the use of Arabic as much.

The time I spent in Lebanon was split. The first two years after moving to Lebanon were my seventh and eighth grade years. Ninth and tenth grade were back in the states where my father worked in the New York headquarters of the Presbyterian Church for a while. Then eleventh and twelfth grade were back in Beirut so that I graduated from ACS. My older sister Barbara spent her junior and senior year in the United States and doesn't have the same attachment to ACS that my younger sisters Nancy and Judi, and I have.

I think I got to live in Beirut during some of the best glory years. After I left for college the Civil War began intensifying. While away in college my family had their front apartment windows blown out by a bomb. A hotel across the street, not they, was the target. At that point only my youngest sister Judi was still home with my parents. Later, after our family had left Lebanon, my father's colleague **Ben Weir Board of Trustees**, with whom he shared the office, was kidnapped. Because of the developing circumstances I remember a several-month-period circa 1975 where I had no contact with my family. Regular mail service was not getting through. As Americans were once again being evacuated, I remember anxiously watching the news clips on the dorm lounge TV hoping to see my family among the pictures of Americans being evacuated. I never did see them but was enormously relieved when I got a phone call that they were safe in Cairo. My parents had gone full cycle; first evacuated from Egypt when we ended up in Lebanon, now evacuated from Lebanon and returning to Egypt.

By that time, my sister Nancy was enrolled with me at Georgetown University. Only Judi was still with my parents. My parents soon returned to the states, though Judi remained behind and finished out her senior year at Cairo American College where we had first gone as elementary age students.

### **The Beckett Family – Elise '73 and John '75**

George and Jettie Beckett married in May 1948. George was finishing up his Master's degree in Math and School Administration and Jettie was an executive secretary. Upon graduating, the couple moved to Abbeville, MS, where George became the youngest School Superintendent to have taken that post. In 1950 George enlisted in the newly formed Air Force, as the Korean War had just gotten under way. He was assigned to Misawa AFB, Japan, working for OSI (Office of Special Investigation). It was in the last year of this assignment, that they were blessed with their daughter, Elise. They returned to the US for a few years and then back to Japan for

another tour and the addition of their son John.

George and Jettie lived an adventurous life! George retired from the Air Force in 1967 after four tours to Vietnam. He then decided he wanted to continue his education and began working towards a PhD in Clinical Psychology. He almost got there, but a position in the US State Department offered him a job he couldn't refuse. They were off again, but this time to the Middle East - Beirut, Lebanon. George was in charge of security for the US Embassy and for all of the personnel. Jettie was in charge of entertainment and raising their two children. They loved to throw parties and go dancing. It was here that Elise was able to attend ACS and make so many life-long friends!

After leaving Lebanon, the couple lived in Poland, Argentina, Bulgaria, and Afghanistan. There was also a post at the UN, where he was Jean Kirkpatrick's security officer. Even after retiring, he would often go out on short trips as others were taking leave. The couple finally retired in Jettie's hometown of Eupora, MS in the 1990s. As George's health began to fail, they moved to Texas to be closer to Elise. George passed away in 2004. Jettie moved in with Elise and her husband Michael and lived until she was 96! Her goal was to live to be 100, she almost made it.

### **The Beursken Family – Juliette '71, Irene '72, Maureen '73, Ingrid '74 and Carolyn '77**

#### **A GOLDEN ERA**

Our parents, Irma Jolanda Coronel and Pierre Leon Beurskens, met each other in Paramaribo, Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana) in 1948. During WW II, Pierre, a Dutchman, managed to get across the English Channel from his German-occupied homeland to join the Dutch resistance training in England. Dad became an officer in the Dutch Army. After the war ended, he was asked to train troops in Suriname, Curacao, and Aruba.

Our parents were introduced by some mutual friends and it was pretty much love at first sight. They married in 1949, lived one year in Aruba, then moved to the Netherlands in 1950 and there they had three daughters: Maria, Juliette and Irene. In 1955, they decided to move to the US where a promise for better job prospects, for greater economic mobility, and for more housing availability were reported by other family members. Daughters Maureen, Ingrid, and Carolyn were all born in the US.

Dad initially worked for the Fuller Brush Company. He went on to do accounting and economic forecasting for the Singer Sewing Machine Company. From there he landed a job in the

## Parent Dedications Continued

international department of General Foods, now Kraft Foods, to help develop international sales.

He became Vice President of Sales for the Far East, Australia, New Zealand, the Middle East, and Africa. He was gone on trips, sometimes, up to 10 weeks at a time. He suggested to the company that he could increase sales, if he and the family moved closer to his customers. They were convinced and off we went. In August 1968, the Beurskens travelled New York-Rome-Beirut with 21 suitcases and two dogs. Moving a family of eight halfway around the world to Lebanon was quite an undertaking.

Even though our father was closer to some of his customers, he still travelled quite a bit. As part of his role with General Foods, our dad would run quiz shows on Lebanese television which carried scholarship money as prizes.

Our mom was very socially active after moving to Lebanon. She raised money for an orphanage in Jounieh run by Canadian nuns. She became a member of the American Women's Club and helped to create an international women's club called The Cosmopolitan Club.

Our first year in Beirut, we attended Ahliyah School for Girls. The school offered education primarily in Arabic but also had a small English section made up of international students. It was quite a culture shock but children are very adaptable. Our parents decided that, for safety reasons, we should live outside of Beirut. We moved to a beautiful hillside community north of Beirut, Rabiya. Our fairy tale villa had multiple balconies with a gorgeous view of the Mediterranean. We made friends with many of our neighbors who were Lebanese, French, Finnish, South African, and other nationalities.

We had the time of our lives, riding mopeds, playing tennis, paddle boarding, learning to ski, and putting on holiday performances at the local clubhouse in Rabiya. And of course we all learned to love Lebanese cuisine.

During the school year at Ahliyah School, Juliette and Irene became aware of the American Community School in Beirut and made a case for us to transfer there. The sisters rightly believed that we would need a high school diploma from an American school if we hoped to attend college in the United States. In one year we had adopted many Lebanese mannerisms and many ACS students thought we were Lebanese when we started school there. Given the number of girls in the Beurskens family, at one time we had students in grades 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11. My oldest sister

Maria had special needs and did not attend ACS. Sisters Juliette, Irene, Maureen, and Ingrid all graduated from ACS. Youngest sister Carolyn spent the greatest number of years as a student at ACS, 1969-1976.

We made lifelong friends at ACS and poured ourselves headlong into many of the activities offered at the school. Irene and Ingrid were very active in the Drama Club. Irene played the role of Dolly in *Hello Dolly*. Irene and Maureen contributed to the school newspaper, *Aleph Beth*, and were cheerleaders together. Juliette enjoyed writing poetry and was an editor of *Al Miraat*. Maureen ran track. Carolyn went with the track team to compete in Cairo in 1975.

The Beurskens girls would volunteer Mom's talents for our extracurricular activities at ACS. Mom baked, sewed costumes, and hosted many boarding department students who needed to get away.

Maureen returned briefly to Beirut in 1975 after the war had started and it became clear that the paradise we had known would be forever different. Carolyn stayed in Beirut until the fall of 1976 when Irene, then an MEA flight attendant, took her out of the country to finish schooling in Europe. Fast forward many years later, Maureen reconnected with **Marke Baker '73**, one of her ACS classmates, and they are now together. They have enjoyed attending ACS reunions and reconnecting with former teachers, friends, and classmates. They returned to Lebanon in 2015 and 2018 and had a wonderful time walking the ACS campus and revisiting old memories.

After Beirut, Mom and Dad went on to living and working in Al-Khobar, Geneva, and Brussels before Dad's career brought them back to the US. They retired in the Fort Lauderdale area. The time the Beurskens family spent in Lebanon was definitely a golden time for us. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have shared living in Lebanon and being part of ACS during those years are bonded by what was a magical and unique experience. We are grateful to our parents for giving us this amazing opportunity.

### **The Bruder Family - Anne '70, Ceci '73, Jay '74, Catherine '77, and Caroline '81**

Tina first laid eyes on Joe Bruder at the Quantico fall horse show, when Joe went over the jump and his horse refused. She turned to her father and said, "I want to meet that Marine." They were engaged by February and married on April 14, two days before her father deployed for Korea.

## Parent Dedications Continued

Fast forward 17 years. On a rare evening out in the spring of 1967, my mother overheard an officer responsible for future assignments say that he was in need of someone who spoke Arabic or French. She turned to him and said, "You should speak to my husband. He speaks excellent French." Several weeks later my father sat us down and asked if it was OK for us to move to Beirut, Lebanon, where he would work in the embassy. When we asked where it was, my mother said, "The land of milk and honey where the Cedars of Lebanon are."

Having been stationed overseas with her family in mainland China and Haiti, my mother knew the routine of adapting to a new culture. She let us know that we were representatives of the United States and needed to be on our best behavior at all times. On arriving in Rome, our final stop before Beirut, my older sister Anne and I were sent out to buy white kid gloves, so that we would be properly turned out when we stepped off the plane. Not wanting all of our clothes to come from the mundane selection in the Montgomery Ward and Sears catalogues offered by the embassy, as a special treat, my mother took us fabric shopping, which a local dressmaker turned into lovely dresses based solely on the pictures we showed her from *Seventeen* magazine. My mother was shopping for Indian and Thai silks, mod paisley satins which were transformed into fabulous evening wear as seen in *Vogue*. An accomplished seamstress herself, my mother made the red satin and chiffon roses on the bodice of the dress pictured below. Surrounded by many wonderful, exotic foods, my mother cautioned us to know what was in them. I seem to remember my mother steering my youngest sister, Caroline, who was always an adventurous eater, even at four years old, from the *kibbe nayyah* to the cooked version.

After several years of a round-the-clock job at Headquarters Marine Corps, where my father was liaison to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during the height of the Vietnam buildup, we finally able to see our father every day. He took up riding again, taking us to the Horse and Pony Club by Cité Sportive. An avid skier since early childhood, he included us on many trips to Faraya, even taking us out of school on George Washington's birthday to ski. Both my parents enjoyed bundling us all in our station wagon to visit new-found friends and all the archeological sites up and down the coast.

Our apartment near Rue Sadat, just down from Smith's Grocery, was chosen because it had a double salon living space and a large terrace well suited for the frequent entertaining of business contacts that was part of my father's job. My mother and father

dove right in to the social scene. My mother feigned weariness as they headed out to an afternoon reception, two cocktail parties, and a dinner all in the same day. They loved our experience so much they did everything they could to return after my father retired from the Marine Corps. Their return is another story best told by my younger siblings. As I left for my first year at college, they headed back to Beirut.

This is a collaborative effort based on conversations with my three sisters and brother. Please remember that these memories are filtered through 50 years of life, not necessarily an accurate biography.

### The Brunger Family – Scott '64, Bill '66, Muriel '73, and Ted '75



**Tina and Joe Bruder, on the left, are greeting Adele and Ambassador Dwight Porter at the Marine Corps Birthday Ball in November 1967. This was probably taken at the Phoenicia Hotel.**

My parents, **Grace Board of Trustees** and Harry Brunger started out with one year old Scott to what was then Canton, China to work of the International YMCA. It was the beginning of a big adventure. While in Canton, my brother, Bill was born. After encounters with the changing regime in China, the four of them moved to Hong Kong and my father continued his work with the YMCA, primarily in developing housing and vocational programs for refugees for 10 years. My younger brother, Ted and I were born in Hong Kong. Our family spent a furlough year in East Lansing, MI and then we moved to Beirut in 1960.

My dad, Harry Brunger, was asked to move to Lebanon to assist with developing programs and services for the Lebanese YMCA, focusing on refugee services. We were all enrolled at ACS - Scott for two years and Bill for four years. I was at ACS from first to twelfth grade and Ted was the winner- from kindergarten to senior

## Parent Dedications Continued

year. ACS has always held a special place in our lives. Both of my older brothers married ACSers; Scott is married to **Ann Owens-Brunger '65** and Bill is married to **Melinda "Twig" Held-Brunger '69 Board of Trustees**. As a family, we have both the experience of living in Lebanon and of ACS in common. While we lived in Beirut, my mother was a member of the Board of Trustees and Twig has followed in her footsteps on the board. My mother was a woman ahead of her time and believed in education as the foundation of a good life.

After my brother Ted passed away, I was hesitant to go to a reunion and have to explain why he was not there. Ted was very much a part of my ACS experience and ACS was an incredible formative force in his life. My exceptional friends and classmates encouraged me to reconnect with ACS. Our family has continued to enjoy the ACS reunions as a time to be with each other and our classmates. These connections and friendships have thrived and grown through the years. When Scott and Ann, Bill and Twig and I returned to Lebanon in December 1998 with my nephews and Dad, one of our priorities was to show the nephews where we had gone to school and what we had been talking about all these years. That trip to Lebanon was a wonderful adventure. Part of the time we had a small bus to go to historic sites and we each shared stories of ACS and our own experiences exploring the country. One of my nephews commented that we had all had different experiences while living in Lebanon, which is so true. ACS and Lebanon are part of our DNA. I will always be grateful.

### **The Fetterolf Family – Cynthia '72, Karen '73, and Craig '77**

Excerpt from my memoir, *The Importance of Paris* by Cynthia Fetterolf-Davidson

[...] I recalled the times my father Andy Fetterolf had been held hostage in Beirut. Both had happened in 1975, the opening year of the war. The first kidnapping was short and brutal. The *Mourabitoun* "Sentinels" had taken over our Rue May Ziade neighborhood in the summer of 1975. Primarily Sunni Muslims, they were a socialist, pro-Nasser, pan-Arab militia. They had grabbed Dad off the street near home, roughed him up in their car, and dumped him back on the sidewalk in less than an hour. None spoke much English but he'd understood their message. "Buy your black market cigarettes, gas and alcohol from us, or else. We run this section of the city now." The second time, in December of 1975, was more serious.

[...] For weeks Dad had not been able to go to work. Beirut airport was closed. Its runways were too near the Palestinian camps and the aircraft made tempting targets during takeoffs and landings.

[...] Navigating on the ground was equally dangerous. Airline employees had to negotiate the roadblocks of too many factions to reach the airport.

[...] but during today's ceasefire the airport would be open and he had to get there. For safety's sake the airline employees coming from Ras Beirut decided to form a convoy. After converging at the meeting point, they fell in behind one another, their cars moving like a funeral procession.

[...] Their little caravan was waved through the roadblocks without being stopped and forced to show identity cards or passports.

[...] As they approached the airport, at a traffic roundabout near the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps, a mud spattered car suddenly entered from a side road. It prevented my father's Volkswagen from exiting the ring road to remain with the convoy. As the other cars stayed in line and left the traffic circle to turn onto Airport Road, the gun-waving men in the dark car gesticulated and shouted at him. My father braked and put his hands up. His colleagues watched what was happening in their rearview mirrors but kept moving.

[...] A second car joined the *keffiyeh*-draped driver and his cohorts in the first one. My father realized he was being escorted elsewhere and suspected it would be the notorious "Sabra Hilton" where the Palestinians routinely took their kidnap victims. Like most groups, they were in the lucrative ransom business whose profits paid for the weapons, ammunition and fuel necessary to dominate their fiefdoms.

[...] The cars flanking Dad's ignored stop signs and sped on.

[...] Metal gates suddenly opened to admit the cars into an enclosed area and the guards swung them shut just as swiftly. Hustled out of his Volkswagen, Dad purposely left his uniform hat with its black patent visor and shiny brass MEA logo pin, on the passenger side front seat as a clue. He hoped someone would see it as confirmation he was being held here. Brought to a main office area, two other men patted my father down, and passed his confiscated passport to the interrogator boss, a man in green military fatigues. "Mr. Fetterolf, you've worked for MEA how many years now?" His English was excellent. Dad could tell these men had been doing this a lot longer than his Mourabitoun kidnapers. After a few more questions Dad realized the man in charge already knew all his answers. He hoped being an MEA employee, with a local Lebanese company, might offer a bit of leverage and fewer lectures about the 'Great Satan Uncle Sam.' He was taken downstairs and

## Parent Dedications Continued

locked in a cell.

“Not knowing what to expect next was the worst part,” he later recounted. “After the day shift, the men on overnight duty wanted some amusement. They made me strip down. But it was very cold that night and I kept my socks on. They never found the cash. They waved an electric cattle prod at me, but just to intimidate and humiliate,” he explained to us after his ordeal.

“Thirty-six hours later a man from MEA arrived with a briefcase and I was released. I even got my car, flight kit, and suitcase back,” he marveled. My father was never told what was inside that case and he never asked. Cash? Ticket vouchers? After being rescued, he felt indebted to the company. That loyalty kept him with MEA for another seven punishing years until June 1982. He spent some of it living aboard a Greek freighter in Jeddah harbor, when the airline could no longer afford hotel accommodations for its relocated employees.

He'd told us his story when we congregated in York, PA that December to celebrate the Christmas holidays with my maternal grandparents. My mother and brother had fled Beirut months before this after spending a harrowing night in the parking garage. While the Haigazian College burned nearby, their apartment was looted. For a while they stayed with other expat friends in Paris hoping the war would end. But the fighting dragged on...

### **The Graham Family - Jimmie Hagood '62, Catherine '68, Rose Mary '70, Christine '71, and Sheila '73**

How did Finlay Morrison Graham, a Scotsman born in a tenement flat overlooking a gas works plant in Greenock, Scotland and Julia Cleone Saccar, a red-headed Texan born in Hallettsville end up in Lebanon? It's quite a dizzyingly circuitous route like many of your parents also took after WWII at a time when the world was turned upside down yet again.

My father, Finlay Morrison Graham, was born in 1920; grandad worked as a carpenter in the shipyards. During the depression years, they moved to Argyllshire where grandad worked as a handyman and carpenter on an estate owned by a Laird who had made his money in the cotton industry from Egypt to Manchester. Daddy spent his school years in a one room school house. As the brothers approached high school years, grandad sought employment nearer the town of Oban within cycling distance to Oban High School, which served as a large community hub for several islands in the Inner Hebrides.

In the summers, Daddy worked on commercial salmon fishing

boats and also on a road gang hauling rocks from a local quarry. Daddy attended Glasgow University on a maths and sciences scholarship. In the summer of 1939, while Daddy was working with the forestry commission logging trees, the British government declared war on Nazi Germany. Daddy volunteered for military service. He was accepted by the Royal Air Force as a navigator because of his Master's degree. He served from 1940 to 1946 in North Africa and the Middle East. Daddy didn't talk much about the war years as I grew up, but we heard the stories in his later life when he was suffering from Alzheimer's.

My mom came to the Middle East with her first husband, Henry Hagood, as missionaries. They had both graduated from Baylor University and received their Master's degrees from seminary as well. They left on a troop ship in May 1945 with their 7-month old son, my brother Jimmie, headed to “Destination Unknown” in the Middle East. That's all the ship captain could tell them since it was still during the war. Their destination goal was Palestine. The ship made landfall in Port Said, Egypt which then allowed them to go by train to Palestine. Somewhere along the way on leaving the port in Boston, their one suitcase each was lost including all the diapers and baby formula. My resourceful mom befriended one of the cooks on the ship who allowed her in the galley each day to make baby food for my brother. Nothing like getting weaned off the bottle in a hurry! They traveled through potentially hostile waters on a ship full of sailors with no guard rails to protect Jimmie from crawling right into the ocean.

Within seven months of arriving in Palestine and settling into Nazareth, my mom's husband, Henry, died. Julia became a widow at the age of 29 with a toddler to raise on her own far away from home. Everyone assumed she would pack up and retreat back to Texas, but they didn't know my mom. Her calling to service was neither trivial nor superficial! After the abrupt funeral, she sought out a quiet place – a hard thing to do in a one-bedroom apartment filled with mourners – and prayed fervently for guidance. She had to answer for herself the question, “Did Henry's death change her call to ministry, or just her circumstances?” Her conclusion was obvious. She stayed. She soon took in an orphan girl, and subsequently many more. Her ministry morphed into what is known today as the Baptist Children's Home in Nazareth.

How did these to disparate, head strong, disciplined, dedicated young people get together?

In the Royal Air Force, as Daddy flew over country after country in North Africa and the Middle East, he started feeling the tug for service to the Arab people who were being displaced by war after

## Parent Dedications Continued

war. On one of his numerous missions, his plane was shot down in Libya. He was the only survivor and was rescued by a Bedouin family who nursed him back to health and returned him to a British base. He was also shot down in the Gulf and was the only survivor from that crash as well. He suffered from survivor's guilt and earnestly tried to find the answers to what all these experiences meant for his life. For a year he taught navigators who were waiting in Jerusalem to receive their assignments. He attended church there and grew to love the Arab people. He decided to stay in Palestine after the war and started attending an Arabic Language class in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, after mother had decided to also stay in Palestine, she realized that she needed to master Arabic and enrolled in the same language school as my dad. She enrolled in the beginner class but found it too easy since she had already been with Arabic-speaking people for almost two years. She could speak quite well, but wanted to read and understand it better. After a week, she moved to the advanced class. In way over her head, she lamented, "How will I ever catch up? These three students have already been studying together for six months!" My dad was one of three, who volunteered to come to her boarding house in the afternoons after class to help her. When Daddy arrived at the hostel that afternoon, and they had begun their tutoring session, my brother Jimmie woke up from his nap, looked at this strange man with his mom, crawled up into my dad's lap and sat there for the whole lesson. Press "repeat" and this vignette became common place between the navigator Scotsman and the widowed English teacher Texan. They married within the year.

The ministry work in Palestine was well underway, and my parents wanted to be involved in pioneer mission work so they applied for a Jordanian visa. They moved to Jordan in June of 1946 to begin work there. How did my parents decide on Taibe, Jordan? This was their young- adult naive plan. In each village they visited, they would ask for a place to rent. If a house was offered, they would settle there. After several tries, a man in Taibe offered a house. They accepted sight unseen. Daddy worked hard to get the home ready. He put glass and screens on the windows. He built an outside bathroom. Taibe had no running water, no electricity, no phones, no doctor, no drug store, and only an open-air market. Over 6,000 people lived in the town. No one spoke English. Language learning by immersion was the name of the game! Another piece of the plan was that after settling in Taibe, Daddy would return every other weekend to Nazereth and preach in the church there. The week they moved permanently to Jordan, the war that established the statehood of Israel broke out and the Allenby Bridge between Jordan and

Palestine blew up. Their well-laid out plans were again interrupted. They never returned to Palestine (Israel) till years later.

After several months in Jordan, Daddy asked Mom to accompany him on a trip to Beirut for a small vacation and also to visit a young church there. Meanwhile, in Beirut, half a day's drive away, several people were meeting for worship and were praying for a family to come live in Beirut and help the Baptist work there. When my parents arrived for their visit to Beirut, a woman approached them and excitedly said, "We've been expecting you. I will take you to see your house." My parents had no idea what she was talking about, but politely, as guests, followed her. Apparently, she had "put feet to her prayers" and knew that whenever this prayed-for-family arrived, they would need a place to stay, a place that would have a big enough *dar* to accommodate Sunday services. My parents could hardly grasp what they were hearing. These kind folks in Beirut were not only assuming that they would come to live in Beirut to help out, but had already found them a house!

My mom at first refused to move from Taibe, Jordan. She had just settled in and was happy in her work with the mothers and children there. How could she leave them? Guess what? They moved to Beirut in November of 1948. My brother, Jimmie, was a preschooler, and then my three sisters came right along after, ending with me being born in 1955.

We attended the Beirut Baptist School, the school my parents founded in their garage, for most of the elementary years. However, the year before the first furlough that I remember, we came to ACS because my mom wanted to make sure we were "American" enough to fit in stateside. My dad was planning on us staying in Texas for two years to finish his doctorate. I started ACS as a second grader. The first person to talk to me on the playground was **Muriel Brunger '73** and the rest of my ACS years unfolded from there. As for me, I was kinda American during the week speaking English, but definitely Lebanese on the weekends speaking Arabic. I think I still straddle that fence!

### **The Grubbs Family - Leni '70, Glen '71, Lugene and Bob '74, Bill '75, Wynn '81, and Todd '83**

Glen Allen Grubbs (22 May 1930 - 20 December 2018) was an American businessman and executive, most closely associated with Raytheon Company, where he was employed for more than 20 years. From the mid-1960s to the late 1970s, he was largely responsible for and instrumental in Raytheon's development of the Air Defense System of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As a friend of the Saudi royal family, Grubbs was able to negotiate and secure

## Parent Dedications Continued

billions of dollars in Hawk Missile Systems contracts, including installation and maintenance services of said missile systems, and the formal education of many thousands of native Saudis to operate the defense system. In addition, his close relationships with members of the royal family enabled him to serve the kingdom and the royal family in several other capacities for Whittaker Corporation, Litton Corporation, and Orion Corporation well into the 1990s. The ensuing historic friendship and alliance between Saudi Arabia and The United States of America has largely shaped the balance of power in the Middle East. In addition, the hard work and diplomacy of Grubbs contributed to the exponential growth of Raytheon from a fledgling diode and defense electronics company into the largest manufacturer of guided missiles in the world.

The legacy of Glen Grubbs and Raytheon has proven to be important and historic. Beginning with a \$112 million Hawk Missile contract in the mid-1960s, the Raytheon/Saudi relationship has now grown to over \$100 billion. As of 2015 Raytheon ranks as not only the largest guided missile manufacturer in the world, it is also the fifth largest military contractor in the world, and the third largest defense contractor in the United States.

Editor's Note: In all, nine Grubbses attended ACS. I suspect that is a record.

### The Hanna Family - Philip '69, Ed '72, and Richard '73



### THE STORY OF EDWIN B. HANNA AND ARPINE'YENOVKIAN HANNA

**Edwin Bell Hanna Board of Trustees** was born and raised in Virginia, Indiana, and Kentucky, the son of a Presbyterian minister and Seminary professor. He was inspired by a distant relative, Dr. Nelson Bell, a medical missionary in China, to enter the mission

field. Dr. Bell, by the way, was the father-in-law of Billy Graham.

In 1947, Dad, just out of college, not quite 21, was ready to go overseas. I once asked him this question, "Dad, why did you go to Lebanon?" I will never forget his answer, "Because China was closed." You see, the revolution had begun in China and they were evicting all the missionaries.

But a representative at the Presbyterian Mission Agency in New York said to Dad, "But there is a mission school in Sidon, Lebanon, that needs a teacher." He signed up for three years as a short-term fraternal worker and shipped over to Lebanon as his new home.

Dad arrived in Lebanon in 1947; not long into his assignment, he witnessed the influx of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon, fleeing from the newly created state of Israel, settling in camps just outside the walls of the Sidon School. While he had earlier debated the founding of Israel with relatives and with refugees going to Israel, the influx of refugees brought the impact of regional politics home.

During one of his summers at a "Welfare Camp" in rural north Lebanon, Dad met Arpine'Yenovkian, one of the volunteers. She was a graduate of Beirut College for Women and the daughter of Armenian parents who had fled Turkey, during the massacre of the Armenians. They had settled in Acre, Palestine, where Grandpa was a pharmacist trained at Syrian Protestant College, which later became AUB.

When Edwin and Arpine' met it was love at first sight – or close to it! Mom was 5'1"; Dad was 6'1". They got married on the campus of BCW on December 28, 1949 and began a marriage that lasted over 60 years.

After returning to the US to complete his ministerial training and other educational credentials, they returned to Lebanon as career fraternal workers, serving in rural north Lebanon at a rural development project of the Presbyterian Church. The events of 1958 forced them to leave the project and they were assigned to Sidon, serving with the church and the two mission schools there.

While they lived in Sidon many of their years in Lebanon, in 1972 they moved to Beirut, where Dad worked with the Presbyterian Synod and served on the Board of the American Community School for several years.

When the Civil War erupted in 1975, when many Americans were leaving, they chose to stay in Beirut where they could serve the church and its members during the crisis. They had

## Parent Dedications Continued

harrowing stories of that time, including mortars landing near their apartment, Mom being shot at by snipers trying to cross the Green Line, and Mom refusing to allow members of an Armenian militia to occupy the apartment of their next door neighbor. But when Dad's colleague, Rev. **Ben Weir Board of Trustees** was kidnapped in 1984, Dad left west Beirut and lived in a dorm room in east Beirut. After a year of living apart, they decided to retire from the mission field in 1985.

Edwin and Arpine' Hanna lived and served for 30 years in Lebanon. It was home for them, as it was for their three boys. The Civil War in Lebanon that brought so much death and devastation to the occupants of that country, also kept many of us "Third Culture Kids" who were in the states in college, from returning for visits to the land that was our home. Despite that, or because of that, we have preserved wonderful memories of living in that amazing land called Lebanon! The different ACS groups, list serves, other social network groups, and the *Diaspora Potrzebie* have helped preserve these memories and kept us in touch with friends who shared many common experiences.

### **The Harms Family - Ruth '73 and Donna '74**

#### **MY MOM, BEATRIZ HARMS LOPEZ-HENRIQUEZ**

In 1995, my husband's company relocated us to Massachusetts from NJ. They connected us to a relocation company that helped us find a home, decide on the educational plans for our elementary school children, and arranged for full packing / unpacking and moving of all our possessions. That's when I realized everything my mother had had to endure during the years of being a global nomad, the wife of an oil expat with three young children relocating to at least 10 different "homes" from 1960 until 1974. Some of these were extremely temporary, others were long term – or were supposed to be but turned out otherwise. Often, my father would have gone to the new assignment first and left my mom to pack and move by herself with us three kids in tow, traveling to distant lands where she knew no one and usually not speaking the language of the country's citizens. The family's first move to Kansas included migration from Aruba via tanker to the port of Philadelphia, then crossing over the continent to end up in Lawrence so that my father could attend college. There she was told by the school system that she, a non-native English speaker, would need to only speak English to us kids so we could assimilate faster. And so, she did throughout our K-12 schooling though she would continue to speak to my father and her family in our native Papiamentu, allowing us to have a working knowledge of the language which came in handy when we didn't want anyone to

know if we were talking about them! In Libya she taught herself to speak Italian as our housekeeper, a Libyan woman, knew the language from when the country was an Italian territory.

As we grew up, moved, started new schools including boarding schools away from our home in Libya or Saudi, Mom continued to support our education and extracurricular activities whether the school was local or boarding. She was a Scout leader in Libya to encourage us to be part of those organizations. She would often come to visit the boarding schools Ruth and I attended to encourage our participation and support our causes. Sometimes the support would come in the way of advocating against what she saw as repressive rules such as those imposed by the Swiss boarding school we attended. She made friends with another mom who lived in that little Swiss town, giving us a "home" away from home during what could have otherwise been a miserable year. Other times, it was visiting and attending the different special events we took part in. When I attended ACS and became involved in the "Road Show", she traveled first from Tripoli, Libya to Beirut then accompanied the band as a chaperone to Cyprus. Over the years she endured the evacuation of the Six Day War; supported our desire to remain in Beirut at the time of the Yom Kippur War and some of the unrest of 1972 – 1974 and advocated for my father to take a temporary assignment in Saudi to allow me to remain at ACS for my senior year.

She left us in 2003 at the age of 75 - much too early. However, her legacy was three resilient, strong-willed, and self-reliant adults.

### **The Hilgendorf Family – Denell '79, Eric '82, Heidi '85, and Heather '89**



**Hilgendorf Family at the German Christmas Bazaar at the Phoenician Hotel (left to right) Ellen, Denell, Rindala, Dennis (as Santa), Heidi, and Eric.**

## Parent Dedications Continued

Our parents, Dennis and **Ellen Hilgendorf Fac**, came to Lebanon in 1963 as missionaries and Beirut and ACS became our home. Denell was 2 years old when they arrived and the rest of us were born at AUB—Eric, Heidi, Heather “Rindala”, and Nic who was too young to attend ACS. My father’s work transitioned to a non-profit he created that supported handicap rehabilitation and was later involved in war relief, Contact and Resource Center on Bliss Street. When I was enrolled in kindergarten at ACS, Denell and Eric transferred from a local Arabic-speaking school as well.

Our parents and ACS became our foundation of support and a stabilizing force. Through exploring Lebanon, learning and growing, creating identities that have formed our futures, and surviving political unrest, invasions, and wars they were our sense of normalcy. We lived near Pigeon Rocks and walked the streets and alleyways to get to ACS. Past the various check points of whoever was in charge that year; past Caracas Taxi, where we would sometimes spend our lira to get a ride; past the Abu Talib brothers, who would yell, “Hey Blondiel!” and offer us toasty falafel straight out of the pan; down to Bliss Street and past the cotton candy shop; between AUB and IC to the IC Steps aka Stinky Steps; and finally arriving at ACS. As elementary students we would walk to the FarFar Field, the large empty space beyond the playground and play kick ball. We would gather in the auditorium and watch *Lucy and the Long*, *Long Trailer* and eat popcorn, and we would help Mrs. **Elizabeth Langdale Fac** in the elementary library, where my love of libraries began. In high school we gathered in the courtyard, painted the walls with murals at the direction of Mrs. **Elayn Rifai Fac**, played in the band under **Peggy “Magoo” Manoogian Fac** and played basketball against our rival IC in our beautiful gymnasium. At ACS you could explore all of your interests (art, music, sports, drama) whether you were good at them or not and discover the joy of each. In the midst of all of the talent shows, the dances, the trips to Egypt for art and music and Athens for basketball, the field days at AUB, the drama productions, and carnivals, were our parents. They attended and supported everything that we were involved in, cheering us on. Our father’s organization supported the ACS yearbook and our mother was a substitute teacher for the elementary. Throughout all of these American childhood experiences was also the thread of political unrest and war. Eric and I frequently walked home under the fall of shrapnel, collecting pieces as we walked. Militias roaming the streets were a part of our everyday life. We did homework by candlelight as electricity was cut off and school was often cancelled.

We were in the art room when the American Embassy on the

Corniche was destroyed by a car bomb. Within minutes we ran down the Corniche to witness the destruction. We sat at Long Beach after our Field Day and watched as the Israelis bombed towns south of the airport. This was the normal that we adjusted to because it was our home. Our parents spoke openly with us about the chaos surrounding us, asking us if we wanted to stay or be evacuated, but we always chose to stay, wanting our family to be together. My father often took us on his work to refugee camps and to his centers where individuals handicapped by war and illness were taught new skills for employment. We explored every inch of Lebanon from the beaches in Tyre, the fertile Bekaa Valley, the ruins of Baalbek and Byblos, the Cedars, the Jeita Caves, and the sidewalks of Beirut. My family remained in Lebanon from 1963 to 1989 and it influenced who we became as adults. Denell became a teacher and returned to Lebanon to teach from 1983 to 1987; she continued on to teach in Jordan, Cyprus, Japan, Kuwait, and Oman. Eric was sent out of Lebanon in 1982 by my parents after he was kidnapped with other ACS classmates because they thought they were Israeli spies. He returned to the Middle East; Bahrain and the UAE, and uses his fluent Arabic and Lebanese ability to connect to everyone to work in Abu Dhabi. I became an art therapist and professor and have returned numerous times to Lebanon to work in the refugee camps and train front line workers in using art with trauma. Rindala became a counselor and works with active military in Camp Lejeune. Nic was four years old when we left Lebanon and doesn’t remember much beyond the Israeli gun boat shooting a rocket into the living room of our apartment building. My father was home from work that day and moved us all to safety while my mother, he, and neighbors put out the phosphoric flames. This event didn’t cause us to leave Lebanon, but we did move to the mountains for a couple of months. Throughout, our parents were our stability and calm within the chaos; ACS was our normalcy in an abnormal but resiliency-promoting childhood, in a country that stole our hearts and will always remain home.

### The Hutchins Family – Jeff ‘65

My parents lived in Dhahran during my junior and senior years at ACS (and many years before and after that). **Dwight Knox Fac**, the head of school at ACS in those years, would travel to ARAMCO’s communities at least once a year to encourage students to apply to ACS and to meet with parents.

Dr. Knox had a reputation for sternness. He rarely evinced any sense of humor, and was known for strict punishment of anyone who violated the many rules, especially for those of us living in the

## Parent Dedications Continued

Boarding Department (BD).

On February 2, 1963, I was hanging out in the student lounge in the BD after dinner and before heading up to my room to study. I was playing cards — hearts or bridge or pinochle, most likely — when someone tapped me on the shoulder and said that Dr. Knox wanted to see me immediately in his apartment on the top floor of the BD. I went white as a sheet, trying, as I stood up, to recall anything I had done wrong that might have been discovered. I trudged to the elevator like a condemned man making his way to the gallows.

When I stepped out into Dr. Knox's apartment, he greeted with a cake with several candles burning. My parents had met with him in Dhahran and asked if he could arrange for me to have a cake on my birthday. They had given him a few dollars to cover the cost, and he had agreed to surprise me. I'm not sure why he chose not to present the cake in front of my classmates. Perhaps he knew the effect a commandment to appear before him would have. Imagine me returning to the lounge with the remnants of the birthday cake and a story for the ages.

### **The Johns Family – Julie '71**

My father, Lloyd Johns, grew up on a ranch (really an orchard with olive and fruit trees) in Southern California. He joined the Army after high school. After Pearl Harbor he trained as an Army Air Force pilot and flew his B-17 over France before, during, and after D-Day. He and my mother, Gloria, met and married when he returned stateside. He went to USC on the GI Bill and studied chemical engineering. They had three daughters. In 1958 he joined ARAMCO working mostly at the Gas Oil Separation Plant (GOSP). We lived in Abqaiq from 1959 to 1968 and then moved to Dhahran. He retired in 1982. My sisters graduated from Marymount International School in Rome. I attended College du Lemman in Switzerland my sophomore year and ACS for my junior and senior years, graduating in 1971. My father lived in good health in Southern California until he was 91. We adored him. He was a real upstanding man.

### **The Kano Family – Michael '72, Gina '73, Nayla '74, and Ray '79**

#### **THEY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE DIFFERENT.**

She was from Vermont, from a family that had only known difficult circumstances in their small town. Her ancestors arrived in North America from England in the late 1600s, and they had not moved very far from where they had settled. Summers were spent on

her grandfather's farm, where she learned how to create delicious meals from her female relatives. After her mother became an invalid, my mother dedicated herself to becoming a nurse. She worked a full shift at the hospital then went home to care for her mother. As the eldest, she took it upon herself to look after the rest of her family as well.

His family, too, had not moved very far from their roots, either. But it was a tenure of centuries, dating back to the Aramaeans, one of the oldest Christian communities in the Middle East. My Syrian grandfather, a wheat farmer, had made his fortune selling wheat to Italy in the years after World War II, when the Italians were in dire need of ingredients for pasta.

After oppression by the Ottoman government and their successors, he had taken his family to Aleppo, abandoning the castle-like house my great grandfather had built in southern Turkey. British and French "diplomacy" after the First World War resulted in a line being drawn on a map that placed their hometown on the wrong side of the Turkish-Syrian border. A massacre in their village was the final straw, and they fled to Syria.

But, improbably, they met.

In spite of the thousands of miles between them, my parents set eyes upon one another while my father attended university in upstate New York. My mother thought he was French, but he soon cleared that up. He charmed her family, and a few years later, they married, and then boarded a ship that would take them to Beirut. A winter crossing of the Atlantic on an Egyptian freighter was bad enough, but my mother also had morning sickness to contend with. (I still feel guilty.)

In the big family house, my grandmother and her daughters educated my mother in the best of Syrian cuisine. In return, she baked apple pies, which immediately fixed her in their hearts. The family also coached her in our dialect of Arabic. Three children and three years later, my parents moved us to Beirut. A fourth child followed in due course.

Our home life was a melting pot of various Middle Eastern nationalities with a strong bias towards an American education. Deference to our extended Syrian family was of paramount importance, but it was tempered with a bit of flexibility. It was at times a struggle to know which "rule" to follow. It was for the most part straightforward, but there were times when we felt as though we were tap dancing through a minefield, with the various aunts and uncles acting as a Greek chorus.

## Parent Dedications Continued

What lessons did our upbringing teach us? The enduring importance of family immediately comes to mind. We may have transgressed at times, but we learned to support one another. This came in handy during the Civil War when our ethnicity put us in a grey zone, and we knew we could rely on the family to see us through.

Appreciation for what we had was important to our parents. My father's family had lost everything more than once, and we learned not to place too much importance on material possessions. And although she rarely discussed it, our mother reinforced this lesson in subtle ways—after all, she had grown up with very little in the way of comforts.

I think we also learned how to examine problems and challenges from different points of view. The multiple value systems with which we had grown up provided us with many lenses through which to observe the world.

And, finally, there was the food. But that's another story...

**The Kelberer Family – Michael '69, Mary '71, Margaret "Mug" '73, Barbara '75, Elizabeth '78, and Kristine '81**



**Art and John Kelberer, early days in Beirut.**

**SMALL TOWN MINNESOTANS TAKE THE PLUNGE: 38 YEARS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**John** and "Art" **Kelberer Board of Trustees** were adventurers. In 1947, Art was introduced to John at a gas station while she was on a date with another guy! John was fixing the clutch on a car, caught Art's eye, and decided right there that she was the one he was going to marry. Mincing no words, he stated his intent on their first date, much to her chagrin. Two years later they tied the knot.

A graduate from the Fairview Cadet Nursing program, Art worked at the Veterans Hospital while John completed his degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Minnesota. Young and without much money, John spotted a curious notice on the campus bulletin board, the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company (TAPLINE) in Saudi Arabia was looking for talent. Being a prankster, he and his friend took the notice off the board and stuck it in their pocket to ensure their odds. They took the recruiter out and, yes, he got the job!

In 1950, John left for Beirut, leaving Art behind in Minneapolis to have their first child. Six months after delivery, Art, having never left Minnesota, boarded a plane with her 6-month old baby, heading off to a world she knew nothing about! "The Istanbul airport was just a tent," she remarked. Their first post along the TAPLINE was a small outpost where Art was one of three women among 800 men! They lived along the pipeline until 1959; their last stop was living in Turaif, before moving to Beirut, a city Art fell in love with. After the first-born boy, Art went on to have six girls, one born in Saudi Arabia and five in Beirut.

The family has many memories of city life in the early days of Beirut - the local vendors of bread, shrimp, and oil being delivered by horse cart, the small neighborhood groceries, and the beat of daily life in the streets. Our first home was on the third floor of a building on Makdessi Street. Knowing the grocer across the street well, Mom would lower a basket down from the balcony with a small grocery list in the basket and Wadia would fill the order, adding a few pieces of Bazooka gum for the kids. As kids, we spent many a day at San Simon Beach, at the TAPLINE Club in Sidon, at Cité Sportive, walking the Cornish, wandering the souks, and exploring the mountains. We will never forget the lovely walk home through AUB, stinky stairs and all.

Aside from her busy life raising seven kids, Art volunteered with Catholic Relief efforts through the Pontifical Mission, raising money through charitable bazaars and supporting orphanages. She was a Brownie/Girl Scout leader for each of her girls. Art was an avid learner of languages, studying both Arabic and German. John served on the ACS board for many years, unfortunately for

## Parent Dedications Continued

him, during Mug's more mischievous years at ACS! Both Art and John embraced the Lebanese culture of hospitality and loved their wonderful Lebanese friends.

Out of the seven children, four graduated from ACS and two spent their elementary years there before John transferred from TAPLINE to ARAMCO. After many adventures, all seven kids now live in the USA. Michael '69 retired to the Seattle area, Mary Renquist '71 a retired nurse and faculty member, winters in Wilmington, NC and summers in International Falls, MN. Margaret "Mug" '73, a retired international teacher lives in St. Paul, MN when she isn't traveling to warmer climates. Barbara McDonald '75 serves as president of The College of St. Scholastica, in Duluth, MN. Elizabeth Kerr '78 is a Senior Clinical Nurse Manager at the University of MN Cancer Center in Minneapolis, MN. Kristine Currin '81 works for an orthodontic office as a treatment coordinator in Wilmington, NC. Annie, the last born in Beirut in 1971, grew up in Dhahran, and works for Be The Match, a bone marrow donor registry in Minneapolis, MN.

Our experiences growing up in the Middle East were invaluable. It formed our lives as open minded, global citizens and for better or for worse, instilled in us the constant tug of wanderlust.

### **The Martin Family – Joy '68, Debbie '70, Linda '73, and Arliss '75**



**Arliss and Ruth Martin at Clifton's Pacific Seas**

Our parents met in St Louis where my dad was in training for Army Air Force (he was a farm boy who was going to college when WWII began) and my mom was living with family having come from rural Arkansas for jobs, which were big during war years. She received her BA from U. of Arkansas Fayetteville and graduated after their marriage. There is a long story about how he was with his other training buddies and kept dozing off in church behind her and her

friends and he supposedly kept kicking her heels as he dozed off. And she would turn and glare at him. Afterwards by way of apology they invited Mom and friends for ice cream. My dad was so shy she was not expecting to hear more from him; she was expecting to hear from a more gregarious friend in his group. How much of this was embellished in telling I am not sure, but Mom's diary more or less confirms part of it.

They dated a while until he left for training in Texas or maybe Idaho. He was going to be a pilot but some action people tend to do he kept doing so he became a navigator instead. Probably a good thing as his crew when assembled had an experienced pilot who already knew how to fly and probably many newly minted pilots never came back from bombing missions in Germany. Mom went on to work on Liberty Ships and then on war employment office in Richmond, CA, before she enlisted in Marines (or WAC). She went to Washington and he went to England and bombing missions on a B 24 over Germany, where they were part of D Day.

On their 13th mission flak hit them for a second time; the first time they barely made it back across North. Sea and the pilot ditched the plane over Channel after having crew bail out as thereby avoided crashing among farms and so on. But 13th mission they made for Sweden instead, as more likely to survive, and were interned, which was not a bad place to be. After some months, all were back in US, and my dad was assigned to air transport over the south Atlantic and Middle East to Calcutta, a mini Hump. One of the puddle jumps they made was a stop in Abadan, Iran. I don't know if that visit is why he took a job there years later or not.

He tracked down my mother and long story short they were married, on *Bride and Groom* radio show, in California. My mom submitted their story and because of that they had some nice gifts for setting up housekeeping. My father had already been in college studying engineering and subsequently received an MA and a PhD in Chemical Engineering, which as it happened was first PhD. given when Missouri School of Mines became University of Missouri Rolla. (If there had been a PhD in a field alphabetical before "C" of Chemical he would not have been the first PhD. And I never knew he was until years later when my brother saw it in a paper, maybe a 30-year anniversary or something.) In celebration of his PhD we went to Europe camping and hosteling for summer all over. Only my dad had been out of country before.

In 1966, my dad got a job in Abadan working for NIOC, the National Iranian Oil Co. My mother and we children had been living in California and we were off on another adventure. And so my sister Debbie and I were dropped off at ACS. Dad had somehow gone

## Parent Dedications Continued

before, and there were no rooms in dorms, so we were in a room in apartment with **Joy Mickelberry's '67** family. This was one of at least two times I have lived in a situation with another Joy, and both were redheads. We of course, like all classes in 1966-1967 year were evacuated in June. My sister Debbie graduated after four years, three as a boarder. My sister Linda and my brother Arliss were there for some period of time when old enough for ACS, as Abadan had a school for younger students, for many nationalities.

After leaving Iran in early '70s my father taught overseas in Algeria and Saudi. He was teaching in Mississippi when he died in 1986 of acute leukemia. My mother died six months later. Like a lot of women she had a bouncing around career and that is not easy to summarize. Besides raising four children, she was a very good writer of our adventures in our hometown newspaper and she got a Master's in counseling elementary school kids and later worked in various small towns in Missouri.

### **The Parker Family – Tanya '73, Jamilla "Jamie" '75, Leslie '77, and David '80**

Orin and Rita Parker met in college and became friends, but never dated. After they graduated, Orin took a job with a radio station in Washington DC and Rita was in Los Angeles working. When Rita got engaged (to another man) she wrote Orin a letter to share the news and he sent a letter back that warranted a phone call and as our mother told the story. "The phone lines between Washington DC and Los Angeles, CA melted!"

They had five children, Jeff, Tanya, Jamilla (Jamie), Leslie and David. We marvel that our parents carted us all around the world living in Athens, Greece; Ankara, Turkey; Baghdad, Iraq; and Beirut, Lebanon with limited time in the suburbs of Washington DC off and on.

Most of Dad's overseas career was spent working for A.F.M.E. (American Friends of the Middle East) which later became AMIDEAST. After Baghdad we did spend six full years in Bethesda, MD prior to moving to Beirut. Those years were hard on Dad and he couldn't wait to get back to expat life overseas. There was talk of going to Cairo, but he was especially excited to move us to Beirut, a favorite destination of his.

Thanks to our parents, we experienced an additional layer of education as we gained a respect and understanding of the Arab people and their culture. The experience we had attending ACS was formative and liberating. Our eldest brother, Jeff, went to college but spent some summers in Beirut.

Thanks to our parents, we learned to put ourselves in other's

shoes and see the world from different perspectives. We learned to question what was printed in the newspaper both in the US as well as abroad. We learned that people are much more alike than different. We taught Sarifa children in Baghdad to play ping pong (until they stole our paddle!) and danced with the Bedouins around a fire on the hillside in Petra.

Let's face it –our parents made us interesting.

### **The Porter Family - Jim '67, Ellen '69, Barbara '71, ACS Board of Trustees 1996-2019, Joan '71, and Ritchie '73**



**Formal US Embassy Photo Summer 1965—Dwight Johnson Porter (1916-2006) and Adele Ritchie Porter (1917-1997) with their children; upper level from left, Jim Porter '67, Ellen Porter Honnet '69, and Dwight A. Porter '63 and lower level from left, Barbara A. Porter '71, ACS Board of Trustees 1996-2019, Ritchie Porter '73, and Joan Porter Maclver '71.**

Our father, Dwight J. Porter, a career Foreign Service officer, was the US Ambassador to Lebanon from June 1965 to September 1970. His career before that took him and our mother, Adele Ritchie Porter, to Germany, England, and Austria. From 1963 to 1965, he served as Assistant Secretary of State for Administration in Washington DC For those who want to read his memoirs, including about the years in Lebanon, they are easily accessed via the web and make for interesting reading. Our mother was very active in many ways in Lebanon, including with the American Women's Club and as a painter. Our parents were always very interested in ACS and attended many of our activities when their busy schedules allowed. As five of their children attended ACS and four of us graduated from the school, ACS is an important part of the Porter family history. We know that we were fortunate to live in Lebanon at that time. We also experienced the 1967 evacuation and traveled to Athens with our mother. Our father followed after US-Lebanon relations were cut but as they resumed in the fall,

## Parent Dedications Continued

we were able to return to school in good time. The Porter family made strong friendships in Lebanon, but it was a challenging and absorbing post to be US Ambassador. A place to enjoy as a family was the rented village house in Faraya where we spent part of our winter holidays and had great fun. The homes we lived in above Beirut in Yarzeh were special and we were able to host some amazing parties, including the 1969 ACS Prom. We moved to Vienna, Austria in the fall of 1970 where our father served as the Resident Head of the US Mission to the IAEA. As we had lived there before from 1959-1963, three of us graduated from the same school that we had started in (AIS Vienna) and which our father had helped build (Ritchie in 1973 and Joan and Barbara, hence why we have two high school diplomas as we went back to Beirut to graduate in June 1971).

### The Putnam Family – Pamela '63, Peter '74, and Lyn '72

My brother, Peter and I discussed today how much our mother, **Martha Putnam Fac** thoroughly enjoyed teaching at ACS for three years, 1965-1967. She told us later that it was one of the most rewarding experiences of her life. She taught in the elementary school; we think 4th grade most of the time. Peter remembers Mrs. **Deanna Hanson Fac** in 4th grade and **Don Corsette Fac** in 5th grade. There was also another elementary teacher, **Rose Churchill Fac**, who was a 4th grade teacher with sons **Andy** and **Steve**. Anyway, Mom made good friends with **Elsa Fac** and **Will Turmelle Fac**, and **Sarah Rich Fac**. Sarah flew out to Turaif to visit our family in Saudi Arabia, with another teacher, **Kay Fritschel-Gerard Fac**. They had to register as my dad's wives on the manifest in order to visit! Mom made friends with other teachers like **Jeff Stallings Fac** and **Martin Gostelow Fac**, who were also excellent teachers. I don't think we realized how good our teachers were, and how motivated they were to be there at the beginning of their careers. We were privileged to have had such top notch education.

### The Reynolds Family – Meredith '74, Michael '76, Marjory '78, Matthew '82, and Melissa '85.

#### BEIRUT ADVENTURE – MY PARENTS' TIME IN BEIRUT

According to *Yankee Magazine*, Hurricane Diana (category 2) holds the record for the wettest hurricane (19.75 inches of rainfall) to have hit Massachusetts in the month, August 1955, my parents were to be married in western Massachusetts. It caused \$110 million in damage (in those days!!!) and washed out many roads (whose skeletal remains you can still see emerging from hurricane-created bodies of water). My mother **Nancy Fac** and her parents scrambled to move the wedding gifts from the first floor to the

second when the water from the hurricane flooded their basement and was lapping at the first floor. The impending nuptials had to be postponed until the next week because roadways had flooded and the town was unreachable from outside for several days.

A week later, my dad and his family drove from Cape Cod, MA to Monson, where they were met by a bespectacled Civil Patrol officer who demanded to know where and why they were headed to Monson, to which my dad responded, "I'm getting married tomorrow and I'm going to Mike Galas' house (my mom's brother's house where the reception was now to be held, since the initial venue was no longer available a week later), and the officer replied rather conspiratorially, "oh, you don't want to go there. Mike Galas is CRAZY. Go back now while you have the chance!" but he let them through the barricade. Imagine my father's shock and amusement when he eventually arrived to Mike Galas' house and found that the brother and Civil Patrol officer were one and the same!!

So, my parents were married and bought a small house in Cochrane very near to where they had met as teachers. My father taught and worked toward a doctorate while my mother kept house and raised kids (what people did in those days). My father became an elementary school principal in a neighboring town until a friend of his told him of a unique opportunity to run a new American-style elementary school in Kanpur, India, on the campus of the Indian Institute of Technology (American—there are several others affiliated with other countries across the country). FUN FACT – Pan Am held the plane for us (previous connecting flight had been delayed) because our family made up a significant percentage of the passengers!). It was a two-year contract; my dad took a leave of absence from the stateside school.

After a short year back in the states, my father learned of the opportunity to become the Vice President of International College in Beirut. Because some of my siblings missed being schooled with English-speaking students and things like television, hamburgers, constantly running electricity, not being ill on a weekly basis, not waking up to the stench of the nearby leather tanning and sugar beet factories, and not being on the lookout for cobras in the grass, the family decided that my dad would "check out the situation", report back, and have a family meeting to determine whether or not we would go to Beirut. After the slideshow prepared by my dad of his visit, we had a family vote. You can surmise the outcome.

We arrived in Beirut to be greeted by the brilliant sunshine and the pungent smells of orange rinds, coffee, and petrol, and made our way to our third floor apartment. My father began his tenure at IC. My mother applied for a teaching job in the elementary school at

## Parent Dedications Continued

ACS. She was taken aback that the then principal questioned her ability to teach with five kids and potential absences (see how time has changed?) Needless to say, my mother assuaged his concerns and the entire time she lived in Beirut, she never missed work due to our rare sick days or anything else!

We adjusted to and loved our life in Beirut. My siblings and I felt like we had free reign of the city and loved exploring the streets of West Beirut for chocolatiers, ice cream parlors, and Wimpy burgers. Another couple of fun facts—my father bought a car and wanted to have it repainted the same time as the current IC President was having his car repainted. My dad wanted a dark green car, but that was the color the president of the school had selected, so he had to choose another color. There wasn't much choice, so my dad selected a baby blue color (think '70's colors). When the cars went in for painting, OUR car came out green, and the current president's car, a Jaguar, looked like a baby shower confection, and definitely not a sleek feline! And later, during the time of the "troubles" as they were so euphemistically referred to, our car needed the engine replaced. My dad was assured that this would be easily done. My dad was skeptical, as there weren't too many Buicks of that year around the city—my dad knew of only one. Well, the car comes back with a different engine, and my dad called the owner of the only other Buick he knew, and said, "Hey, is your car running ok?" Of course, it wasn't. I don't know how it was resolved, but they both had a good laugh!

Not long after our arrival in Beirut, the President of IC stepped down and my dad became the President of International College. My dad weathered the loss and acquisition of school properties (so I have been told) with limitless patience. One example—IC acquired the former British Embassy on the Corniche which is now called Reynolds Hall, but it was later traded to AUB for part of the AUB sale to IC of the Ras Beirut campus. IC set up the Educational Resource Center which brought American-style teaching concepts to other Arab nations like Bahrain and Oman.

Before the actual Civil War, we experienced the Beirut people rave about—the beach memberships, the skiing in Faraya, the restaurants with their truly international fare. My mother turned a fashion faux pas of accidentally wearing two different black sandals into a new fad! Who else has seen a foreign dignitary kick a dinner roll under the table? My father loved to interact with every waiter he encountered. I particularly remember being at the Spaghetteria when a waiter asked my father how he liked the Ksara wine. "Tastes just like *mazoot*", my dad proclaimed, grinning. (*Mazoot* is a crude oil grade.)

My parents, on behalf of IC, hosted Thanksgiving dinners, multiple parties (like a changing hats party when people were promoted), and our house became an open forum for disgruntled teachers to express and vent their views on academics, behaviors, etc. (however few) after hours in a nonjudgmental venue. One custom we embraced, perhaps out of a bit of necessity, was adhering to late-night dinners, a tradition that I still carry on when I can today. My parents frequently dined with Anne and **Malcom Kerr '49** at either Martin House or Marquand House.

One night at our residence, Martin House, my mother raised the alarm that she had heard something (bomb-like projectile as it has been described to me) swoosh overhead. The partygoers at our house dismissed her alarm, but my dad went to check, and lo and behold, an unexploded mortar of American origin launched by undetermined sources had landed in the mud in our backyard garden. It turned out that somebody had to call the PLO (the only indigenous group who knew how to diffuse such a projectile as such as well as to dismantle it)! Things never allowed today—this shell casing is still within the family, much like the original Pot, an ancient rock cannonball is within the ACS family.

As a testimony of their love for Lebanon, and before the destruction caused during the Civil War, my parents made tentative plans to build a retirement home in Beirut. Cape Cod still called my father. The night before he was to leave Beirut to join the rest of the family stateside, he fell and broke his knee, but refused to have it hard-set because he didn't want to miss his flight to Boston and spending the Fourth of July weekend on his boat. He had his knee operated on after the weekend!

During the Civil War and my mother was among those Americans evacuated from Beirut on a requisitioned French cruise ship to Marseilles during the Israeli invasion of 1982. She then returned to the states to pursue her MA in reading and resume her teaching career as a reading specialist in Massachusetts. My siblings were sent back to the states where I was in college.

My dad stayed and saw IC through several tire burnings and other protests. Extraordinary circumstances took on the look of the mundane. My dad hosted the Marines when they were offshore during the Lebanese Civil War, providing Lebanese-style hospitality of dinner (and hot showers). My dad once compared the frequent school closings in Beirut due to the "troubles" to snow days in New England to explain to those unfamiliar with Lebanon the ordinariness those days had become. Despite students burning tires a few yards from our house, and occupying school buildings, my father weathered each storm with an apparent inexhaustible vault

## Parent Dedications Continued

of patience. He had the unwavering ability to make us feel safe. My father oversaw IC throughout the “troubles” despite surviving two heart attacks until his passing in Beirut in 1986.

It is important to note that I left Beirut in 1974, and returned only for “vacations” from 1978-1985. The information after 1974 I obtained from my mother’s correspondence and later, conversations. These recollections are not in chronological order. My siblings’ recollections are no doubt different from mine as they remained after me and viewed the situation from their own personal lenses.

### **The Swenson Family – Dan ‘69, Becky ‘70, David ‘75, and Ruth ‘77**

Leonard and Lois Swenson arrived in Beirut in 1955 and called Lebanon home for 35 years. Shortly after arriving in the port of Beirut, without any knowledge of Arabic, and very few contacts, they put down roots and began their ministry at the Dar el-Awlad Orphanage which was located in the mountains just below Brummana. The orphanage became a refuge, not only to hundreds of young boys, but to many in Lebanon and beyond.

Although my parents were very busy being “parents” to over 30 young boys at a time, Dad found time to coach Little League and drive for many class field trips. Mother served as one of the “Nursies” at ACS for many years

### **The van den Berg Family – Elizabeth “Betsy” ‘74**

#### **A GRACED CHILDHOOD**

This is really a story about my mom and dad. I was just a kid. While I recognized that my childhood was different from those of my relatives back in the states, I really didn’t understand just how different until well into adulthood.

Johannes “Jan” van den Berg was born and raised in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. He lived there until he left on a ship at the age of 16 to go to sea, first as a cabin boy, then later in the hulls as a diesel engineer. During WWII, he was stranded in the Pacific on a Dutch Merchant Marine ship due to the occupation of the Netherlands by the Nazis. The US government set up a “home base” for these sailors in San Francisco, and assigned each of them a US military vet buddy. Dad’s was Eddie Jensen, who would ultimately become my Uncle Eddie.

Barbara Jensen was an elementary school teacher, and fairly adventurous for a gal in the 1940s. Eddie brought Jan over for dinner one night, and well, there they were.

After some complications that involved Eddie declaring that Barbara “better not marry that Dutch sailor,” and Johannes briefly being wanted by the FBI for being in the country illegally, they settled in San Francisco. Mom continued to teach, and Dad got a job with General Motors Corp. installing diesel generators to provide electricity in many Middle Eastern countries. This meant he was often gone for months at a time, leaving Mom essentially a single mother raising first my brother and then me. Dad got a new job with Voice of America, managing the diesel generators that powered the radio stations sending American voices out into the world. This meant that rather than leaving us home alone, we would travel as a family and live abroad.

While they had lived for a brief time in the Netherlands before I was born, Mom had never been to a Middle Eastern country. Our first posting was Tangier, Morocco. While cosmopolitan and having been under both French and Spanish rule at one point or another, there was still a lot for her to get used to. I was four – and wondered why there were ghosts all over the place. In truth, they were women dressed in white billowing *djellabas*. My brother was 11, and having adjustment issues. Both my parents bravely adapted to new customs, traditions, schooling, dealing with the rules of the Consulate, as well as proper dress. He served in Tangier for two terms – six years, my elementary school years.

After a brief stopover for a few months in San Francisco where we lived in a residence hotel and I went to public school for the first time (and where I began to realize how different my life was), he was posted to the Philippines. We lived in the mountains in Baguio City, and he worked down the mountain about 45 minutes away if the road didn’t wash out. They bravely adapted again – new rules, new customs, new school, and new people. This was during the Vietnam War, and on our way to Thailand for a consultation, Dad was given combat pay for flying over a war zone! My brother in the Marines was sent to Vietnam, and we actually got to see him for a time when he broke his collarbone and was sent to Clark Air Base for rehab. Three years – middle school for me.

Then Dad was posted to Rhodes, Greece. There was no American high school on the island, so I initially went to a very strict boarding school in Switzerland. Mom dropped me off, and proceeded to meet Dad in Greece. I was miserable. Luckily, over Christmas break I met **Delinda ‘71** and **Drew Curtiss ‘75** who seemed quite happy at a school called ACS in Beirut. My parents agreed to send me there beginning with my junior year.

I got involved with theater, and Dad was not happy when I asked to leave home early from break so I could rehearse the spring play.

## Parent Dedications Continued

Quite the row ensued, but he relented. To my wonder and surprise, they actually flew to Beirut to see the play. Dad was my hero once again.

Some of Foreign Service life was glamorous – white glove teas with visiting dignitaries, entertaining officers and Seabees when American ships came into port, square dance parties, and ladies bridge groups. Some was not – boiling drinking water, filling the bathtubs prior to storms because water and electricity would go out, worry when my brother was injured. I'm sure my parents were

terrified when the war started in Lebanon during my senior year.

I look back now and realize that I truly had a graced childhood. I don't think I thanked them. I hope they knew how grateful I was for the chance they took when Dad took this job, for bringing the family along, and for saying yes to Beirut where I was truly happy for the last two years of my high school.

Thanks Johannes and Barbara van den Berg!

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