TERESA FARR FISTERE
MEMORIES OF MOTHER



My earliest memories of Mom are the smell of camphor for her chronic hay fever; the '47 Ford with the running boards that she drove her four kids around in; the ringlets she formed in my hair with her fingers; the mother and daughter dresses she made for just the two of us to wear; the Halloween costumes she made for us that made us the best-dressed trick-or-treaters in the neighborhood and the scuff-scuff of her sandals as she went with us to swim next door at the Bailey's. Swimming in that pool was the greatest thrill of our little lives and we had learned to swim there. Mother, too.

I knew I was special to her as her only daughter, but not better. She never played favorites. She was what mothers ought to be: warm and soft and ever-loving.

I found my singing voice in high school. There was not musical talent in the immediate family except for me and Mother made much of it, never to others, but to me. She wouldn't brag about her kids. I couldn't look at her in the audience, though. She'd look so proud I'd want to cry.



After college, I left California and finally settled in Salt Lake City, where I lived for the next 15 years. Mother and daughter kept their closeness by phone. When I got sick again, she told me: "It's not your fault". She knew it. And sure enough, a smart psychiatrist finally made the right diagnosis after many years - manic depression - and gave me the right medicine. It was an atypical form of the disease and so hard to call. But, Mother knew without knowing exactly what it was, that I had an illness and I wasn't to blame. The only one in my family who knew that.

I returned to California after Mother's Guillian-Barre, a life-threatening disease that scared us, but not her. She came home from the hospital with permanent damage and the will to overcome it. She just did everything she did before, only slower. She kept playing golf, using her golf club like a cane to get around on the golf course. To this day she is a nutrition and fitness expert and at 88 takes exceptionally good care of her health.

Mother and Dad had a full life together. In their later years they enjoyed travel, lots of friends and activities. But my dad was a very strong-willed man. When he died, Mother became much more assertive, opinionated, independent. We four children loved it. At the same time, Mother was realizing her new social role. As a widow, she was no longer invited by couples or to couples' events. The rare widower was grabbed up by hostesses, the widow ignored. What a blow - and by old friends.



Teresa - 1956

To add to that, Mother endures a strong chronic pain, the aftermath of shingles from a few years ago. After a year of illness and suffering, Mother decided to live with that pain and life has gotten good again, at 88. Without that resolve, I believe we would have lost her.



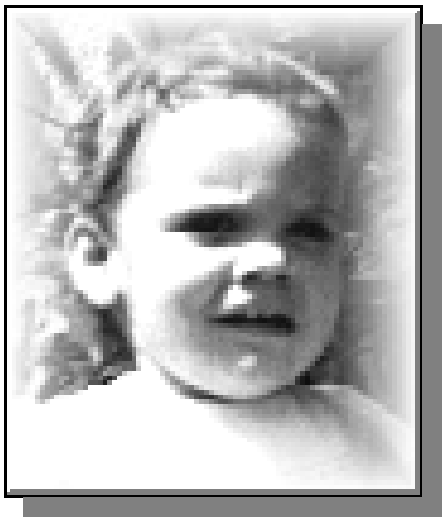
Teresa at 16

Above all, Mother has shown her children how to reinvent oneself when it is necessary. It took her a long time after her kids all left home. But after her illnesses, her widowhood, her age, she is strong; stronger than any of us would have ever thought. Stronger than us, maybe?

How I love this mother who still tells me what to do, but not too much. Who believed in me when I no longer did. Who cried when I sang - still does. I see her every weekend and I say goodnight to her every evening. Oh, but I'll miss her when she's gone.



TERESA FARR



I didn't like men when I was little. I wouldn't go to them and I didn't like being held by them. So my Uncle Val Burke made it his mission to win me over. And maybe convert me too because my Irish Catholic uncle took me to Mass, gave me a rosary and taught me my Hail Marys. Val's winning ways included rides in his turquoise '55 Thunderbird convertible. By this time I was 10 and my heart was won over by Valentine.

I showed my love of music in infancy. The wall behind my highchair was somewhat scarred where the back of the chair hit it while I was in it rocking to the music on the radio or in my imagination. Somehow I managed to hit that wall while I was sitting in a high chair that I shouldn't have been able to move!



Teresa at age 5

I really had a nice childhood. I grew up in a pleasant neighborhood in Los Angeles called Westchester, just north of the international airport. It was a community of 1940's and '50's tract homes except for our side of Arizona Avenue and an adjoining street, Riggs Place. Here were the ranch-style homes of Westchester's wealthy and here we lived comfortably but not ostentatiously. Our living room was bare for years until it could be furnished properly. Mother drove a '47 Ford until my brother Dave bought it from her and painted it baby blue. My parents had spent some money for that house but they lived within their means.



Teresa 1951

All of our relatives on both sides in Los Angeles did very well financially. Those were thriving years after World War II, especially in L.A. The Farrs and Jacksons, with a Mormon pioneer heritage made up of incredible hardship and impossible dreams, came to L.A. in the 1920s and '30s and just had it made by the 50s and 60s. Real American entrepreneurs: the Jacksons in construction, the Hunts in asphalt, the Farrs in air filters.



Tersea at 10

I'm very glad we Farrs lived in plain, unpretentious Westchester. Our friends may have been in awe of our house but we were unspoiled kids just like them.

A lot of my friends in Westchester were very brainy. No reflection on me except that I was a voracious reader and a good student and so I took classes with these smart kids and those classes were hard. Junior high and high school were unhappy years for me. My classmates were the children of physicists and engineers, the brains in research and development at the nearby aerospace companies. I studied way too hard too long and by my senior year I got sick and dropped out. When I returned to school the following year I was in a party mode. I didn't take a single advanced placement class but I made some great new senior friends and had some really fine parties at the house. But the music was the best of all: the choir, the Madrigals, the folk music and the senior talent show which I organized. I booked the incredible black duo Joe and Eddy to headline the show. What a wonderful year to make up for six years of hard labor.

Then onto whoops! BYU - where I experienced the party life unparalleled. Of course, BYU was a very strict Mormon college with very strict standards of conduct which I and my now Jack Mormon buddies meant to dismantle conduct by conduct. I really cannot go into detail about my misconduct at BYU for the sake of the Farr children. I will say that I was not a bad girl at BYU, merely a rebellious one. If, dear family member, you wish to hear of my adventure in Park City cleaning out the historic and filthy jail with my girlfriends on the judge's orders, or perhaps my ride in a Sherman tank across a farmer's fields in Orem, Utah, you'll want to refer to my unabridged memoirs yet to be published.



Teresa at age 12

I finally tired of fun and low achievement and returned to Los Angeles where I graduated from UCLA in sociology. But these were trying times especially for a twenty-something woman. It was the 60s, when social and political change in the U.S. was rampant and life was multiple choice, often not the choices your parents had made. I chose to leave L.A., ending up in Salt Lake City by way of Colorado and New Mexico. Salt Lake had always been a second home for me, the place where my dad grew up, gateway to Holiday Park, the beloved mountain home of the Farrs.

Salt Lake was good for me because it was small and clean and really just minutes away from the great mountain outdoors of the Wasatch and Uintah ranges. Some mountain memories were cross-country skiing up to Holiday Park in a snowstorm, twice! And going up in a dogsled a third time. Throwing a great party at the Wasatch Mountain Club when I was their social chairman. Running rivers on rubber rafts with the Club. These were lifetime experiences I shall not forget.



I created for myself church families in the Unitarian Church and later the Church of Religious Science in Salt Lake City. Salt Lake City has many denominations and about half the population are not Mormon. That half makes sure it believes in whatever it believes and so there are a lot of church-going Salt Lakers going to a lot of different churches. As I had in the Mormon church in Los Angeles, I found wonderful friends and opportunities to use my singing and theatrical talents in these Salt Lake churches.



Teresa at 23

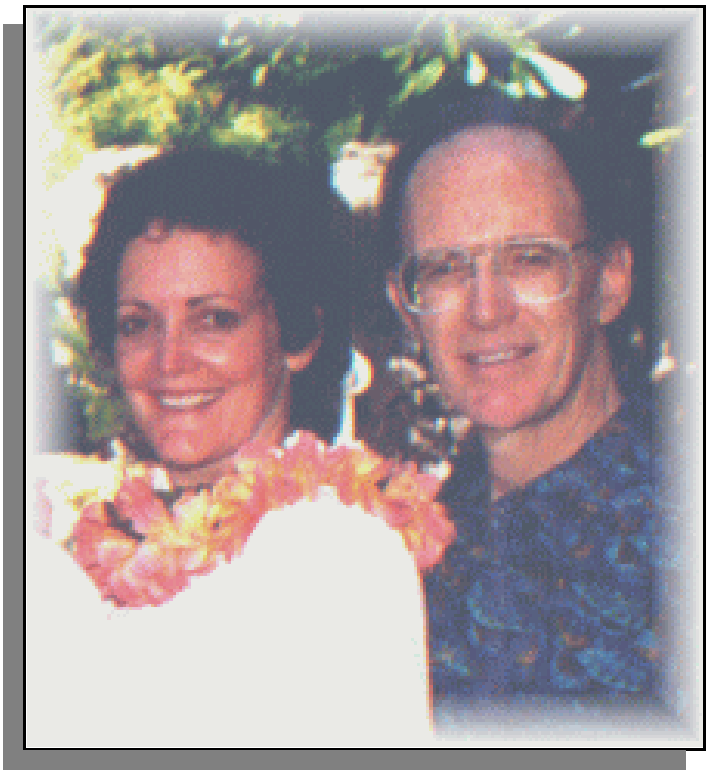
But I did have health problems in those years. I had a wonderful doctor and good support. But there was a lot of catching up to do. I did get some good work in my field of tourism in my last five years in Salt Lake. But I couldn't catch a man and at 40 years old in Salt Lake I had to compete with seven other women for one eligible man.

After two great parties in my honor, my 40th birthday party given by my brother Jerry and sister-in-law Jana, and my farewell party, I moved to San Diego and have lived happily ever after. It was a carefully considered move. San Diego had lots of single men. It was a tourist town. It felt like home from the beginning: a city in Southern California without the drawbacks of Los Angeles. It is a pretty city that people really like living in.

I've had a business in San Diego, Old Town Tours. We conducted walking tours of Old Town San Diego, California's first city. We did scripted first person performances of historical people from San Diego's past. My guides were teachers and artists, very qualified to do these special tours for fourth grade students and conventioneers.

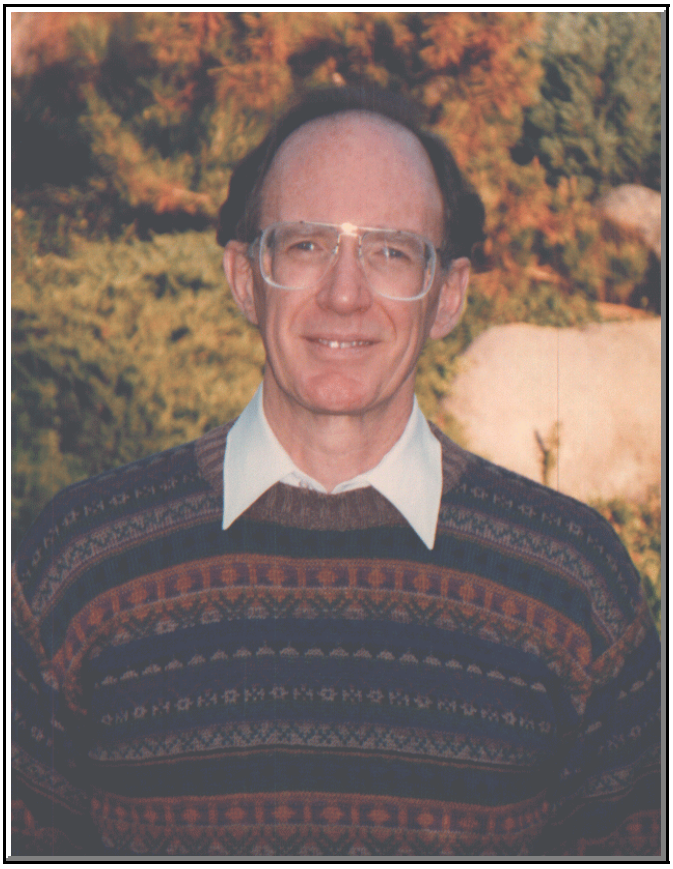
But best of all, I met a wonderful man here in San Diego. Through a matchmaker! I highly recommend it. About an hour into my first date with John Fistere, I realized I felt so comfortable with him. We married nine years ago.

Dreams do come true.



Teresa and John - 1996

MEMORIES OF THALIS AND SPENCER FARR
JOHN FISTERE



My introduction to the whole Farr family occurred at Flathead Lake Lodge in the summer of 1990. I had known Teresa for several months, and we were getting along well. I had met Thalis and Spencer and we got along fine, too. It seemed to me at the time that Thalis was a little more reserved about me than Spencer. Teresa was not that sure either, I think. She did not invite me to Flathead Lake. It was Spencer. Not being married yet was, up to that point, a definite exclusionary factor. I knew everything was going to be OK when we were assigned 32A and 32B at the end of the hall in the South Lodge.

The family was great to me, and has been ever since.

Thalis and Spencer used to come down to visit us for a weekend frequently. We always had a good time. As we all know, Spence's work ethic was stronger than most - certainly stronger than mine. Teresa and I, before our marriage, had come to an understanding that I did not do yard work or gardening. As good as it may be, I just can't develop an interest in it. However, we really appreciate our yard, and our oranges, which brings me back to Spence's work ethic. We have these wonderful orange trees, and when he learned that I was not having them fertilized, he became a man with a mission. Every six months or so, he would make sure I had bought fertilizer, and out we would go to the trees. No matter what I wanted to do at the time, I was recruited. My job was to make holes in the hardpan with a piece of reinforcing bar and a sledge hammer, and Spence's job was to pour fertilizer in the holes. Does that seem like a fair division of labor? Well, it worked for us. The oranges were delicious. However, they still are delicious, and they haven't been fertilized in quite a few years.

After Spence passed on, I got to know Thalis a lot better. From time to time we would get involved on one topic or another, such as politics, and we would get into an interesting discussion, or so I

thought. It turned out I was developing a reputation with her for being contentious. It didn't help any when a new topic came up, and Thalis had not yet said which point of view she favored. I said "Thalis, let me know which side you are on, so I can take the other side!" She did laugh at that one.

John Fistere 28 September, 1999

