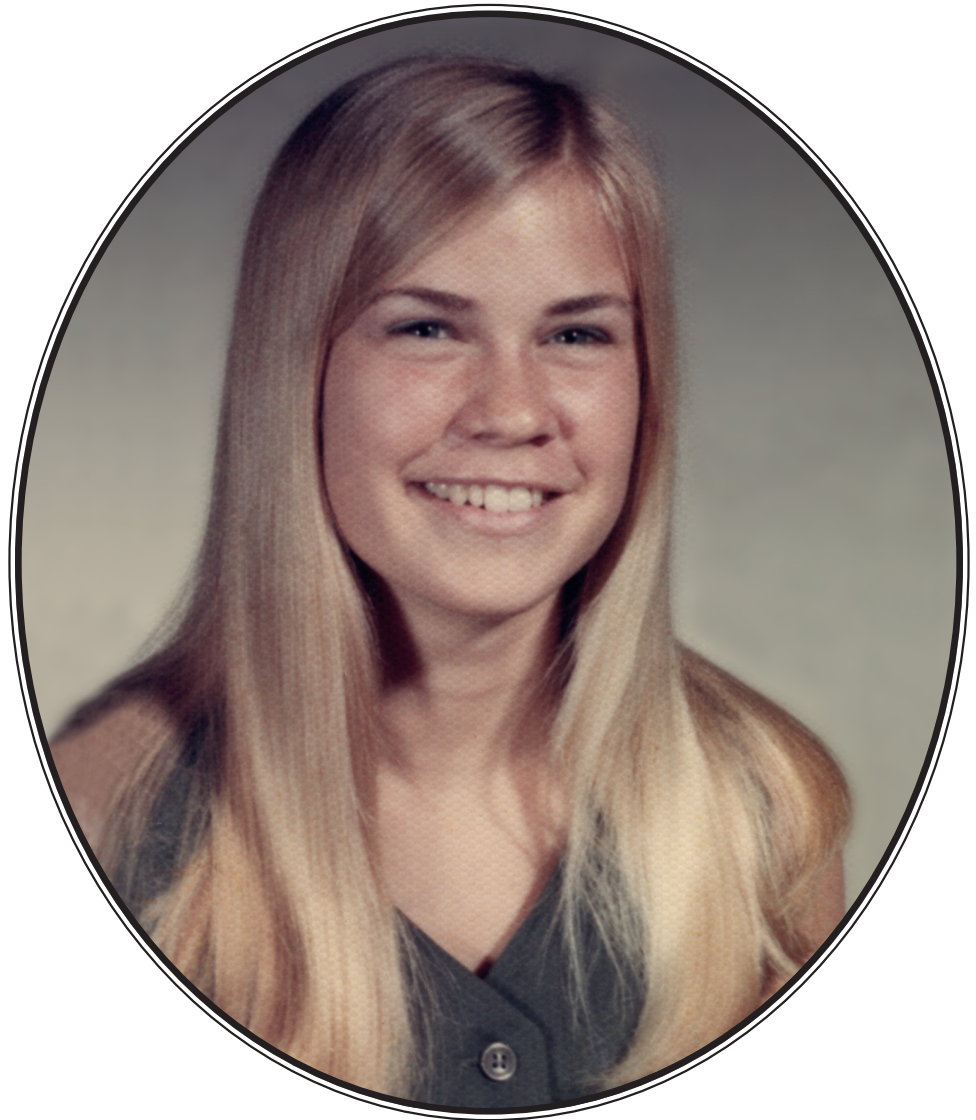


Elizabeth Patterson



Betsy was born in Birmingham, January 29, 1953. She was a source of great delight to her older brothers and sister, not to mention her father who was able to be more involved in her upbringing than he had been with his previous children. Betsy was a typical Patterson student and perhaps even more disciplined. Much of her childhood was more like that



*Celebrating her christening with Godparents and relatives:
Lucille McDowell, Myrtice Moore, John Caldwell,
Margaret Moore, a proud papa and Charlotte*

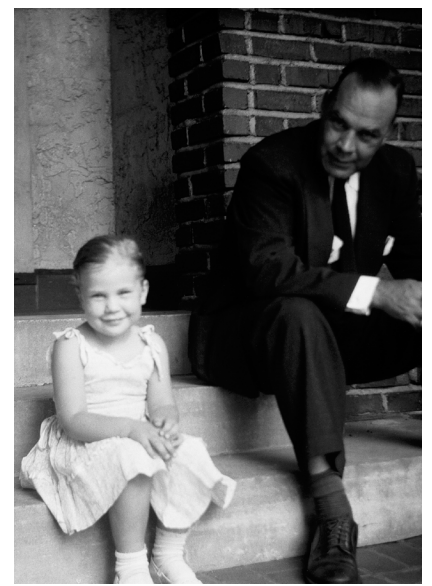
of an only child since all of her siblings had left the nest by the time she was in the second grade. She never really felt like an only child due largely to her lifelong friend Merle Drennen and the knowledge that she was *not* an only child as her mother had been. She recognized early on that having older siblings allowed her to see the consequences of a variety of “decisions” each of them made, and this opportunity played a tremendous role in shaping her life and dreams.

In 1964, in the heat of the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, her father was transferred to Phoenix, Arizona. This move was



Playmate of the Year 1953





initially viewed as a terrible hardship to Betsy as she had made many good friends at the Brooke Hill School for Girls, a private, college-prep school in Birmingham. The decision for her to attend this private school was made in the interest of getting a good education but also as a way to avoid the clamor and imagined dangers of attending the soon-to-be integrated public schools in Birmingham, complete with the threat

of possibly being bused to Bessemer or Irondale, wherever those places were. Clearly, there was something to be said for the “better” education offered by Brooke Hill: not only does she remember many of her teachers and classroom experiences, she can still recite the Presidents of the United States, although now her memory gets a little fuzzy around the Roosevelts and Wilson eras.

Before arriving in Phoenix, the family attended Richard’s graduation from Yale where they were given the name of a school in Phoenix and a teacher related to one of Richard’s

Betsy and friend at The Sandox, a family tradition resurrected for her benefit and enjoyed as much by the family cats as the children

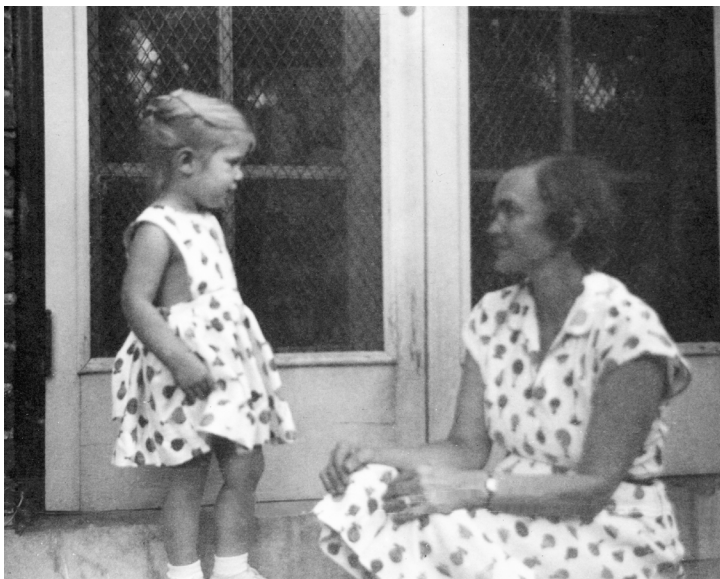




Documenting a rare snowfall in Birmingham with her Brownie.



At Lake Martin



Birmingham Post-Herald

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1955

Santa's List

ELIZABETH DURANT BURNETT
Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Burnett,
2510 Park Lane-cr, s.

BETSY PATTERSON, daughter of Mr. and Mrs.
George D. Patterson Jr. 2432 Henrietta-rd.

OWEN and BRUCE HOLT, twin sons of
Dr. and Mrs. LeRoy Holt of Bessemer

JOHN PERSONS McHENRY
Son of Mr. and Mrs. William K. McHenry Jr.
1007 42nd-st, s.

CLAY McCLUNG JR., son of
Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Clay McClung
2918 Overhill-Rd.

DEVAN ARD JR., son of Mr. and Mrs.
DeVan Ard, 2957 Pine Haven-dr.

MARILYN FAITH HOPKINS, daughter of
Mr. and Mrs. Paul M. Hopkins, Millbrooke-rd.

JIMMY SOMERVILLE
Son of Mr. and Mrs. Ormond Somerville
3336 Dell-rd.

Betsy Patterson

One of the greatest benefits Betsy provided her older siblings was the fact that Santa Claus gained a new lease on life and felt obliged to fill stockings hung by teenagers as well as genuine believers.





classmates. The school was Phoenix Country Day School, a small, private, *but co-ed*, college-prep school about a half mile from the house they had bought. The decision to attend that school was an easy one — the public school in the neighborhood couldn't be found due to too many dead-end streets.



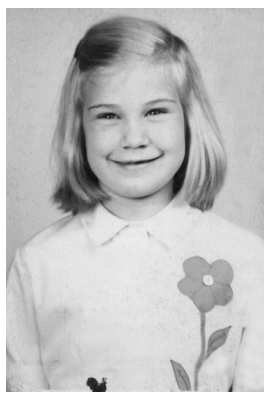
South of the Border in Tiajuana during a visit to George in Coronado, CA, in 1959

Betsy's experience at PCDS was one of the best educational experiences of her life. The classes were small — only 26 people in her graduating class. The teachers were enthusiastic about teaching and sharing life experiences with their students. The 7th grade Social Studies teacher skateboarded with students during recess as well as equipping them with an armamentarium of "swear" words, such as "trash-bucket" and "gobblety-gook." She was taught French by a Greek, Latin by a Hungarian, math by an Armenian, and English by two kooks right out of a Jack Kerouiac novel. But, the high point of her time at PCDS was in Biology when they dissected fetal pigs, whose internal anatomy very closely resembles that of a human. Thus, were planted the seeds of her love of biology and an eventual career in medicine.

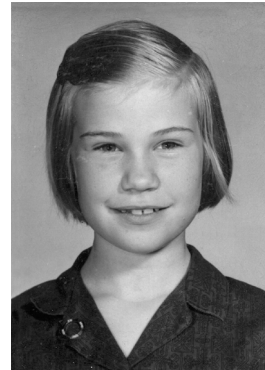
The other truly wonderful aspect of moving to Phoenix from Alabama (aside from having the niece of Barry Goldwater in her class) was the realization that people from different ethnic, racial, cultural and religious back-grounds were just people, not monsters that could give you cooties. She actually had friends who were Jewish, and she really could not understand why that was such a big deal



In the backyard with Kevin and her cat



Betsy began at Lakeview like a proper Patterson, but transferred to Brooke Hill School as soon as possible.



to people in Alabama. There is some basis of truth in Thomas Wolfe's "You Can't Go Home Again."

When the time came, she was more than ready to leave the conservative southwest and head to the liberal northeast and the Radcliffe - Harvard setting. The academic studies were challenging, especially in science classes surrounded by back-stabbing pre-med students. However, she was able to find her own pace and niche — and especially enjoyed those afternoons in the bowels of Widener Library, seeking out fine bits of knowledge about the influence of camels on mankind throughout history. The final year spent studying the behavior of house sparrows in the ivy-covered walls of the Harvard Athletic Building (which produced no useful data and consequently no thesis) confirmed her belief that academic research was not her forte. Fortunately, the University of South Alabama College of Medicine in Mobile thought she would add some gender-diversity to the Class of 1978; and thus began the fairly long road to a career in medicine.

During her junior year at Harvard, she wrote a paper for a Social Science class taught by Doris Kearns, looking at Birmingham ten years after the police dogs and fire-hoses and church

bombings of Civil Rights Movement era of the early sixties. Interviews with citizens of Birmingham of various ages revealed some changes (Birmingham had a black mayor.) but also no changes — many were still fighting the Civil War and longing for the good ol' days and the good ol' darkies who were so happy. Clearly, four years in medical school were the most she could stand of living in the South.

After four years of medical school, she moved on to St. Louis, Missouri, in 1978 where





Fortunately for Betsy the family kept the place on Lake Martin when they moved to Phoenix, and Betsy inherited command of the 14-foot red aluminum runabout with the Evinrude 25 from Dwight and Richard.



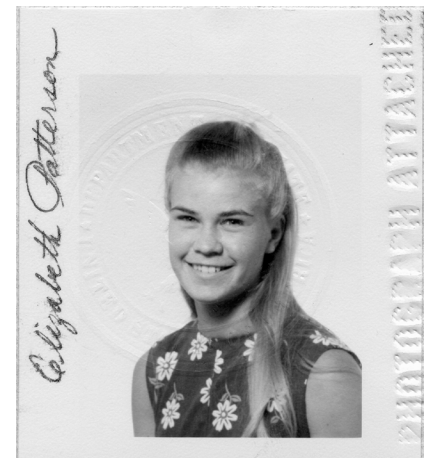
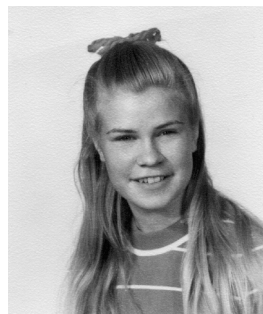
Cocktails aboard the Queen Elizabeth 2 crossing the Atlantic in 1970

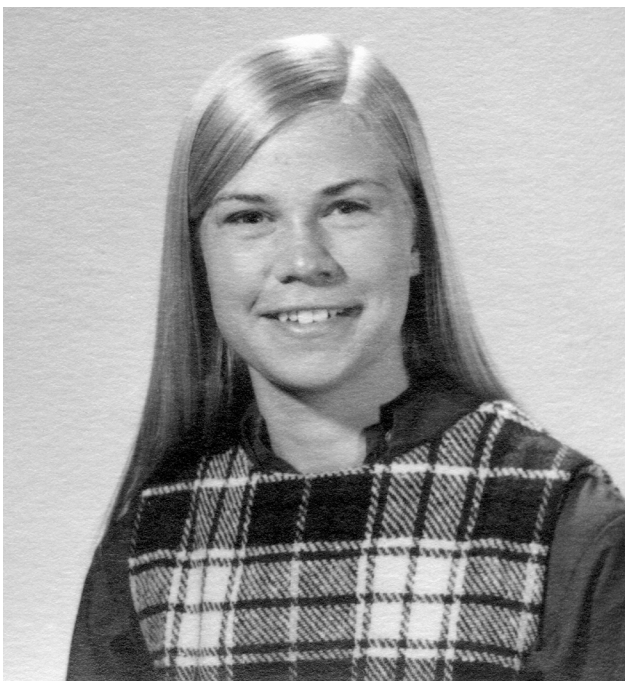
she spent two years doing a pediatric residency at St. Louis Children's Hospital — the second best educational experience in her life. It was a grueling two years of being on-call every third night, but it was an intense education which developed lifelong habits of attention to detail and continual striving for excellence.

In 1980 she moved to Redondo Beach, California, and finally got to be a "California girl." She began a two-year residency in Emergency Medicine at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and finished her Pediatrics residency there. She passed both her Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine board-certification examinations and began practicing emergency medicine at Downey Community Hospital where she eventually met her husband, Albert Jon Stroberg.

In 1983 she fulfilled a lifelong dream of going to Kenya to see the wild animals in

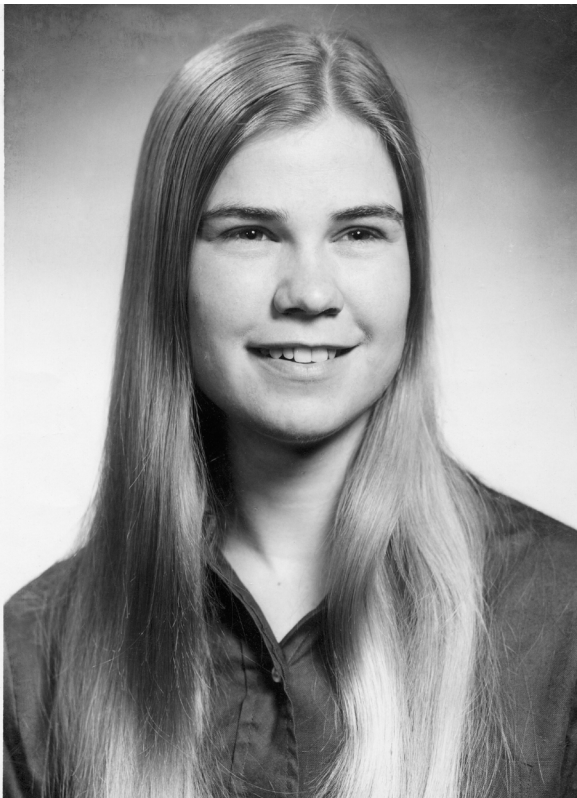
Passport photo and Hungarian visa photo from trip to Europe in 1970





When Betsy graduated from high school and went to Harvard, the family moved back to Birmingham. Her father persuaded Betsy to make her debut in Birmingham, and she had a party with Marie Louise O'Neal, the daughter of a longtime family friend, Camper O'Neal.

their natural environment when she volunteered through Direct Relief International to work for three months at Friends Hospital in Kaimosi, a Quaker hospital in western Kenya. During that time she went on safari to the Masai Mara Game Reserve, climbed Mt. Kenya with a veterinarian from Scotland named Jane Fraser, climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro with a couple from Germany, and visited the mountain gorillas in Rwanda. Again,





Spring 1980 in St. Louis



Visiting her nephew Tristan in Los Angeles in 1976



Playing dress-up with Merle in San Francisco

she was reminded how people are the same regardless of the color of their skin, the name of their religion, and the origin of their ancestors.

On returning from Africa, she resumed her work in the ER at Downey Community Hospital where she got to know Al Stroberg, an orthopedic surgeon who was always very pleasant on the phone regardless of the time of the call. They began to spend time together pursuing mutual interests in running and bicycling and his interest in ocean swimming (except when there were dorsal fins showing above the water). It was his unique perspective of the world around him and his subtle sense of humor that stole her heart for life.

On January 25, 1985, they were married at the Palos Verdes Country Club by a renegade non-denominational minister who showed up late, sparing George from having to perform the ceremony. The wedding ceremony concluded with a rousing rendition of Randy Newman's "We Love L.A." The honeymoon began the next day after Betsy had finished running in the Redondo Beach Super Bowl 10K with about 20,000 other runners.

They settled down in San Pedro, California, and continued their lives as usual until January 29, 1987, when their first-born son Steven Ragnar (Is that a family name? It is now.) Stroberg arrived. What a bundle of joy and happiness for them both! How could life get any better? Life did get even better fourteen months later to the day on March 29, 1988, when their second-born son Tom Wylie (Is that a family name? It is now.) Stroberg arrived. From the moment he was born he was full of belly-laughs and clever tricks.



*Betsy and Al
were married
in a perfect
California
outdoor
wedding.*



*Their house in
San Pedro,
California,
bordered on a
golf course
and had a view
of the ocean.*



*Celebrating
Al's birthday
in San Pedro,
August 1984*



As the boys grew and the graffiti crept closer to their home in San Pedro, they began to look for a “get-away” place for weekends. Knowing that two hours was about as long as any of them could spend in the car, they visited Julian to the south and Ojai to the north looking for that ideal get-away spot. Ojai won and in 1990 they started construction on a house on a nine-acre avocado orchard that they were converting to an orange orchard after a winter freeze nearly wiped out the avocado trees. As construction progressed they realized that they enjoyed being in Ojai a lot more than Los Angeles, so in 1992 they moved to Ojai to



Jim, Gibby, Dwight, Elizabeth, George, Charlotte, Betsy, Al, Judith, Elizabeth, Richard, Liza, Dwight, Vince, Kevin, Tristan and Harriet

live and work (they hoped). The living in Ojai turned out to be wonderful — lots of families who spent lots of time with their children, friendly neighborhood schools with grassy playgrounds, community service activities looking for a few good volunteers. Working in the medical community was far more than a challenge; it proved to be a long and painful experience for both Al and Betsy.

In January 2000, Al decided to take a sabbatical from his private practice in Ojai and visited his friends who were practicing orthopedics in the San Fernando Valley and at UCLA and at Orthopedic Hospital in LA. During the course of those months he decided that he wanted to pursue his lifelong interest in pediatric orthopedics, so he joined the pediatric orthopedic group at UCLA spending two days a week there. The other two days a week he spent at various pediatric orthopedic clinics

in Ventura County, leaving one day open for surgery. As a result he was much happier. He also became quite a knowledgeable citrus rancher, branching out to raise Pixie tangerines as well as Valencia oranges. He loved his chainsaw and skirt-pruner — and as of this writing is still waiting for that back-hoe to be delivered.

Betsy continued to work in the ER in the small hospital in Ojai, becoming the Medical Director of the Emergency Department. She continued to have problems blending her expectation of excellence from those who work in the ER with the reality of the situation, which is that the other ER physicians are Family Practitioners who work in the ER in their spare time.

Fortunately, there were other sources of joy and fulfillment in her life. For almost ten years she coached boys soccer, until Ragnar and Wylie announced that they would no longer



*Fall 1988:
Ragnar and his
Mom check out
the property in
Ojai where they
are planning to
build a house.*

be playing soccer. Their love was basketball. She coached Wylie's sixth grade math team to victory in the Math Super Bowl —largely due to the smart math students (including Wylie) in the class. She was also the coordinator and trainer for the volunteer umpires for the Ojai PONY baseball league, training over 30 volunteer umpires. They were courageous men and women who went out onto the field each week and called the games fairly, despite much grumbling from the fans in the stands. She was very proud of her students.

Editors note: Betsy was not at all sure she was ready for her life to be written down as if this is all there is to it. She reserves the right to make additions periodically so her bio can continue to develop as her life continues to unfold.

Wylie, Betsy, Ragnar and Al at home in Ojai

