

Memoirs of My Sister Rose
(who is Denise Pearson Dixon)
By Nancy Pearson Escobedo
(also known as Rose - her only and best sister)

May 12, 2020

I had an interesting conversation with my sister Denise Dixon tonight on the phone. She is in a long term facility in Nampa, Idaho, where she has been for more than four years. I am on a mission in the family history center in Salt Lake City, Utah. We were discussing what I have been doing on my mission, and she said, “Do you ever do any family history?” I asked her what she meant specifically, and she said, “I need someone to write about me, because I just can’t do it myself.” Instantly, I said, “I’ll do it.” Then I told her I was going to entitle it: “Memoirs of My Sister Rose,” and we both laughed.

Our nickname of “Rose” for each other is a unique story, and I will start with that so you will understand why I have entitled this memoir in that way. When we were teenagers (I am one and a half years older than Denise), we had a good bunch of LDS friends we palled about with. One of the girls’ names was Karen Slater, and she had the funniest laugh that was high and shrill with a big hiccup in it. We got the biggest kick out of imitating her. She had a lipstick called “Kiss Me Rose Pink,” which we thought was so romantic. At that time there was also a program on TV called “Car 54 Where Are You?” about a talking police car, and on the program was a very talkative wife who never shut up. But when her husband had enough, he would say, “That’s enough, Rose,” and she would immediately shut right up. Well, we sure thought that was hilarious, so we started saying that to each other all the time: “That’s enough, Rose.”

One thing led to another, and before you know it, we had all our friends named Rose. Of course, since I was the oldest I was Rose 1 and Denise was Rose 2, and there was Cousin Rose, and Kiss me Rose Karen, and Uncle Rose, and Dingy Rose, and on and on. The nicknames stuck with Denise and I, and we both call each other Rose. In fact, our kids thought we were both named Rose — I know it sounds confusing, but to us it just “IS.” So we still, to this day (I am now 65), call each other Rose.

Right now, Denise is struggling with health issues which are critical, and she asked me to pray that she will go peacefully when it is time. I assured her that I pray for that for her daily, and

that the Lord is in charge and will let her go peacefully when it is her time. She is still here for a reason, which we may never know right now. But she is a trooper, and is fighting to stay positive for her husband Owen (who is a Saint in my opinion) and her 4 wonderful children and her seven and a half grandchildren.

Denise was born on Dec. 2, 1946, in Portland, Ore., to Evelyn Stewart and Denton Willey Pearson. She was the last of their four children. She has three older siblings: George Denton Pearson, born on May 10, 1941, in Oakland, Calif.; Michael Stuart Pearson, born on April 5, 1943, in Oklahoma City, Okla.; and Nancy Ann Pearson, born on April 25, 1945, in Memphis, Tenn. (that's me). Both of our parents have now passed on. Dad died of heart complications after a gall bladder surgery at age 58, and mom died at age 74 of a massive coronary.

Most of the next part Denise told me on the phone on May 22, 2010. We laughed and had such a wonderful hour-long conversation. Denise married Owen Dixon, who she met through his roommate, Bruce Pitt. Owen was born on June 4, 1942, and was raised in Boise, Idaho. He had gone to BYU and then moved to Portland to work as a respiratory therapist in a hospital. Denise says Owen was very, very, very shy. She doesn't even know how in the world they ever got together. They were total opposites. Owen said he thinks that their kids on the other side were trying to get them together. Owen is very smart, and that is the first thing that drew Denise to him — his brain. She also thought he was handsome.

Denise heard him give an M-Men and Gleaners stake class, and she was fascinated. Then Bruce wanted Owen to get a date so they could double date. They dated for two weeks, and on April 6, 1970, got engaged.

Before that, on a General Conference Sunday, he came over to mom's house in King City, Tigard, Ore., where Denise was living and working, and they watched conference on TV. She fixed dinner — pork chops with gravy. He told her, "You know how good a cook is by the way the gravy turns out." Denise panicked. She didn't add any liquid to the drippings, only the thickening, and the gravy turned into a little round ball, the size of a meat ball. She cut it in half and gave him half, and she had half. She was so embarrassed. He didn't think anything of it. He just ate it. And a few days later, they went to a movie. Denise picked him up in Mom's red Mustang, since she lived out in Tigard in King City, and he didn't have a car. After the movie, she went to drop him off at the apartment he shared with Bruce Pitt, who conveniently could not find a date that night even though

he was a ladies' man.

While they were sitting in the car, Owen turned to Denise and asked, "Will you marry me?" and she said, "Yes." Then he gave her their first kiss, and Denise felt the spirit so strong you could cut it with a knife. Owen didn't feel anything — because he was a bundle of nerves. He really had not dated much. This was about 3:00 a.m. He went in and called his parents at that early hour and said "I'm engaged." They said, "That's wonderful, can you call us in the morning?" He was so excited, and so was his family. Owen was 28 and Denise was 24. Four months later on Aug. 4, 1970, they got married in the Idaho Falls Temple.

They traveled to Burley on the way to the temple, and stayed with Owen's aunt and uncle and three cousins (all boys) who made so much noise all night long that Denise did not sleep. They had to get up at 3:00 a.m. to go to the temple, so she was mad. Since Owen is an early morning person, he wasn't mad.

After the ceremony, they stayed in Idaho Falls for their wedding night. There was a motel across the street from the temple, and there was a slot at the top of the door, and you need to close it if the room is occupied. They did not know that. The next morning, the maid came and knocked on the door and saw that it was "unoccupied." She opened the door as Owen was walking face toward her, naked. She quickly closed the door, and Owen went back to bed. Denise asked, "Owen, why didn't you just turn around?" and he said, "I didn't think of it." She was so embarrassed. They felt like the manager had set that up, because the sign was broken and he knew this was a newly married couple.

Then they went to Pocatello, Idaho, the next day. Denise's old roommate, Susie Ruka Barfuss, had been at the wedding, which she was not expecting. She brought a present and wanted Denise to open it right then, but she couldn't since she was having pictures taken. So that's why they went to see her the next day. She had come all the way from southern California to Pocatello to her parents-in-law, so she could come to Denise's wedding. She had her new baby with her. The gift was a sewing kit.

Owen and Denise are the parents of four children: Stephen, Eric, Michelle, and Shannon. Stephen LaMar Dixon was born on Sept. 21, 1971, in Salt Lake City, Utah (middle name is Owen's father's name); Eric Denton Dixon was born on Nov. 12, 1972, in Salt Lake City, Utah (middle name is after our dad, Denton Willey Pearson); Michelle Trieste Dixon was born on Aug. 22, 1975, in Portland, Ore. (her middle name is after our Aunt Trieste Pearson Hall, our father's sister); and

Shannon Evelyn Dixon was born on July 12, 1979, in Portland, Ore. (her middle name is after our mother, Evelyn Stewart Pearson).

Our family was raised in Portland, Ore., where my parents decided to stay after Denise was born. Dad had traveled all over the country selling subscriptions to Collier Magazines. Thus, we were each born in a different state. We lived at 7304 N. Seward, a beautiful street with friendly and fun neighbors all around us. We played with all the kids on the block, and had lots of games and rituals that we all were involved in growing up.

At night in the summers, we would stay out in the evening and play “Hide and Go Seek.” That was so fun, except when our brothers would trample on the Craigs’ flower gardens and we would all get in trouble. There was a hedge on the side on their lot closest to our house, and beautiful flowers were on their side of it. The boys would just jump right over the hedge and right onto the flowers that they would not see. They were two old ladies who lived about three doors down. One of them was the mother, and the other was a spinster who never married or had children and was the vice principal at our high school. We were terrified of them, but really they were nice people — just not used to us rowdy children in the neighborhood.

As our brothers got older, they would hide in the bushes with their girlfriends and we could never find them — I imagine they were smooching. The more we would call “Olly Olly Oxen Free,” the longer they would hide. That was our signal for everyone to come in. I don’t think we got it then, but in retrospect, now I understand perfectly that they were putting one over on us little kids.

We also played “work up” in front of the Koppens’ house, which was across the street and down the block. That is a game of baseball where you work up to bat and play each position in succession. It was lots of fun, and we played for hours, only moving out of the street when a car would come by or our parents would start yelling out the door for us to come home for dinner. I know some windows were broken along the way, but that didn’t stop our games.

A favorite game in winter in our basement was “Bully Bull,” that we made up as kids. Denise was always scared to death, because the lights were out and because whoever had the bull hat on would butt whoever they found. We had a black hat with horns sticking out (it was part of a Halloween costume, like a devil costume). The rules were that whoever got butted had to be “it.” Lights were out, and everyone hid in the basement and the “it” person went looking. It was fun and scary, and since our basement had four big rooms, we had plenty of places to hide.

Red Rover was played on the lawn outside, Two teams held hands on opposite sides, and the

person who was “it” came running toward the line saying “Red Rover, Red Rover, send Denise right over” and Denise would take off and try to break through the hands. But Denise was so little, she could never make the break, so she would have to stay on their side.

One summer, we decided to have a parade, so we gathered all the kids in the neighborhood and all dressed up in costumes. Antoinette Kaiel, who lived across the street, was the princess — which made us all mad. I dressed in my tap dance costume, which was sparkly. (Mike and I took tap lessons. Denise says she was so jealous that she didn’t ever get to take them, since we could not afford it by the time she was old enough, and finally Mike and I also had to drop out.) We marched around the block, and Stevie Miller was at the front and he had a toy rifle. It was wet out, and he jiggled the trees with his rifle, which made the wet trees rain on us. There was probably about 10 of us, including our brothers. We thought we were so smart and cute, and that is was a real parade like the famous “Rose Festival Parade” done yearly in downtown Portland.

We always made our own fun, and were close to all the kids in the neighborhood. We played outside or inside at one of our houses. All the parents were good to let us have fun and romp around. We were always safe and secure wherever we were — inside or outside. We didn’t venture off our street much, since we always had too much to do.

We had people of all different religions: Kaiels were Catholic, Koppens were Lutherans, we were Mormons, and a Jewish family moved in.

One of Denise’s favorite places to go was Wahkeena Falls, just before Multnomah falls on the old highway (probably about 50 miles from Portland). She loved the falls there, and it had a nice picnic ground and a nice stream. We went there often on Sundays to picnic, and also took other families. She likes the sound of rushing water — it is very peaceful to her. She also loves the ocean. We went to Seaside a lot when young, since our cousins Helena Rawls and all her family lived there. Helena’s mom Lois was my mom’s first cousin, and they were close. Her husband was a doctor in Seaside, and they had a great big house. We loved to go there and stay and play in the ocean and around their place. They eventually got a divorce after we were all grown up.

Denise and Owen loved going to Canon Beach because it is just a couple miles below Hug Point, and that is the neatest beach — when the tide is out, you can walk around where it is usually overflowed with water. There were also caves that Owen loved. They did not go back in very far, but were fun to explore — especially for Owen and the kids, who loved to look for treasures.

The third beach, over where the rock was cut out of the wall, was where the carriages could

cross around the point of the rock, before the highway was built and the tide had to be out to cross. This was before cars. That was a place they liked to take a walk. If the tide started coming in, you had to move fast so you wouldn't be stuck.

When Denise was little — about three years old — and we were at Seaside, she was playing at the edge of the ocean and got swept out a little ways. She was scared to death, and fortunately someone came to rescue her — probably mom.

I (Nancy) got left behind sitting on a wall at Seaside, and I was crying. They didn't count all the kids and forgot me. They had started home in the car, and went a mile or so before they realized I was not there. I was four or five, and there were people there who were trying to find out what was wrong because I was sitting there bawling my eyes out. They finally came back and found me, and mom felt terrible about leaving me behind. The people standing there did not make my mom feel much better.

We always stopped at the Elderberry Inn (which my dad and all of us called the Beldererry Inn). It was about halfway home from Seaside. We always ordered fish and chips, which were so good, and sometimes there was a bear in a cage outside that we loved to see. Denise says she was concerned because it was a small cage, with no room to do anything but stand — very cruel. At that time, we didn't give it any thought.

We had a wonderful, peaceful, happy childhood, and although we were probably the poorest on our block, we always had food on the table and decent (if not the newest) clothes to wear. My mom made a lot of our skirts and dresses. And our cousin Kathy Lou Kollenbaum (now Flett) also sent us her "hand-me-downs," which were wonderful and felt like new — she lived in Oakland, Calif., and was four years older than me. In fact, she taught me and Denise how to shave our legs and underarms. My, did we feel mature. I think I was about 12 and we were visiting for a summer vacation.

May 29, 2010

Denise and Owen were living in Portland, Ore., where he was working at Good Samaritan hospital as a respiratory therapist and she was pregnant with Stephen. All of a sudden, they had a distinct impression that they should move to Salt Lake. At that time, I was also living in Salt Lake, since I had finished BYU and was working at the Utah State Employment Service downtown. I was living with Barbara Busath and her daughter Amy in an apartment nearby. When they moved to Salt

Lake, they moved into an apartment building at 300 S and 300 E and were the apartment managers, and Owen also worked at LDS hospital as a respiratory therapist. The pay was so low, they qualified for food stamps. They did not apply for them, but could have. Since there happened to be an apartment vacant right next door to them, and since Barbara and I were not happy with the apartment we were in, we moved in next to Denise.

At Christmas in 1972, I was visited by a friend named Paul Fox. Denise and Owen and I and Paul decided to go to Gloria and Alan Dixon's house in Orem, Utah for Christmas day (Alan is Owen's brother and Gloria is Francisco's sister — I later married Francisco).

The day was cold, and we were all inside having a wonderful dinner and then playing games. I was introduced to all of those I did not know. One of them was Francisco Escobedo Jr. (who was called Quico by his family). He was there visiting his sister Gloria. He said hello, and I was sitting by Paul on the couch (later he said he thought that was my boyfriend — but he was not). I asked Francisco where he was from, and he said "Pioche, Nevada." I asked where that was, and he told me that it was a tiny town about 300 miles from Orem. I said, "I would never live in a small town. I think Provo is Podunk county." Little did I know that I would end up marrying him and eating my words.

The reason for this story is that a few days later, and much time spent with Francisco, I went to see my sister and told her about dating Francisco and that I knew I was going to marry him. She was all in favor of it, since she was already part of the family and had met him and liked him a lot.

As things progressed in my relationship with Francisco (and by this time Owen and Denise had both Stephen and Eric, who were born in Salt Lake), they had the impression that they should move back to Portland. So they did, and lived there most of the next many years. They eventually moved to Vancouver, Wash., and then to Nampa, Idaho.

As we have looked back at that time, we have come to understand that I would never have met Francisco if they had not come to Salt Lake and subsequently spent time with Gloria and Alan. I am so thankful that they listened to the spirit and made that move, even though it was hard since she was very pregnant. It's interesting that the first Christmas they were there we also spent with Gloria and Alan — who at that time lived in Salt Lake in an apartment. The parents of Gloria and Francisco were there from Texas, and also a brother named David was there. Francisco was not. Denise thought maybe I would get together with David — who was close to my age and single. But that was not to be. We know that the Lord works in his own time and ways to accomplish his plans for each of us. I married Francisco in 1973 in the Provo Temple, and that was the best thing that ever happened to me.

Another thing that Denise and I did while they lived in Salt Lake was to do our genealogy. Our mom Evelyn was really into gathering records — all of which I now have — and she sent Denise and I money each month (\$15.00) to go to the genealogy library and find the records there. We spent time each week in the evening (while Owen tended the boys) searching for and copying the records we found. I also spent my lunch hours at work typing the documents we found that were handwritten or hard to read. We had many happy times, and felt like we accomplished a lot.

I, Nancy, am now serving as a full-time missionary in Salt Lake at the Family History Center, where I am following up on the work we started so many years ago. I know that this time now, and that time then, were not by chance and that the Lord has directed us in these things.

One memory I have of our life in Portland was the fun house we lived in. It was located at 7304 N. Seward St. (in North Portland). It was three stories, including the basement. There were two bedrooms on the main floor and two upstairs (one very large, one small, and an attic). The basement had four rooms — laundry room, a room to hang the wash on, a room where we had a ping pong table, and a family room with a bar (counter and shelves) and a fireplace. That is where we spent the summers when it was hot. We had a TV down there, and it was cozy and comfy.

Our brothers George and Mike always slept upstairs in the small bedroom, and Denise and I sometimes slept on the main floor and sometimes upstairs in the big room.

We were terrified of the attic, and I was much more comfortable when they left the attic door ajar so we knew nothing bad was in there. When we were little, and I was scared, I would make sure my bed was right next to Denise's so I could feel more safe. Then I would tell her that I would hold her hand if she was scared. All the while, it was me, the older sister, who was scared, and she just gave me her hand and let me feel secure.

We had all our storybook dolls lined up on a shelf upstairs, and we played up there a lot. We also played lots of board games, such as "Monopoly" and "Sorry," or cards games like "Go Fish" or "Old Maid," either in the front room or in the basement. Often, the neighborhood kids would come play games with us or we would go play at their houses.

We had a park close by called Peninsula Park, which was about five blocks away. All summer, we spent hours there either swimming in the outdoor pool or doing the structured games and crafts that were offered at one end of the park. We would either walk or ride our bikes there every day. They also had a little stand on wheels that sold "sno cones," which were a treat for us. It was a safe place, and we spent many enjoyable hours there from the time we were old enough to go by

ourselves until we graduated from high school. They often had free concerts there in the evening, which we would also attend with our mom.

At the end of our street and across the main street of Portland Boulevard was a very unusual place called “Mock’s Bottom.” It was down a deep ravine and was a swamp. Our parents told us never to go down there because it was so dangerous. We would stand at the edge and look down and wonder about all the ghouls and goblins and danger that were down there. Now it has been developed into an industrial area, and I don’t really know if there was a swamp there. But we were sufficiently terrified that we did not ever venture down there. It is likely that our brothers were much braver and did take the dare. I just don’t know.

We all went to Peninsula Grade School, which was kindergarten to grade 8. It was about 10 blocks away, and we walked to and from the school every day. There was also a “goodie wagon” close to the school on our way home, where we could stop if we had money and get a treat.

Then we went to Roosevelt High School, which was several miles away and had grades 9–12. It was a big school, and we made lots of friends from all of the other elementary schools who also went there. We were on the bus route and mostly took the bus, unless dad could take us and pick us up. When he worked evenings selling insurance, he met us and brought us home, and then we all cooked dinner together since Mom was working days at the National Education Association as a secretary. She had previously worked at the Benson Hotel in downtown Portland as a freelance stenographer on the second floor.

Dad had lots of different jobs over the years, but never really had a career like mom did. He was sometimes out of work, and then we had to rely on church welfare for food and assistance. At those times (mostly when we were teenagers), as part of getting help from the church we were asked to clean the church chapel, which we did on many Saturdays. We went as a family and spent the day working hard together. It was a blessing to have the help, but also to pay it back by working to clean the chapel.

At one point, dad had a business with his brother, Uncle Mike (Milo Pearson). They had pinball machines and jukeboxes all over in different restaurants and bars in Portland. The business was called “Pearson Amusement Co.” I think they did well for a few years, and then they stopped — because Uncle Mike died. But we ended up with several of those “amusements” in our basement, and used to play the jukebox and machines. I remember us girls going with dad to change the size 45 records in the different locations in the jukeboxes. (Those machines were very popular back then, and

the pinball machines were much as the arcade games of today.)

We used to stay with Uncle Mike and Aunt Oleta — they had no children. They loved us to come stay at their apartment in Portland, and they spoiled us rotten with gifts and treats. Aunt Oleta was probably about 20 years younger than Uncle Mike. They both drank heavily, I learned later, and I think both of their deaths were from alcohol. Aunt Oleta died first, and Uncle Mike a few months later. They also had a friend, who was also a friend of my dad, who was called Uncle Duke. I remember sitting in the backyard with Uncle Mike, Aunt Oleta, Uncle Duke, dad and mom and all the men would be drinking whisky and telling funny stories. We enjoyed sitting out in the backyard in the summertime. That was before my dad got reactive in the church.

This next part Denise dictated to me today:

Denise says her earliest memory was sitting on a wooden floor in our house in Portland, and she was putting an undershirt onto a dolly. It was a half undershirt, and it opened in the back. You put the arms of the doll in it and buttoned it in back, and it only came down partway on the belly of the doll.

We lived on Haight Street for a while when we first moved to Portland. Before Denise was born we moved to Seward Street. The dining room furniture, which some of the family still has, was included with the house. That was special to us since we grew up with it. We all did our homework at that table in the dining room. George would take the table cloth off and draw on the white pad protecting the wooden table. Rockets were drawn, and he liked to doodle. We would turn on the radio in that room and sing at the top of our lungs to the music. Denise's favorite song was the "Grand Canyon Suite," especially the clomping of the mule's feet. She was about four, and listened to it when we were at school. She was so bored when we were at school, and jealous she could not go.

Mike had a wooden horse stick hat he would ride around on in the basement, and he also had a cowboy hat and shirt and a belt with toy guns on it. And cowboy boots that Denise later wore.

Nancy used to steal Denise's baby bottles because she was so jealous that she could not still have one. Once in a while mom would give Nancy one, but the bottles ended when Nancy grabbed it away from Denise one day and it fell on the floor and broke. And Nancy was heartbroken — her nose was probably out of joint, since she was not the baby anymore. The baby food in the Gerber jars was loved by Denise. She especially loved the custard, and even as an adult she used to buy it and eat it.

Denise hated eggs and mayonnaise, although when she was little she used to eat mayonnaise

by the tablespoons out of the jar (so did I). June Skyles was our babysitter and cleaning lady, and we stayed at her house sometimes. That's where we ate the mayonnaise. Denise got sick on eggs once — it was probably the mayo. In third grade, she took an egg salad sandwich to school and it had not been refrigerated and she got so sick, so she did not eat mayo or eggs again — ever. She will only eat a little mayo now on potato salad (her recipe — no onions and no eggs). Her kids love it, except Eric will not anything with mayo.

Stephen used to be on the cross country team in high school. He went to Grant High School, and so did Eric. Eric was on the yearbook staff. Michelle was involved in debate and president of the debate club. She went to Madison High school. Shannon went to Madison, and she had German classes and science classes. The science teacher asked her how far the moon was from the sun. She and Eric had been listening to the group "They Used to Be Giants," and they had a song about how far the moon was from the sun. She told the teacher it was 93million miles, and he said "you're right."

The teachers were all so impressed with all of Denise and Owen's kids. They are all very smart. And all interested in different things.

In 8th grade, Stephen's math teacher gave a special problem to solve over the summer. They could not figure it out. They sent it to Owen's brother Darrell, who researched it on the computer and found out there was no answer. He told Stephen, who took it back in the fall, and his teacher was dumbfounded that they had continued to research it since no one else had. And that was the right answer--there was no answer.

Eric was called on to take a specialized test in grade school. A lot of the kids were called in because of behavior problems, but Eric wasn't. They just could not measure his intelligence as far as abstract reasoning went. They were so impressed with his intelligence. He was off the charts in his abstract reasoning, and they could not even score it.

Michelle tried for a spot to go to Germany with a car company Daimler-Benz. At Madison they had the kids try out. All the foreign language students tried out. Michelle was taking French. A lot of them, including the German speaking classes, were trying for it. One of the kids who was also LDS didn't want to study and do the research so he wouldn't be disappointed if he didn't get it. Denise spent many hours with Michelle, preparing her and teaching her German (Denise had majored in it in college) to get her ready. She taught her the phrase "Wo ist die Toilete?" which means "Where is the toilet?" and "Das stundt hat semel im Mund," which means "The morning hour has the roll in its mouth," which really means "The early bird gets the worm."

Michelle went in and wowed all the teachers, since she was a French student but could rattle off all these things in German too. She did get accepted and got to go for two weeks. She had the confidence, too. She later went to France with her husband (she majored in French in college). She also lived in Switzerland for I think a semester during college, where Nancy and her kids visited her when they went to pick Nick up from France, where he had been an exchange student.

Shannon went to two years of college and decided academics were not for her, so she went to Germany as a nanny. Dr. Keller — our German professor (Denise and I) — put the nannies together to go. She was there for nine months. The family she worked for was not too happy when she taught the kids the song (Owen taught her): “There once was a Dutch boy, his name was Johnny Roebeck; He was a dealer in sausages, sauerkraut and speck. One night his wife was dreaming, and walked into his shop. She gave the clank a heck of a yank and Johnny Roebeck was meat.” (Shannon can finish the words of the song for you.)

Denise was impressed because Shannon, with another nanny, traveled to Israel by themselves. They stayed in a hotel and below them in the street was a riot which they watched from their balcony. Another thing about Shannon was that when she and Joseph decided to buy a house in Caldwell, she was the one who did all the work and research in buying their home, and she has done a great job in decorating it.

June 2, 2010

Denise is still telling me things. She remembers Uncle Duke and watching the Rose Festival Parade with him at an apartment — somewhere downtown. We watched from the second- floor window.

Stephen is a very neat and meticulous person — very organized. Eric is the opposite. Michelle is very creative, and liked to tap dance and those things. Shannon had lots of friends, some not LDS across the street. One day, they all went to a store and the other two kids shoplifted. Shannon did not. When they got out of the store, they were bragging to Shannon about what they got away with. Shannon was furious. She told them to go back in and give those things back, and so unhappily they did. She insisted.

Denise & I, when we were young, would all sit on the Kaiel’s porch across the street to play. Denise was a little mother, and would not let the youngest sister Theresa go off the bottom of the stairs, because she was about three and her sister Antoinette and brother Gary were supposed to be

watching her. Denise was paranoid she would get out in the street, so she watched her like a hawk.

Denise had lots of friends in high school. Two of her best were Patty Phelps and Karen Slater, who were LDS. Also Sharon Legrone (who was black — a 5th grade friend). Her boyfriend in high school was Don Denkers, and in college it was Lynn DeSpain. She fell really hard for him. He had another girlfriend when he went home for the summer, and before he left on his mission he broke up with Denise. He didn't really tell her, he just showed up with another girl at his own farewell. She was crushed.

She majored in German, and minored in drama with a teaching certificate. She graduated in May of 1969. That's the same year Owen did, but they were not to meet officially until the year 1970. She had met Owen two times, but she did not realize it until they compared notes later. He was dating her college roommate (there were 12 of them) in the Hyatt House. Her roommate and Owen were in the same ward, but Denise was not in that ward. The roommate was from Jerome, Idaho, and very pretty with blonde hair. But Owen was already starting to go bald, so she wasn't at all interested in him. She wanted a jock. The receding hairline didn't bother Denise at all when she finally found him again.

Owen was a custodian at the gym and Denise was on the BYU dance team one semester. One day, they were rehearsing overtime and he came in and shooed them out. That was the other time they met.

When we were little, we would spend a lot of time in the basement dancing to the Robert E Lee song on the juke box. Some of her favorite songs were the tangos and Latin music. She loved the "Little White Cloud That Sat Right Down and Cried," by Johnny Ray, and "Hernando's Hideaway."

When we used to sit on the Kaiels' porch, we would sing at the top of our voices all the popular songs, like: "Old Man River," and "When the Moon Hits Your Eye Like a Big Pizza Pie, That's Amore," and "Hernandos' Hideaway." We all thought we could sing really well, and Denise and I have continued to sing our whole lives.

June 5, 2010

Denise and I spent a lot of time together growing up, and even though she was 18 months younger we got along well for the most part. We are very different in personality and looks. Everyone always thought she was older because she was a little more serious than I and she wore glasses. I remember when she was little and they finally found out she needed glasses, she said, "I didn't know

the people across the street had faces.” Sad, but at least they caught it in time that it didn’t interfere with her learning.

We loved to go down the block and on the main street Lombard, and over a few blocks to our favorite place to get a treat. It was called 24 Flavors, and had so much wonderful penny candy and candy bars. Back then, the candy bars were a nickel and we could get a whole sack full of penny candy for a dime. We also loved their ice cream.

As I got older and had boyfriends as a teenager, sometimes I would hang out in the backyard with a particular beau on the patio. Unfortunately, Denise’s bedroom had a window that looked right out onto the patio and if she saw I was about to smooch my honey, she would tap on the window. We figured out a way to get rid of her on many occasions by giving her a nickel and telling her to go down to 24 Flavors and get a treat. This worked great for an hour of peace, but she caught on and upped the price to a quarter. Oh, the fights we had over that.

We lived only about two blocks from the bus line, and often we would go downtown for shopping, or a movie, or just to look around. We were safe, and lots of times Mom would go with us to pick out material for skirts and dresses. Mom worked downtown also, and rode the bus back and forth. And when we got to high school and had summer jobs downtown, we would also take the bus.

Friday nights, we often went to the neighborhood movies, which had a double feature, so it was about four hours of movies. Back then, they were not rated, but they also did not show risqué films like they do now. We saw lots of movies — well acted and not so well acted. We went as a family before we were teenagers, and after that often went out with friends to the movies. As a family, we always stopped at Kienow’s Grocery Store to buy our treats for the show. My dad would let us each spend a dime, so we could get two things. I used to get a Sugar Daddy which would last the whole movie, and/or gum. Sometimes, we got treats at the movies, and then I liked the jujubes even though they tasted like soap because they lasted long. They were like the Gummi Bears of today, only harder and not so chewy.

There was a Meier & Frank store delivery man who used to come down our street often. In the summer, if we spotted him while we were out playing, we would call after him because we knew he kept bubble gum in his truck for all the kids. We would call, “Bubble Gum Man, bubble gum man,” and he always stopped and handed out gum. I don’t know anything else about him. These days, that would not happen, but it was a safer and happier time back then and we knew that he would not hurt us. He probably just loved kids.

Also in the summer, the ice cream wagon would come down our street a lot, and you could hear the bell ringing all the way down the street. We would find money on the mantel where dad left his change, or ask mom for a nickel, or dig into our babysitting money and run after the wagon.

We had wonderful, blissful days spent with family and friends. We often went picnicking, swimming, and/or boating with others in our ward. I remember best the Ambrosia fruit salad my mom used to make, with coconut, sour cream, mandarin oranges, and pineapple. That was always part of our picnics.

June 6, 2010

One incident I remember from when Denise was about five or six, was when we discovered the haunted house. A bunch of us neighborhood kids were on our bikes — I remember mine was new and blue, and I was so excited to be on a bike with the other older kids in the neighborhood. Usually, we just rode around the two blocks on either side of us, but someone who was adventurous decided we needed to go exploring further from our neighborhood. So we all took off and, of course, Denise did not want to be left behind, so she hopped on her large brown tricycle and pedaled after us. Of course, she was last in line because she just could not pedal that fast. Whoever was at the head of the line just kept riding farther and farther than we had ever ventured before. We felt like we ruled the world — we were so daring.

We finally came to a street about five blocks away that had a very old and scary looking dilapidated two-story house on it. We stopped and just stared at it. It was odd to see a house in that neighborhood in such bad shape. And we knew no one could possibly live in such a wreck of a house. All of a sudden, someone said, “Look at that upstairs window, I just saw the shade move. There must be a ghost.” Well, that was enough for us. Someone else shouted, “It’s haunted. This is a haunted house.” And then someone yelled, “Let’s get out of here.”

Well, we all took off on our bikes and just rode like the wind — not even realizing that we were leaving little Denise in our dust. I finally looked back and there she was just pedaling with all her might and still at least a half a block behind us — yelling, “Wait for me,” and crying. Of course, none of us could possibly even imagine waiting for her, since we were all terrified of the ghost someone had seen in the house. I think in a couple more blocks we took pity on her and waited, but not without much concern about being overtaken by that ghost in the window. Denise says she saw a lady hanging out the laundry from inside the house — hanging out the upstairs window. We didn’t

see that, but since she got left behind, she knew the truth. I don't remember much else about the incident, but we never, ever, ever went on that block again in our young days. I know it was a traumatic experience for all of us, but especially Denise, who was the most terrified of all because she got left behind.

I started babysitting when I was about 11. Mostly for the young couples in our ward, who were dental students and lived in the cheap housing nearby. I often had Denise come with me, to keep me company. We were a very popular duo, and both babysat either together or, when older, separately. We made 25 cents an hour and 35 cents after midnight. We loved making our own money, and we paid tithing on every bit of it each Sunday. Back then, the ward clerk sat up near the front of the chapel, and we could go up to him before or after church with our little change and pay our full tithing.

We were both very careful when babysitting about doing what the parents asked us to do as far as the "rules" of the house went, and when to put the kids to bed. We both had excellent reviews from all the families we babysat for, and were consistently busy almost every weekend for years. Very often, we had two or three different people who wanted us on the same night, but we always took the one who called first. We made sure we did a little "clean up" of toys, dirty dishes, etc., and did not eat anything unless they told us to — which usually was the case.

We both loved doing this, and we learned a lot about taking care of children, being responsible, and earning money. Also about saving money. It was a very good experience, and even after we started college and were home for the summer, sometimes we were still asked to tend kids.

Denise and I always went shopping and to do the laundry at the laundry mat each Saturday with dad. Mom worked on Saturday, and so we cleaned the house and then went on our errands. Some of the time we had a washer and dryer that worked. This was in the laundry room in the basement. At other times, only the washer worked and so we hung the wet clothes in the adjoining room where we had drying lines set up. In fact, when we were very young the laundry was done in an old wringer washer that you had to wring out the rinsed laundry by hand. It was quite a process. But then some of the time the washer and dryer were broken, so we had to do the laundry at a laundry mat.

We would go to the one that was close to Kienow's Grocery Store that was about six blocks away on Lombard Street. We did about four loads or more at a time, and while the clothes were washing and drying, Denise and I would visit or read — we always had a book with us. My dad

always read — he liked the Zane Grey Westerns and he read a lot even at home. Or dad would also do the crossword puzzle in the newspaper. I don't remember being bored or unhappy. We just helped with all the sorting and folding, etc.

Then it was on to the different grocery stores for all the sale items. He would look through the papers while we were doing the laundry to find the best prices. Then we would go to three or four stores and get what we needed. This was also a very good lesson for us on shopping, bargain hunting, budgeting, and selecting food that was fresh. We both loved going with him, and it was always a good experience.

We also helped him cook. That is where we both learned how to cook well. Since he was home first and sometimes worked in the evenings, he always made dinner (except on Sunday and Monday, when mom was off work). He was a good cook and liked to make spaghetti (I still use his recipe), casseroles, chili, or potatoes and gravy, and many other things. We always had plenty of good healthy food, and often bought apples and oranges and potatoes in boxes that we stored in the basement. We ate very well.

One casserole he made was called Rosy Beef (of course, we thought that was funny because we called each other Rose). It was basically hamburger with noodles, and had as the sauce one can of cream of mushroom soup and one can of tomato soup mixed together. It really was good. I have never made it since. Denise and I liked to tease my dad and call it "Rosy Barf," which he did not appreciate.

But dad was a good natured guy. A little laid back and always interested in what the teenagers were doing. He always let us have our friends come to the house, and when we would be downstairs for a long time, he would come down to check on us and make sure we were okay. He liked to try to dance the modern dances with us and show off. He was big, and it was funny to watch him try to do the "bop." He loved us to have our music blaring, and when my mom would yell downstairs, "Turn that dang music down," we could hear him say, "Now, Evie, they're just having fun. Let them be." He was fun and outgoing, and everyone loved "Uncle Denny," which is what everyone called him.

June 8, 2010

This was a conversation with Denise. I asked her some questions that I got from our cousin Jim Bennion. He told me he got it from church, and it is a list of questions to use to write your history. There are 154 questions, but I picked the ones that I thought were the most interesting or that we

hadn't written about before. Here are her answers:

Did you have a bike? She had a bike and rode it up and down the street all the time. She rode to St. Johns, to Lynette Tracy's house. It was blue. Girls' bike.

What did you want to be when you grew up? Denise wanted to be a secretary, like our mom. The only trouble was that in high school when she took typing, she couldn't type worth beans. She took typing and shorthand and all the secretarial things, and was not that good at it, so she gave that idea up. But she was good at German, and so that is what she took up in college.

Who were you named after? Denise was named after dad, who was Denton Willey Pearson (our dad). Mom wanted to name her Penny Jo, but dad wanted her named after him and he won. She did not ever have a middle name, and was mad that she never had one because the rest of us did and she always wanted one.

What was a birthday you remember: A teenage birthday — age 16. Nobody told her happy birthday, and there was no party from anyone in the family. She cried when she went to bed that night. All of a sudden, mom had called Denise's girlfriends and they burst into her bedroom and sang happy birthday. She was still disappointed, because it wasn't a party. She was in bed. They just sang and left. She never found out why it wasn't celebrated.

What were your chores as a child? Her chores as a child were going on Saturday with dad to shop and do the laundry. That was her favorite. She also went to the church to clean, and she would get under the pews on her belly and run the buffer on the wood floor. It was a small one that we owned for our house. Her least favorite chore was washing windows.

What was your favorite toy? Her favorite doll was Patsy Marie, which was her first dolly, and it took a bottle of water and she would wet. She had to wear a diaper. Another dolly she liked was Janet Marie, and she was tall and came up to her rib cage, and she could walk — if you held her hand, she would walk alongside you.

We had a fort in the backyard. It was a huge packing crate that the neighbors — Henizes — had shipped their belongings home from Germany. We spent many hours in our fort, plotting and planning and snacking. There was another fort in the same place, and this one had a hole in the top so we could go up on top and see the world. It had a trap door. And there was no ladder. All the neighbor kids liked to hang out there.

Tell about Christmas traditions. Christmas trees were put up every year. We bought them usually from the Boy Scout lot, which our ward sponsored. We liked to pick them out with dad, since

our friends and crushes were usually hanging out at the lots. We did homemade ornaments, except we had a few of the nice ornate glass ones. We also put up mom's long nylon socks to have Santa leave treats in. We put them up on the fireplace, and we always had ribbon candy and an orange at the bottom of the sock.

June 10, 2010

I called Denise today, and this is what she said:

Tell things about mom and dad. What I liked about mom and dad was we always went on picnics. My favorite place was Wahkeena Falls. Dad was a lot of fun, and he didn't mind that we listened to our teenage rock and roll on the car radio when we were in the car. Mom did not like it, and always said, "Turn it off or turn the channel." But he let us anyway. I remember that mom would get mad easily, but dad did not. Dad didn't help her cool down. He always said (after gathering us all together), "Jiggers Jiggers here comes jughead." That made her madder, and then you could hear her heels clicking across the floor very quickly. She would come after us with a switch from the apple tree in the backyard. And she hit the back of our bare legs to make it sting like crazy. We don't even remember now what we did wrong.

But a good thing mom would do was to take us outside when we were little in the backyard, if she could not get us to quit crying or if we were sad or mad, and find a ladybug on the rose bushes and put it on our arm to crawl. That always made us stop crying.

Mom was sick a lot, and so was Denise. They both craved chocolate at the certain time of the month — but they were both very sick for at least two days.

I did more things with Nancy than the brothers since they were older and on their own with their friends. George was the valedictorian at Roosevelt High School. Mike was the student body president. And Nancy was on the pep rally.

What activities were you involved in in school? Denise was in the German Club with Nancy. In German class, our teacher, who was Herr (Mr.) Preller, taught us how to make Birchermuesli, and we had that at German club parties and sometimes during class time. The ingredients were: yogurt, honey, oats, fruit and nuts, and ice cream in any amounts and with any variety. It was so good and healthy. A very authentic German dish.

What were the rules of the house? Our parents were pretty lenient — not many rules. One day, Denise went to a friend's birthday party on a Saturday. She didn't call to tell mom and dad she was

staying a long time. When she got home, mom and dad were so mad because she had not called and they wanted to take us all to a drive-in movie.

Who taught you how to drive? Dad taught Denise how to drive, but he let her drive home from Freightliner on Swan Island — where she was working. She was so scared, and hadn't had any training. They made it home in one piece, but she doesn't know how. She was 16 when she got her license.

Who was your first kiss with? Her first kiss was with some kid Pam Crawford knew. He thought Pam was better looking, but Denise was a better kisser. They would go stand under the water tower and smooch just a few times.

Who was your first boyfriend? Her first boyfriend was Dan Cole. He used to take her to the movies and they would sit in the back and smooch. But she didn't like the way he kissed. His mother had to drive them back and forth. She was only a freshman in high school, and so was he. Then John Waite took her out on a date. Mom always had us have our dates walk us to the back door, and he asked her for a kiss and at first she said no, but she finally gave in and let him kiss her after he begged. Just once.

Did you like school? School was good for her. She especially liked drama and German, which she majored in in college. She had a lot of use for her speech classes. Her first calling after getting married was a stake calling to be the speech director, and later the ward speech director. The teenagers would come to her house to get help on their church talks.

Are you more of an inside or outside person? Denise is more of an inside person. Her favorite things to do were to dance and to sing. She didn't like to read until after she was married.

What is your favorite ice cream and foods? Favorite flavor of ice cream is chocolate. Best foods are prime rib, ribeye steak, rosy beef, ice cream, berries, fresh carrots, and celery.

Now this is Nancy telling some other things we had in common. Every Sunday, mom would have Denise and I help peel potatoes, carrots, and onions, and cut them up. She would put them in a big roaster pan with some type of roast — beef, pork, lamb. Then we would put them in the oven and when we got home from church dinner would be ready, except for making gravy with the drippings. That was the best meal of the week, and we all fought over who could gnaw on the bone. Usually there was enough leftover meat for meat sandwiches for that evening. We used ketchup, mayo, and “bread and butter” pickles. That was the Denny Pearson special.

Mom didn't like to bake much, but when she did make a cake it was always “bald” — no

frosting, because she claimed she did not know how to make frosting. So we ate them anyway. She was great at making corn bread, and her corn bread stuffing was wonderful — homemade. She was a good but simple cook. Sometimes we would buy chicken legs or thighs and bake them with a lot of garlic, and that was also a favorite when she was cooking.

Friday and Saturday nights, we watched TV (usually downstairs) together as a family. We watched programs such as Lawrence Welk, and any western shows, Ed Sullivan, and I Love Lucy. When us kids would get home from school, we would get a snack and go downstairs and watch the Walt Disney show. One of the Mousketeers, named Annette Funicello, looked just like our neighbor across the street, named Antoinette Kaiel. We used to tell her they should put her on the show.

June 13, 2010

This has been a fun and interesting biography to write. With Denise's help, I've learned many things I did not know about my own sister. Some of my own memories that I will include now about our family is that our dad Denny Pearson used to "catnap" in the afternoons. When we got home from school (he usually picked us up when we were in high school), he would sit in the big easy chair by the fireplace and start to read one of his western novels. Pretty soon, the book would be laying open on his chest and he would be fast asleep. In about 15 minutes, he would wake up and be ready for whatever was next — usually cooking dinner. I thought that was interesting that he told us that just a few minutes of napping would refresh him.

We had a "mangle" iron in the basement, in the room that we dried clothes in. It was a huge machine that you sat at and ironed clothes. I remember watching mom use it, and it was very hot and looked scary to me, but she used to iron all our clothes that way, I don't know where it came from or where it went to, but after a few years it wasn't there anymore. So Denise and I would iron all the clothes as we watched TV or listened to our records in the basement. That was the time when everything had to be ironed (including pillow cases). There was no such thing as wash and wear. We had our ironing board and steam iron downstairs. We also had a bottle with a head on it that let us sprinkle the clothes and then roll them up so they were damp and easier to get the wrinkles out.

We lived where it rained a lot — almost every day — but we didn't mind, and were used to it. It seldom snowed, but when it did — even if it was only an inch — they let school out, since the buses and cars were not used to snow and it was dangerous to drive. We always wanted at least enough to build snowmen. We would get all bundled up and try to find gloves and boots and go out

until we were freezing. Sometimes we wore socks on our hands since we didn't wear gloves much. It was always very wet snow. In the summer, when it got really hot and humid, we did everything downstairs where it was cooler. We ate our meals and slept down there. We did not have any air conditioning — and it could get very hot. We would open all the windows just to get a breeze.

I asked Denise about where she worked in her life? Denise says: Places she has worked: a nanny for 9 ½ years for one family in Vancouver, Wash. Before that she worked for three other families. She did not really care for it. She did like the one that had a baby whose name was India. She didn't care for the mother much. She also worked at Arctic Circle for four months before she was a nanny. She worked at Meier & Frank's department store for two years. It was very demanding, and she was already having problems with climbing stairs. Sometimes the escalator did not work, and she had to walk upstairs — very hard.

As a teenager, she worked for IHA and so did I — we worked in the summers when we were in high school. She also worked at Freightliners after that, in the copy room during the summer.

When I was eight years old and Denise was six, our whole family went to Salt Lake to be sealed as a family. My dad had not been very active in the church before that, but he was called to be a scout leader and with the help of some very good men, he was re-activated. I still remember the feeling and the idea of being sealed to my family. It was a wonderful experience. My mom had always been active, and was very patient with my dad in waiting for him to realize what he needed to do to be sealed. He was never a bad person, just not interested in being real involved in the church, He did encourage all of us to go, though. From then on he was stalwart and held many positions in our ward.

One time, when we were getting a new bishop, his best friend "Tut" Whitney Dunford was made the bishop. My dad was very disappointed, since he thought he should be put in and that he deserved it. He was a little bitter. But soon he was called to the high council, where he went all over the stake to speak. He was a great speaker, and this is what he was needed to do in our stake — he soon got over being bitter, and realized that the Lord is in charge and puts you where he needs you. He had such a good personality that he did well with people, and people were naturally drawn to him.

Dad loved to organize parties for the ward, and was very good at it — in fact, he was good at organizing all things he did. I remember several dinners that they would go to the coast and bring home the freshest crab and shrimp and have wonderful ward feasts. Of course, all of us kids helped set up, cook, and clean up. It was part of the fun. Also, someone always made homemade root beer

from dry ice that tasted funny and almost like it was fermented — we had that all the time at ward activities. I remember how it used to “smoke” as the dry ice melted. I thought it was nasty, but it was a hit with everyone in the ward.

June 17, 2010

Denise and I went to early morning seminary all through high school. One of the parents in the ward would pick a whole bunch of us up, and we would drive to the church. The teacher was Clair Tracy, who was the father of our good friends Lynnette and Yvonne, who were close to our age. I think he was a good teacher — a little dry, but he was very kind and we liked being there with all our friends. From there, we went on to school.

The wife of Clair Tracy was Inez, who was a wonderful singer. She was always the choir director. Denise and I and dad were all in the choir for years. I was always grateful that she let all of us teenagers in the choir. I developed a love of music and singing from her, and I know Denise did too. We actually made an album of our ward singing, and we are all on the picture on the cover. She sang a lot of solos in our ward. She was very large and died at a young age (when we were in college) from complications of a hernia.

One of the things that was fun when we were teenagers was that we had a group of friends that had a rock band, and they had nowhere to practice, so they would come to our basement and play as loud as they could. I know the neighbors complained, but dad thought it was a worthwhile thing to hone their talent. Mom wasn't so sure. The ones I remember in the band were our good buddies Eric Nelson and Steve Merrell. They were called the Rapiers, and actually played for a few dances at a local teen dance place. Denise and I would practice singing with them, but we never performed with them. They were actually pretty good.

One recollection I have of our childhood was visiting our relatives in Oakland, Calif.: my dad's sister Kathryn (Aunt Kiffy) Kollenbaum, her husband Frank, and their two kids, Kathy Lou and Frankie. Kathy was four years older than me, and Frankie was two years older. They lived in a huge house with Grandmother Catherine Pearson, who was a tyrant. She had been a widow for years. In the back of the house there was a beauty parlor, and both grandma and Aunt Kiffy did hair there. It was quite the going business, and every time we went we both got a permanent — poodle cut style. Grandma Pearson liked to boss everyone around, and she was bent on getting the housework done. So when we were there, we tried to stay out of her way. And we would laugh and sing this song:

“Work work work, all we do is work, work, work, we think you’re a jerk, jerk, jerk, cuz you make us work, work work.” Of course, we never let her hear us.

Denise says Grandma used to ask her “Have you had a bowel movement today?” She was only 11 and didn’t have any idea what that was. She didn’t know until many years later. Grandma was sort of a fuddy duddy — in Denise’s language. But she meant well.

Kathy Lou, since she was older, was our teenage role model. She was fun and didn’t mind her little cousins tagging along. In fact, she taught us both how to shave our legs one summer, much to our mother’s chagrin. She had lots of friends in the neighborhood, and we hung out with them. They had a huge porch where we would visit and play and enjoy the summers. One summer, mom and dad let Denise and I stay longer, and we took the greyhound bus home — that was quite an adventure for two teenagers.

Uncle Frank was an alcoholic, but fun loving, and we didn’t know that at the time. He worked as a butcher and always had the best meat around to eat. Aunt Kiffy and Grandma were wonderful cooks, and we especially liked the roasts and the puffy bread like muffins made from the drippings.

Uncle Walt and Aunt Trieste (dad’s sister) were bringing us home from somewhere when we stopped for lunch and Denise crumbled crackers in her soup. Aunt Trieste said: “We don’t crumble crackers in our soup.” She was outraged at Denise’s behavior. Aunt Trieste was very dominant and authoritarian, and so was her husband, Walter Hall. We were afraid of them. They lived in Oakland also, and we did see them a lot growing up.

One of the amazing things about our mom and dad is that they helped people all the time. We often had people stay with us who needed help. We also had lots of company for dinner.

My mom’s best friend from her young years came to visit once, but stayed in a hotel. After visiting a few days, she committed suicide in the hotel. This really affected my mom. She had a daughter named Bea Morgan who was about 16 when this happened. The incident sent her into a tailspin and she ended up in a mental hospital close to Portland. We went out to visit her often and she came to stay at our house on weekends a lot. She had severe mental and emotional problems and talked to herself a lot. But our mom taught us not to be afraid of her, and eventually she did get better — married her doctor and moved away. It was a good lesson to all of our family about compassion and mental issues.

June 26, 2010

Lake Tahoe, Calif., was a favorite spot. Aunt Trieste owned a cabin up there, and we spent many summers visiting there. Denise was swimming once and started going under and could not get back to the dock. She called for help, and everyone just stood there and looked at her. Sue Jane (Aunt Trieste's daughter and our cousin), her friend, finally jumped in and saved her. That was after the 3rd time calling for help. I guess they thought she was kidding. She says she would have drowned if it had not been for the girl who saved her.

Sue Jane was a stewardess, and we were in awe of her beauty and the fact that she was on airplanes all the time. We thought that was very cool, and then we wanted to do the same. Aunt Trieste had some kind of a "sno cone" stand somewhere up there in the summers, and Denise remembers being up there with them at some point. They would not let her near the water unless they were with her, and they were too busy running the sno cone stand. Denise says she was very bored and lonely. I don't remember that time, but I may not have been there.

I remember that our brother George sometimes clashed with mom and dad as a teenager (we all did). One day he "ran away." Mom and dad were frantic, and we looked all over the house and called all his friends and could not find him. I don't think they had called the police yet. Finally, he appeared from the basement and was very smug and thought that he had hoodwinked them. The whole time they were looking for him, he was hiding in the basement. I don't remember what else happened after he was "found", but I don't think he ever did that again. I can remember being terrified that they would not find him.

Which reminds me that when I was probably about 7 or 8 I decided to run away (Nancy). I packed a little suitcase and put it under my bed upstairs. I planned and stewed and was mad (I don't remember why). But about dinner time, when it smelled so good, I decided not to leave — I wanted to eat dinner with the family. I guess I unpacked later, since I never did leave.

Dad was a social creature, and loved to host parties. Once he called all his friends in the ward and invited them to a "come as you are" party. He tried to call them when he thought they would be in their PJs. The night of the party came, and he decided to wear his long dress-like PJs, which he always wore to bed. He was the hit of the party with his unusual attire — of course he wore pants under it, rolled up. He did look pretty funny, and I never understood why he liked to wear that big flannel tent. I think he was more comfy since he was very large. I think my mom made them for him. It came to about his knees.

Mike was very popular in high school, and he was the student body president of Roosevelt High School his senior year. He also was a cheerleader (they had boys and girls), and he wrestled. The girls were always after Denise and I to set him up with them for dates. I remember sometimes, the girls our age would try to buddy up with us and then sooner or later announce they wanted to date Mike. We finally got used to the routine and didn't give them the time of day. He could get his own dates, and probably didn't want to date anyone our age anyway.

My impression of Denise as a sister is that she was and is loyal and true to her family, and although she got lots of teasing because she was the youngest, she has always had a good heart and likes to stand up for what is right. I was always a little jealous of her good figure, and although I was more social, she always had more boyfriends. We did pal around a lot but also had our own separate friends. We did a lot with our church friends, and those were all ages from younger to older. With our church friends, we were all like a family — boys and girls — since we were the minority at school. But we converted some of our friends and tried hard to live the principals of the gospel even when our friends would offer us drinks or cigarettes. We were strong and stalwart and loved the church even then.

Sep. 26, 2010

Today, Denise's family and I are fasting for her. She has been very weak and in pain, and very ready to leave this earth. In the past two weeks, I have spoken to her several times. She is still trying to be positive, and I have told her that I pray for her to be peaceful. She has fought a hard battle and is ready to be finished. I pray that Heavenly Father will take her quickly when it is His will that she be done with her earthly mission. I applaud her stalwart faith in the extreme circumstances of poor health she has endured for many years.

From the time she was young, she was not ever very strong or healthy. Even as a teenager, she slept a lot and did not feel well. That continued into her adult life. She started exhibiting muscle weakness and aversion to fragrances and odors. She was blessed to have a wonderful husband, Owen, who for so much of their married life worked two or three jobs, and did most of the cooking, cleaning, shopping, and taking care of the children when Denise was not able to. He has been a rock and a support to her and the children and grandchildren for all these many years. He has told me on many occasions, when I have thanked him for being so good to my sister, that he married her to be with her and to help her in any way he needed to do. He also said that it has not been a burden, but his duty

and obligation to take care of her. He is not bitter and has really endured this experience well. I think he will go directly to the celestial kingdom.

The last few weeks, Denise has had symptoms of small heart attacks, and kidney failure. She is on strong pain medication and sleeps a lot. She also is eating very little. The doctor says that her kidneys are failing. I talk to Owen every day or two to check on her situation.

Even though I am sad that she will be leaving us soon, I will be thankful that when she leaves this life, she will once again be whole and out of pain and misery, which she has been in for many years.

When I was in the temple last week, I prayed that our mom would come quickly and take her home.

October 12, 2010

Denise Pearson Dixon, my sister Rose, died on Oct. 11, 2010, in Nampa, Idaho, with her husband Owen and daughter Shannon there. It was a peaceful passing, and I am thankful that she is now with our mom and dad and other family members and friends, where she can carry on with her next mission. I bid farewell and all my love to my dear sister Rose.

Written by Nancy Ann Pearson Escobedo