How I Met Your Poppy

A letter to my granddaughter
An Autobiography Project of HEAL
Health Education for Assisted Living

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By Myra
as transcribed by Jean Reid Norman

Dear Jess,

I met Arline and her family the summer of 1945 in Bradley Beach, N.J. She was my girlfriend, and I met her mother and two aunts. I was going into my senior year of high school. I was at the shore cooking and watching out for my grandpa Marcus by cooking and walking to the market, etc. I went to Arline’s Sweet 16 party and met more girls. She lived a bus ride away in Montclair, N.J. Her mother, Sadie, and I had ration stamps we exchanged—she gave me soap powder and she took my sugar stamps, etc. In a conversation one day, Arline said her uncle in the Army Air Corps would like to get letters, so I wrote to him and put a picture of myself in the envelope. (It was me in a two-piece swimsuit.) We had a wonderful correspondence, but he was...
stationed in Enid, Okla., and waiting to get out of the service in June or July 1946. He was coming home on leave in April, and he asked me out when he came home. We went out to the Meadowbrook for dancing with his brother Lester and his girlfriend Florence. Needless to say, we all had a great time, and Al and I had a few dates while he was on leave. We continued writing to each other while I waited to graduate high school in June 1946 and Al was waiting for his discharge in the beginning of July. We were attracted to each other right from the first meeting, and the chemistry was there.

We were a couple from then on. I met all of Al’s friends and their significant others. We got together after weekends for dinner at the Jade Restaurant in Jersey City or hiking in the mountains and picnics, etc., without spending too much money that we did not have. Both of us spent most Sundays with my family—dinner, watching sports, tennis, golf—or Al’s family, visiting one or more with my mother- or father-in-law. Then in the winter of 1946, we decided to get married. We had many family
meetings to discuss wedding plans. My father wanted his aunts, uncles—
Nana was one of nine—to be there and my mother was one of four-plus
husbands and wives, and two grandparents, cousins and their friends. Then
our friends, some of their friends. Then for the cocktail portion, we had
about 50 people from the store at the ceremony before the dinner. Then Al
and I spent the night at a hotel in New York City, and we ate dinner in a
fancy restaurant, since neither of us ate very much that day. The next day, we boarded a train
to Miami Beach, where we spent two weeks for
our honeymoon. What a wonderful vacation it
was. We got home and moved into mother and
Dad’s third-floor room and bath to spend a few
months waiting for our apartment to be built, and
started to order some furniture, etc. (This was
right after World War II, and things were scarce.
They just started making cars, furniture,
household goods and pots and pans again.) We
had to wait months for delivery of most of the
things. Both of us went to work. Al commuted
to New York City to work in the garment trade.

We both got to know each other each day and
fell in love with each other more than the day

“We both got to know each other each day and fell in love more than the day before.”
before. After six years, I finally got pregnant and had my daughter. Then, three years later, we had a son. We moved into our house in Bloomfield, N.J., in 1956, and we lived there until Al got sick and moved to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., for seven weeks. We were married 38 years when he passed away. We had a marvelous marriage and wonderful life, with business, friends and family. And now I have good memories, which I remember each day. I miss him and the rest of my family as time passes. Now I keep busy with reading, knitting, gardening, crafts, etc.

Love,
Nan

Myra lived in Florida after Al died until 2008, when she moved to Nevada to be close to family.

Grandchildren Alex, and Jessica.

Farewell party from her Florida condo, shown at left.