



## BARBARA ATKINSON COATS

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Every time I see the film *American Graffiti*, it reminds me of South Salem High School Class of '63: I LOVED high school so my last day was a bittersweet milestone. To this day, I wax nostalgic about those years: enduring friendships, cruisin' in cars (to Woodruff's San Shop), shopping at Johnson's, crisp autumn evening football games, State basketball tournaments in Eugene, and rock and roll. Graduation – that teenage rite of passage – ushered each of us onto the cusp of adulthood and launched us into the rest of our life. For me:

On the career front, I entered college at OCE (now WOSU) and, four years later, applied my Bachelor's Degree to teaching at Silverton Union High School. After marriage and a three-year hiatus to care for our new baby, I worked for many years in Salem then was transferred by my company to the greater Chicago area where lived and worked for eight years. During that time, I earned my MBA degree then was recruited by the Lake Forest Graduate School as a Director of Organizational Development. It was interesting to balance academia with the challenges of business (and a perk that my office window looked across the narrow lane to Halas Hall – home to The Chicago Bears). My next "career" began November of 2001 as a Manager of Customer Operations, Contracts and Export Compliance Officer for General Dynamics. I am still working but counting down to retirement.

The BEST part of my life is my Family – Blessings include:

Children: I have one daughter, Anne-Marie. She is an Oregon Duck, having graduated Cum Laude and as a Phi Beta Kappa from the U of O. Anne-Marie went on to Law School, earned her J.D., passed the California Bar and is an attorney in San Diego. Anne-Marie and Joel have three daughters – our darling granddaughters: Isabel, Olivia and Ava.

Husband: My husband, Jerry, is from the oldest town in Texas – Nacogdoches - and he is the quintessential Southern gentleman. Our relationship began as an acquaintance, grew into a friendship over many years and blossomed into a romance. I moved from Chicago to California in 1996 and, we were married in St. Helena in the Napa Valley in 1997. Through a series of transfers with his company, Jerry and I lived in Pleasanton, Sacramento then ultimately settled in San Diego in 2001.

Grandchildren: Upon our marriage, my family grew to include Jerry's son (Doug), daughter (Kim), and an ex-daughter-in-law whom we call our own (Traci). Over the 16 years of our marriage, our nine grandchildren (8 girls and one boy) know us in their hearts as Popsie and Grammy. In addition to Isabel, Olivia and Ava (all darling) in San Diego, our other six grandchildren live in Texas: Laci (blonde and beautiful), Trent (a thoughtful young man), Karli & Kloe (identical twins as bright as their red hair), and Zoe & Payton (both as sweet as the day is long).

My family wouldn't be complete without mentioning my loving-and-loved siblings - each of them a Saxon: sister Mary Olson Mann; brother, Michael Atkinson; sister-in-law, Linda Holcomb Atkinson.

It's been a wonderful 50 Years.

