



SALLY ROBERTS ELGIN

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Husband: Robert L. Elgin
Children: Benjamin Carlisle Elgin (born 1976); Thomas James Elgin (born 1983)
Grandchildren: None, yet

Influenced by our great science teachers – Mr. Birrell, Ms. Barquist, and Mr. Nebel – I went to Pomona College, majoring in chemistry. I met Robert while playing cello in the Pomona Orchestra, and we were married the day before my graduation in June 1967, so recently celebrated our 46th wedding anniversary. We both went to graduate school at Caltech (California Institute of Technology), Robert in physics and me in biochemistry.

After a postdoctoral stint (also at Caltech), I started academic life as an Assistant Professor in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology at Harvard. Lots of fun – for one semester, James Watson was my department chairman! Robert applied his physics degree to work in energy

policy, and has since done various projects in applied math. In 1981 we moved to Washington University in St. Louis, where I'm now a Professor of Biology, of Genetics, and of Education, which keeps me busy. My research has continued to center on chromatin structure – how the DNA is packaged – and how that affects gene expression, using the fruit fly as a model system (see <http://wubio.wustl.edu/elgin>). In the popular press, this sort of work is now called "epigenetics." The lab motto is "Time flies like an arrow, but fruit flies like a banana," which Mr. Voigt would have appreciated. The research work has generated friends around the world; we did a sabbatical year in Cambridge England in '95-'96, and spent spring semester 2011 in Basel, Switzerland, as well as other visits in Europe, Australia, and Japan. Much of my time now is taken up with our Genomics Education Partnership (<http://gep.wustl.edu>), which gets undergraduate students involved in a genomics research project with us, improving the DNA sequence assembly and annotating the genomes of several species of fruit fly. So I'm doing more computer work and less bench research these days.

Robert and I have two wonderful sons; both followed Robert's "numbers" lead in majoring in math and computer science. The kids got us involved in music lessons, science fairs, soccer, math competitions, the high school musical, and all of those fun things – and Robert even served nine years on the School Board. Ben is now a software engineer with Third Tech in North Carolina, working on 3-D visualizations, and Thomas is an analyst and commodities trader with DC Energy in Washington DC. (The family picture was taken at Tom's graduation in 2009 with an MS in Systems Management from Stanford.)

We love Wash U, except for the fact that it is not on the west coast (that's the University of Washington in Seattle – a source of endless confusion), but we manage to get back to Oregon a couple of times a year for our "northwest fix," and enjoy visits to Timberline to ski, and to the coast for great seafood and walks on the beach. I'm looking forward to the reunion!

