



Diane LaVarre-Godwin Swift-Ornes-Dullnig

March 29, 1925 - July 15, 2022

My mother was born in 1925 in New York City, of parents William LaVarre and Sylvia Doutney. She never knew her birth father and was raised by Frank Godwin (Famous illustrator of Rusty Riley) who she called dad. She always said that she felt like a chameleon, because her life was full of so many twist and turns, that she had to adapt to all its different chapters. Here are some of the high points she related to me.

Her early memories included the summers she spent living in Skanneateles, NY where they had a house on the lake. She use to go up in the attic and watch Frank at work with his artwork. She would go armed with a badminton racquet so that she could swat the bats that flew around.

Her teens were spent in Cuba, where she graduated from Rustin Academy. Those years were spent with many well known artist, musicians, movie stars and writers. She remembers Ernest Hemingway, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Go Smith, Jack Dempsey, James Montgomery Flagg, and her God mother, Gloria Swanson. While her dad was painting, her mother went through central America gathering information on the indigenous cultures for her newspaper column, vignettes. Mother returned to New York, where she worked as a model for Bergdorf Goodman.

She married my dad, Harold Swift, in 1945. He was in the Royal Air force where they met on his liberty in NYC. They corresponded by mail for a while, and when the war was over, he returned to New York and married my mother in a family home in Connecticut.

I was born in England where my mother went to meet my father's family in Liverpool. She returned to the US to await my father's exit visa and job placement. Pan American offered him a job, and that is where much of the other adventure began. They were first stationed in Miami for his training, and the birth of their son Bruce in 1948, then quickly transferred to the Dominican Republic where her was director of operations.

Her second husband was German Ornes, Editor and owner of El Caribe newspaper. In 1955, they went into exile from the Trujillo dictatorship and stayed in the Beverly Hotel In New York while German was writing his book, Trujillo, Little Caesar of the Caribbean. After the book was published, they moved so San Juan,PR. Where they both had positions with the El Mundo newspaper.

In the early 80"s, she moved to Ocala and worked with thoroughbred brood mares at various farms. Her job was to look after some high-profile horses just before they were to give birth. She then cared for the foals until they were weaned.

Her final chapter was spent living in Texas, where she moved in 1986 to be with our family. We were both interested in Genealogy and managed to locate her half sister, Yvett LaVarre Graham, and niece, Elizabeth Godwin.It was wonderful being able to talk about family and recount some of their memories...mother really enjoyed having those new relationships.

Mother got a job working as a tech for Dr. Willbanks, veterinarian. Two years later, she married Chris Dullnig who had some chihuawahs boarding at their kennel. Chris passed away in 1997, and mother continued on in their house surrounded by her beloved dogs, and long time housekeeper and companion Lucia. She lived on her own and recently had her drivers license renewed at age 92. Wow!! What a life.

Tribute Wall

JE

“ I came to Dr. Sangama Herbal Home feeling lost and overwhelmed. The guidance and help i received transformed my life. I have been battling with Herpes Simplex Virus for a very long time now, I have been on med nothing seems to be working, this has affected my marriage, all my effects to get this shit off my system prove abortive till I came across a post by Mrs. Delisha bout a doctor from South Africa who has been using his herbs to cure the said virus, I reached out and the doctor shipped to my location in United State couples of herps, I was place on a total system cleansing after 2weeks my recent test result came out negative yesterday. I Highly recommend you do same and save yourself from doctor’s appointment that hasn’t been helpful. drsangama@yahoo.com best of luck.

Jessy - January 20 at 10:44 AM

MP

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Mission Park - July 18, 2022 at 05:19 PM