

Oral History Project

By Caroline Dana

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The person whom I decided to interview was my grandmother, Jill Susan Fulmer McKibben (pictured here with my Uncle Matthew).

A Brief Biography

- Jill Susan Fulmer McKibben was born on February 14th, 1949 in Wichita, Kansas to Private Henry Fulmer, who served in World War II, and Betty Ann Fulmer. She remembers that Kansas was very farming-oriented, and that her grandparents lived on a farm, which she would visit in the summers.
- She had two brothers, Ted and Kirk; and a sister, Sherry.
- Although they were not poor, they did have to stretch their resources because of her family of six. She referenced having, often, only one potato in a large pot of stew.
- She attended college briefly, but did not graduate after she got married to James McKibben and had 4 children.
- She was raised to be a housewife and mother, so she did not get her Bachelor's degree until age 44 and a Master's in Interdisciplinary Studies and Public Administration at age 46.

A Brief Biography Continued

- She got divorced from her husband, James McKibben, during the year of 1986. Her peers at Al-Anon helped her through that experience and the experience of her sister Sherry's death from cancer.
- She is a Unitarian who enjoys the openness and acceptance of her church.
- She did not have any nicknames during her childhood, but she goes by many names now. Her in-laws call her Jill, her children call her Mom or Mamala, her grandchildren call her MaDear, my Uncle Scott and Aunt Bess call her Aunt Jill, and her brothers call her Sis because she is their only living sister.

One of her most defining character traits is her kind and outgoing personality, which allows her to connect with many friends and loved ones. I believe that her stories and opinions portray this trait well.

How is the world different now from what it was during her childhood?

During our discussion, she referenced the cell phone as the most important invention during her lifetime. She mentioned how she only got to know her neighbors and classmates as a child, but now she is happy that she is able to connect with others over the internet using social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram. The internet has made her happier, in that she can explore the thoughts and opinions of others. I believe that this portrays her kindness and outgoing personality because she loves to engage with people and create lasting bonds with them, and she is now thankful that she has alternate means to do so more easily. Additionally, she is able to connect with individuals from her childhood with whom she may have lost touch because she “loved most of her classmates” and can talk with them, once again, over the internet.

What is on her bucket list?

When I asked her what is on her bucket list, she said that she didn't have many items other than to travel to spend time with the people whom she loves. She loves family reunions, saying that "[they] are the best!" and that "[She] especially [loves] when [her] children and grandchildren are all together. That's heaven!". Although she enjoys exploring new things, "the best time in [her] life is when [she's] with the people [she loves]". It is quite obvious that she is an extremely kind and generous person based on this story. She highly values her connections with her friends and family, and I deeply admire her for this aspect of her personality.

Images



This image portrays the farming aspect of Wichita. Pictured here is my great grandmother Leona Fulmer and my great-great grandmother Chatfield.



Jill McKibben's father, Henry Fulmer, is pictured here as a private in World War II (second from right).

Images



Jill McKibben is pictured here (second from the right) with her sister Sherry and a few other girls.



This is an image of Jill getting her Bachelor's degree.