

Childhood

On April 20th, 1941, Bonnie Loretta Sprole was born in Chicago, Illinois. She was born at the Little Company of Mary Hospital and was her parents first child. She grew up in a neighborhood in East Grand Rapids, from second grade on. It was a busy street, but it had sidewalks where kids could ride their bikes and there were a lot of kids in the neighborhood. Her Mother and Father, Elaine and Mel Sproule, decided to name their baby girl, Bonnie, because Elaine always liked the name Bonnie. They chose her middle name to be, Loretta, because of her Father's Aunt and a famous movie star actress, Loretta Young.

The house that she grew up in was two-stories and it was fairly large, although she had to share a room with her sister, Marge. The house had one bathroom, which her whole family had to share, and she was very clean, whereas her sister was not. She once had to put up a string along the room, so that she could keep her things on one side and her sister's on the other. They shared a double bed when they first moved in and later on they got twin beds. There were three bedrooms in the house and later, her parents added another bedroom. They also added on another half bathroom upstairs in Bonnie and Marge's room.

In her family, her mother was more strict than her father. She and her sister once got disciplined for giving their younger brother a bath. While he was in the tub, to make the water warmer, Bonnie turned the fossett and made the water too hot and his foot got burned. He didn't get burned too badly, but she and her sister got punished. Although she and her siblings sometimes got disciplined, their parents had a good marriage. In order to earn money for the

family, her father worked as a salesman for a steel company and sold steel to different businesses. They weren't the most wealthy family ever, but they made a good living and were about in middle class. They also didn't go on big vacations, but they did belong to a country club because her father's business payed for the membership, and they spent money going out there.

In her family, there was her Mother, Elaine, Father, Mel, her two brothers, Jim and Dan and her sister, Marge. Marge was born two years after Bonnie, Jim was born 3 years after her and Dan was born when Bonnie was 13. She used to lock Jim out of the house and watch him run to every door, trying to get in, and she would always feel bad about it afterwards. She has two Grandmothers' who lived far away in Galena, Illinois, so she didn't see them much. However, she saw her other Grandmother a lot when she came over for dinner on most Sundays. They were born in the 1880's and died in the 1960's.

Bonnie was a bossy older child who was good and didn't get into a lot of trouble. She loved to eat pie and drew a lot for fun. The possession that she loved the most was her brownie hawkeye camera¹ and she took all of the pictures in her family. Her favorite toy was her Hopalong Cassidy Guns and Holsters² because she used to play cowboys and Indians in the woods. She wore jeans and sweaters often and she got a little bit of allowance. If she spent her money, she spent it on record albums and added them to her collection. She still has some of these records today. In grade school, she went to a catholic school and in High School she went

¹ Brownie hawkeye camera- A brownie hawkeye camera was very popular back in 1949-1961 and can take 6x6cm images on 620 film. The original design of this camera did not have a flash facility, but it was added on in 1950.

² Hopalong Cassidy Guns and Holsters- Hopalong Cassidy was a popular book series and was written by Grace Bradley Boyd and Michael Cochran. The set came with a double leather holster set and toy cap guns. It was very popular for kids in the 1950s.

to a catholic girls school. She was a very bright and good student. Her favorite subject was History and her least favorite subject was Algebra. Her favorite teacher was a French teacher because she spoke a lot of french, was really nice and had been to France numeral times. She also wasn't as old as some of the other teachers.

In the past, some of the inventions were the first television³ (which only had black & white- no other colors and very few stations) and her neighbors in Chicago had the first TV. When she grew up, she always wanted to be a sister⁴ (a nun). She ended up becoming one after High School. Also while she grew up, there were some big world events like when President Kennedy died, she was in college at the time. Back then, she did not have all of the electronics that kids have today, you could walk into a movie theatre at anytime, and the only movie theatres were downtown and there was one in each neighborhood. At her graduation, she wore a white gown and there were only 60 girls in her class. She also took drivers training and was in the first class that was required to take it in 1959. When she was a kid, she never owned a car, but her Mother and Father always had Chevrolets.

Adulthood

Bonnie went to Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo and decided on what to study by having there not be a lot of choices back then and girls were usually teachers or nurses, except for the ones who were really smart. She decided to become a teacher. After High School, she went into the convent and there she was going to be a teacher too. When she

³ The first television- The first television was made in the 1950s and was only black and white. It was very small and had very few channels. The price ranged from \$289 (for a GE black and white tabletop model which was 17 inches) and \$499 (for a Philco console model which was 12 inches)

⁴ Nun- A nun (or a sister) is a woman who devotes her life to God and the church. Nuns are also not allowed to get married and are in the convent.

got out of the convent⁵, she still wanted to be a teacher. She wanted to become a teacher because a lot of her friends at the time were also becoming teachers and she felt like it was the right thing to do. She thought that she wasn't a good teacher and wished that she had done something else. The first job that she got as an adult was a tray girl in college at Blodgett Hospital and she took around trays of food to patients in the hospital. Most of her adult life she took care of her house and her children.

She met her future husband, Al Couch, in High School and knew him vaguely, when she went out on a blind date with him after college. She liked that he was cute, polite, kind and he had sort of the same background as her. They both also went to catholic schools. Their first date was in March of 1963 and he hadn't called her for three months. She thought that he had forgotten about her but, he was really trying to break up with someone else. When she saw him again, They went out walking and he asked her to marry him. They got engaged in June of 1963. They got married in June of 1964 and she was 20 years old. Then she was no longer Bonnie Sproule, she was now Bonnie Couch. Their wedding was at the country club and at the wedding there were mostly her parents friends and family there but also some of Al's friends and family. The first big purchase that they made together was their first house. They had three children and they were born the first year after their marriage, the second year after their marriage and then 4 years after their marriage. Bonnie liked common names and so for her children, she picked common names like Barb, Steve and David. She also picked the name Barb because one of her best friends' names was Barb.

Her favorite stories about her children are when her first child, Steve, grew corn in the backyard of their first house. Also when her second child, Barb, learned to ride a bike before

⁵ Convent- The convent is a community, usually with nuns, who devote their lives to God and the Church. It can also be with priests, religious brothers and sisters.

her older brother. In 1980, they went to Maine as a family and Niagara Falls. Their children were 15, 16, and 10. The hardest part about raising her children was not having enough money at times and the best part was being near where family was. Today her children all live in the same state and around where she lives. Bonnie is proud of her children because they are all good, kind people, they love their families, and they all are responsible about their jobs. She also remembers the day when her first grandchild was born, Savannah (me), and she had really large eyes and a little face. She also remembers the day when her other grandchildren were born. Her two second grandchildren, Nicole (my sister) and Jacob, were born two years after Savannah and then the third grandchild, Connor, was born a few years later.

The best part for Bonnie as a Grandparent is getting to do things with her grandchildren and spend time with them. Also she loves that she lives near where all of her grandchildren are so she can see them more often.

Identity

Bonnie's last name, Couch, is part Indian and there may be stories about this family name but she doesn't really know any. As an adult or a child, she never really had any nicknames or names that people used to call her. She is a lot like her Mother, Elaine, because she values family and wants everyone to get along, and she worries a lot like her. Also as she gets older, she starts to look more like her. She is unlike her Mother by not enjoying as many things as she did and she was always looking for something new to do and have fun with it.

She's not only a lot like her Mother, but also her Father. Bonnie had a good business mind, just like her Father. She was unlike him by being more emotional and sensitive. The most

important thing to her parents was making sure that their children had a great, safe and happy life. Bonnie is not a lot like any of her Grandparents, but her children are a lot like her. Her daughter, Barb, worries a lot like she does, her younger son, David, is a perfectionist like her (which is not a good thing) and her older son, Steve, is caring and affectionate of other people like she is.

Bonnie has a ton of wonderful qualities that show through and through, every single day. Her best three qualities are that she's kind, generous and caring towards others. Her worst qualities are that she's always thinking that bad things are going to happen instead of thinking that good things are going to happen and always being disappointed that she didn't develop a few more skills throughout her lifetime. Intelligence has helped her throughout her lifetime by being able to get a good job, which she worked at for 20 years. A special saying that her Father used to say was, "Well, its only money and its getting worth less every day."

Three of the biggest news events in history during her lifetime have been the Bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, John Kennedy when he got assassinated (he was shot and killed), and when the Astronauts went to the moon in 1968. The three people in history she admires the most are Franklin Roosevelt⁶, she visited his home and learned about him, John Kennedy, who was the President from 1961-1963, and Hillary Clinton, who was the secretary of state and who may run for President.

Some things that bring her pleasure now are a clean house and reading. Some things that used to bring her pleasure as a younger adult was going to a fun movie and going out to Grand Haven, and as child, school and taking pictures and putting them into photo albums.

⁶ Franklin Roosevelt- Franklin Roosevelt was the 32nd President of the United States and served for 12 years and four terms. He was President from 1933-1945. He died on April 12th, 1945.

Some things that frighten her now are car accidents and deep water. She doesn't really know what she was afraid of when she was a younger adult or a child. She feels different about herself now from when she was younger because she always thought that she had all this potential and now she sees that she didn't. Something about her that has stayed the same throughout the years have been her personality and something that has changed is that she is now more careful that she is older.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I learned many things about my Grandma that I didn't know before, like that she was a tray girl in college or that she got married when she was 20 years old. My Grandma is a wonderful and caring person and I am very fortunate to have her in my life.

All About

Bonnie Couch

Written by: Savannah Scheid

This biography is dedicated to my wonderful, smart and caring Grandmother, Bonnie, who loves her grandchildren and I so greatly. She is the one who helps me when I need it most and loves me unconditionally. I couldn't ask for a better Grandma than my own. I love you.

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Poem #1. Cinquain

Bonnie Couch

Patient, smart

Loving, caring, helping

Loves me so much

Grandma

Poem #2. About Someone

This poem is for you Grandma.

For your encouraging words

For your helpful knowledge

For you patience towards me

This poem is for you Grandma

because you make me feel special

you care for what I have to say

you love all of your Grandchildren

I love the way you

make me laugh

teach me about music

help me through the toughest days

I hope that you will

keep your great personality
live your life to the fullest
always remember who loves you

Poem #3: She is my Grandma

She lives in Grand Rapids
I live in Plainfield Township
She is wise
I am learning
She has a happy life
I do too

She is the one who took care
of me while my Mom worked
I always had someone with me
She took me to my first big
musical
I love being in musicals now

My Grandma is a role model to me
I look up to her everyday
She loves me so much
I love her too

Favorite Family Recipe

This is the recipe for Zucchini Bread from Bonnie's mother, Elaine. Elaine made it all the time for her children and Grandchildren, and now Bonnie does the same. Bonnie makes Zucchini Bread every fall. The ingredients that you will need to make this delicious dessert: Zucchini, 3 eggs, 2 cups of sugar, 1 cup of vegetable oil, 2 cups of grated zucchini and 1 teaspoon of vanilla. The next ingredients need to be dry: 3 cups of flour, 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 teaspoon of baking soda, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons of baking powder, 2 teaspoons of cinnamon, and 1 teaspoon of allspice. Then once you have all of your ingredients, beat the eggs until they are fluffy. Next, add sugar, oil, vanilla and zucchini. Mix the dry ingredients together and add to the egg mixture (2 large zucchinis make 1 loaf). Then, bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour in a grease pan. After it's done, let it cool for a little bit and then enjoy!