

## 6. BARBARA LEE KEYFITZ, OTTAWA, 1944-

To start at the beginning, 5 years and one month after our marriage, at 7:00 a.m. on the morning of November 7, 1944, Beatrice started having labor pains; I took her to the hospital and the pains continued all day; until at 7:15 pm she came out of the anesthetic. The first time I saw Barbara was an hour after she was born, and it seemed to me then, and still seems to me, that her pink-cheeked face, fresh from the womb, was the most beautiful sight I had ever gazed on. I went about for days enraptured with that vision.

November 7, 1944 happened to be Election Day and the first thing Beatrice asked was "Was Roosevelt re-elected?" We explained that she had only been under anaesthetic for the last five minutes, and the polls were still open. Then she asked "Is it a boy or a girl?" Late that evening we heard that for the fourth and last time Franklin Roosevelt was elected President. A second item of good news, but much less important.

The next time that I recall was mid-December, 1944 when we were sending out end-of-year greetings and family news. I snapped a picture of Barby (now aged six weeks) in her cradle, and made copies which we mailed out to relatives and friends. We had more than one comment (including from Dr. Dunning who had delivered her) on a baby that so precociously flashed a smile at the age of six weeks.

Two years after that her speech was fairly advanced. She said Teewies for cherries, I remember her being carried about by her doting grandfather and looking at a picture by Henri Rousseau of a gypsy being sniffed by a lion, saying "Nyum nyum dippy" meaning that the gypsy would make a tasty meal for the lion.

Then in due course she began speaking in sentences as in "It was ten o'clock and Brenda was not yet furious." And the climax of this progression was reached when she began telling stories to Rob. Alas we have none of these on record. Once when we were in Cantley for the summer I set a tape recorder under her bed, and caught that night's story in full. But alas the tape has been lost.

When Robert came she didn't like the competition for the family's attention, and kept saying from her crib "Wobut is bozzering me". She subsequently referred to him not as her little brother, but as her little brother. Once she seized Robert's cloth doll and threw it down the stairs.

The two got along well on the whole, though there was always a healthy rivalry between them for the ears of adults, especially their parents. And because Robert always found himself handicapped as a second arrival at the dinner table, he developed a sharp wit, a capacity to say things that would make the adults laugh. Now at the age of 56 he retains that cleverness of speech--a capacity that must often relieve the tension of a hard-working office. (We noticed the

same thing in the children of Antonio Golini, two boys of whom the younger was the witty talker, the older more silent.)

Both children were precocious readers. That was following their mother, who in turn closely resembles her mother. If there was a corn flakes box on the table neither one could take their eyes off the text on it.

This high value set on text must go back many generations; Jews have always been people of the Book. The Bible is as deeply symbolic to Jews as the Cross is to Christians. And in a secular age attention shifts from the bible to any worthwhile book.

Barby was always very decisive: she knew from the start that mathematics was the most difficult subject in the curriculum and so it was the one she wanted. She never deviated from that path, following math in high school, in college, in graduate school.

An incident in her third year at the University of Toronto gives the picture. There is an annual Putnam Competition for the whole continent and winning it is not only an honor in itself but gives access to the best graduate schools. The University of Toronto, like all other colleges, had the right to present a team of three students, which it did. They did not include Barby. She looked into the rules and found that she could enter as an individual, independently of the University. She entered and placed higher than two of the three members of the team. The story is on a plaque at the U. of T. to this day. It is no credit to a Department that did not believe a woman could make it.

Barbara's ability and determination showed up again at a later stage. She applied for graduate training at the Courant Institute at New York University, and was admitted and awarded an assistantship to support her. But other students, who seemed less able, were given fellowships, with no obligation to teach. She buttonholed the great mathematician Richard Courant (1888-1972) himself, Director of the Institute, told him her story, and asked for a fellowship. Courant answered that if she did well in the first semester, she would have it. She did.

Once she had her doctorate Barbara was appointed Assistant Professor at Columbia, then at Princeton. At Princeton she met a fellow teacher, Terry Quinn, and in due course they fell in love and were married.

I went for a walk with Terry and identified him as one of those people who get their pleasure out of tearing down others, especially the person with whom they are talking at the moment. This destroyer type is not all that uncommon in our society. My sister Amy married one. I said little, figuring that Barby would be able to dominate Terry. I was wrong.

We put on a fine wedding. I was at the University of California at the time, and since that would be too far for most of the guests we had in mind, I arranged for the ceremony to take place at the Ritz Carleton hotel in Montreal. We paid the travel of the groom and his family and put up a number of other guests at the hotel, engaged Rabbi Stern, who was the Rabbi at the Temple Emanuel where I had gone to Sunday School and who confirmed, me, to conduct the ceremony. Everything went well. Terry's father made a speech saying what an honor it was to be related to our distinguished family. That Terry was not Jewish did not seem a burden for the happy pair to carry.

Barbara's marriage started well, but three or four years into it dark shadows appeared. I had joined Harvard, and was about to spend a summer teaching at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. We were driving from Cambridge to take up the post and there were four of us in the car-- Beatrice and Barbara in front, Hertha Georg, our friend from Frankfurt, and myself in the rear. And Barbara was full of the sad story of the breakup. Apparently Terry had found a young lady (or she had found him) and was leaving Barbara for good. It was all over with her marriage. She talked about it all the way to Ann Arbor, then for another three weeks. After that she said "I am not going to live this way", changed her name from Quinn back to Keyfitz, and not once since has she ever mentioned Terry.

A friend of ours responded to exactly the same problem--of being left by her husband for a woman he found more attractive--some twenty years ago. And she still lives with that memory day by day. She retains the name of the former husband, and still refers to him every now and again.

Barbara lived singly, dated a number of young men, then met Martin Golubitsky, and they saw from the start that they are just right for each other. Instead of destroying, he is constructive, a constant support in mathematics and in everything else. With him she has found some degree of fame. She is apparently not as original and imaginative a mathematician as Marty, but she is better at organizing. She has been considered for a Deanship at one or two major universities, but the difficulty is that institutions are usually trying to fill one spot at a time. So it looks as though the pair will continue to live in Houston, fourth largest city in the U.S. and next only to New York and San Francisco in its cultural attractions.

Meanwhile the Golubitsky's have two wonderful children. We are lucky that one, Elizabeth, lived for over three years right here in Cambridge. She is a computer professional, but that is the least of the reasons why we were glad she was here. She has a charming presence, a great sense of humor, is knowledgeable in science. Perhaps these qualities have some relation to her having studied at Swarthmore. She still feels close to Swarthmore and has often gone there to attend one event or another.

The second child of Barbara and Marty is Alex. Alex has always lived a long way from us and so the occasions on which we have seen him have been very few, perhaps less than half a dozen altogether. . He was smart enough to get admitted to the highly selective Reed College in Portland, Oregon, from which he is now graduating and thinking about what to do next. His strength has always been collecting facts, and storing them in his head. .,

He is not one to make quick decisions. Very much the opposite of his mother who is one of the most decisive people I know. Keeping all possibilities in play for as long as possible is Alex's style, in this as in other decisions he has to face. However he is now settling on taking a J.D. that will allow him to practice law, simultaneously with a Ph. D. that will enable him to teach. He has a friend, Elena whose parents were sufficiently impressed to take him to Europe when they went a couple of years ago. Elena herself is a student of literature, and presumably plans to teach it someday.

And now for another view of the same subject. Beatrice has written her recollection of November 7, 1944 and the days that followed in a letter to me: