

**My name is**  
**Shirley Bailen**  
and  
This is my story

I was born in Louisville in the "old" Jewish hospital on May 7, 1922. My father was Wolf Diamond (1884-1978). He was born in Lithuania. My mother was Birdie Marks. (1888-1978). She was born in Louisville. I was the third child born in our family. My sister, Tobie was born in 1912 and my brother, Victor, was born in 1915.

We lived above my father's shoe store at 603 West Market. Our next home was at Second at and Lee when I was six. Two years later we moved to Second and Gaulbert. I started school at Prentice Elementary for kindergarten and the first half of first grade. My mother and I walked to school every day. My next school was Cochran which was at Second and Hill. After sixth grade I went to Halleck Hall Junior High and then to Louisville Girls High, graduating in 1940.

Everyone remembers we had a major flood here in January-February 1937. We lived on the third floor and while we didn't get flooded ourselves, the water got into the basement and the furnace was out of commission. At times, it was so cold that my sister and I huddled together in a twin bed under all the blankets we owned trying to get warm. My father tried to cook an egg in a spoon using a candle for heat. We had to get to my Aunt Esther Marks and Uncle Harry who lived at Second and Brandeis. My mother stopped a passing boat operated by two young men and they took my sister and me. Later my parents came. We later moved to the Highlands, near the "loop" at Highland Avenue and we stayed with my father's sister, a family by the name of Sadawitz, until we were able to get back in our home after the waters receded and repairs were made to the furnace.

My brother became a pharmacist and married a girl from North Dakota and my sister became a teacher and she married Abe Goldberg. He was a tailor and had a shop on West Market. I got married right out of high school. It was on October 27, 1940, David Bailen (1918-2004) and I married and began a wonderful life together for 67 years. We knew we couldn't afford the expense of a large wedding, and the potential guest lists had already expanded beyond our budget. So we went to Lexington and Rabbi Pero married us in a private ceremony.

David got a job as a photographer at a ship yard in Evansville, Indiana. It made landing craft for the military. When WWII started he joined the Air Force and we relocated to a base at Stana, California. We rode our bicycles every where and really liked California and we seriously considered staying there. While he was in service there I worked on the base for the air force, also.

Of course during the war, there were shortages of most items and everyone had ration cards. We drank our coffee black as we could not get cream. Mother would send us extra ration stamps so we could buy meat occasionally. Once we went to the races in Tijuana, Mexico. We biked everywhere we could...to Laguna Beach...to Balboa. We had become real Californians, but fate stepped in when David's father died.

After the war we came home and David opened a photo shop in Bonnycastle drugs. Later Hucks Pharmacy, near Speed and Bardstown Road closed and sold his pharmacy business to Bonnycastle, so David moved his photo shop to that location and we ran a dispensary, no pharmacy. Several years later we were unable to renew our lease and closed that business.

Then the course of our lives changed again. David worked in sales for one of the candy/tobacco wholesale businesses and during this same time, Donald Stern who had a drug store decided that he needed help. He wanted to spend all of his time with the prescription service and asked me to run the rest of the store for him. This proved to be a good arrangement for both of us, and I did this for 12 years.

One event was significant in my life; at age 56 I had cancer. The doctors were reluctant to tell me about my chances for cure and survival. I insisted and was told that I had only a 20% chance. I told the doctor that I was tough and would beat it. After all, I had children and grandchildren I needed to be here for.

There came another unusual opportunity when Jack Benjamin was involved with the drama department at the new JCC on Dutchman's Lane. He asked David to read for a part. David had never done anything with any theater, but finally agreed to read. David was pretty good with accents and we were all surprised when he was selected for the lead in the play. It was such a big success and had so many sold out performances, they had to extend it for a month.

Another unusual experience occurred when David won a trip to the Los Angeles summer Olympics in 1968. His name was drawn by M & M, one of the candy companies he represented. We stayed at Disney and after the Olympics we went to Mexico City for a week before returning to Louisville.

Our son, James, was born here in Louisville while David was still in the army. James attended Centre College on scholarship in Danville. It is a Christian college and a required course was Christian Bible. James took the course and wrote a paper on a Jewish leader and won first place and \$263 prize money. He went to UL medical school and made urology as his specialty. He helped form the medical group First Urology which is the largest such group in this area. He married Cathy Eichengreen.

James has three children: Michael attended college at Northwestern and became an investment banker with Deutsch Bank in Manhattan. He married Karen Carney. He was going to work the morning of 9/11. After the collapse of the second tower he had to walk 17 blocks before he could get a phone signal to call us and report that he was OK. They decided that they would rather live in Louisville and came home. He works for Texas Roadhouse as chief financial officer. They have two children: Brody, 9 and Zoe, 6.

James second child is Neil, who married Lisa. They have Blair, 5 and Whitney, 2. He is a lawyer with the Stites-Harbison group.

Their third child is Erica. She is a pediatrician. Her husband is Sean Griffin. He is an orthopedic surgeon at Norton Hospital. They have no children.

Our second son is Barry Paul Bailen. He lives in Olympia, Washington and is now retired from Evergreen University as an academic counselor. His daughter is Molly and she is married to Greg Maalof. They live in Portland, OR.

While we were retired we participated in at least 10 Elderhostel programs at various places of interest including San Francisco, Boston, New Orleans, and St. Louis. We lived in a condo in the St Matthews area.

Following David's death in 2004 I continued to be active and I volunteered at Jewish hospital, at the Kentucky Center for the Arts, and for a year at the Louisville Free Public Library. After being alone for 6 years I moved into Magnolia Springs and I have been here about eight years now.

interview by  
Irvin Goldstein  
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