



After graduating from Liberty, Marlene went to Bethlehem Business College, graduating in 1962. After receiving her diploma, she found a job at an overhead door company as secretary to the president. Marlene recognized there was limited opportunity for advancement so she left that job and went to work for Bethlehem Steel Company as a typist in the Saucon Manifest Division. The Saucon Manifest Division was where all the orders for steel products were categorized and sent to the appropriate area for processing. Bethlehem Steel was known as a good company to work for and provided, among other things, excellent benefits. What the company did not provide was the opportunity for employees to work independently and make their own decisions. What she learned at Bethlehem Business College and the skills she acquired through experience were not being utilized. Marlene knew it was time to seek another job. After some searching, she was offered and accepted a job at the General Acceptance Corporation (GAC) in Allentown

as secretary to the Assistant Secretary of the corporation. GAC, a finance company, provided Marlene with the opportunity to utilize her business training. It was also where she would meet the love of her life and future husband, Book Hopkins. Book, an attorney by training, was employed by GAC's legal department. Book and Marlene were married in 1965 at Holy Ghost Church in Bethlehem. Tiffany, their daughter and only child, was born in 1966.

In 1968, Marlene, Book and Tiffany moved to New Orleans, where Book was offered a job as vice-president of a company that leased equipment, store fixtures, construction equipment and airplanes. Little did Marlene know that she would be living in one of the world's most unique cities. New Orleans is, among other things, home of the French Quarter, Preservation Hall (famous for Dixieland Jazz) and Mardi Gras. Of course, Marlene and Book became connoisseurs of the food New Orleans is famous for; food such as gumbo, jambalaya, andouille, crawfish, shrimp, po-boys, red beans and rice, and of course, beignets.

After two years of living in the "Big Easy" Book was offered a job as vice-president of a commercial leasing and finance company in Lafayette, Louisiana. They moved to Carencro (a small but real Cajun town outside Lafayette). Book's job required traveling between Louisiana (New Orleans/Lafayette) and Mississippi (Jackson/Gulfport). To conserve time, Book earned his pilot's license and flew between locations. Marlene, who accompanied him on some trips, took a course for non-pilots on how to navigate and land the airplane should the pilot become incapacitated.

In 1972, Book decided to practice law in Louisiana which meant taking and passing the Louisiana Bar Exam. He passed the exam and was now a licensed attorney in both

Louisiana and Pennsylvania. Of course, this meant another move and after some searching, found a house in Gretna, a town along the Mississippi River, across from New Orleans. Marlene decided to start working again and signed up with a temporary agency. Because of her legal background she started working in an attorney's office that covered all phases of criminal and civil law.

In 1992 Marlene and Book moved to Pass Christian, Mississippi, a small town on the Gulf of Mexico, close to New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama. Marlene continued working her legal assignments and Book worked as House Counsel for Regal Nail, a company that had nail salons throughout the United States and several foreign countries.

Life was good in Pass Christian until August 29, 2005, a day that will live in everyone's mind forever. Hurricane Katrina, a category 5 hurricane struck the cities of New Orleans, Louisiana and Gulfport-Biloxi, Mississippi. Marlene and Book knew they had to evacuate. They secured the contents of their house the best they could, gathered important papers such as birth certificates, passports, insurance policies, etc., and took their Great Dane dog, Blue. Due to space limitations the four cats and three birds were left behind. Marlene and Book assumed they would return in a few days to do the necessary clean-up. Little did they know there would be nothing left to clean up.

On August 28th Marlene and Book, each driving their own car, left Pass Christian for Mobile, Alabama. As they approached Mobile, they heard on the radio that Mobile was evacuating also. They decided to drive to Pensacola, Florida where they found a motel with vacancy. The next day, news reports said the Mississippi Gulf Coast received major damage and all roads to the Gulf Coast were closed to traffic. Returning to Pass Christian was impossible.

Marlene and Book decided to drive to Baton Rouge, Louisiana where the company Book worked for was located. The drive was almost impossible because downed trees blocked roads, there was no electricity which meant gas pumps, ATM's and anything that required power did not work. To make things worse, Marlene and Book became separated and were unable to locate each other. Marlene and her dog were now on their own. After much driving, Marlene finally arrived in Baton Rouge and was reunited with Book. They stayed at a motel which became their home for the next two months.

Using a borrowed cell phone, Marlene called her daughter Tiffany who was in Gulfport, Mississippi. She drove to Gulfport to pick up Tiffany and drive back to Baton Rouge. Along the way they took a detour to Pass Christian to see the condition of their house. Unfortunately the highways to Pass Christian were closed to traffic so they returned to Baton Rouge. A few days later, Marlene and Tiffany were able drive to Pass Christian and what they saw was mind-boggling. The city was obliterated. The well-constructed house they lived in was gone; furniture, the refrigerator, the grand piano, artwork by Wyeth and Dali, personal belongings, military records and certificates, the pets left behind, family heirlooms, all totally gone. Hurricane Katrina was responsible for the loss of over 1800 lives and damages exceeding 100 billion dollars. As time passed, Marlene and Book's life gradually returned to normal and they again enjoyed life.

Marlene engaged herself in both nature and cultural activities. A lover of animals, she did volunteer work with the Wildlife Rehabilitation Program; a program that regulates the rehabilitation of injured wildlife and works in conjunction with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries. She and Book, both supporters of classical music, regularly attend concerts by the New Orleans Symphony (Book is a member of the Advisory Board), the New Orleans Opera, the New Orleans Ballet and the Community Concerts.



Book is also on the Advisory Board of the New Orleans Opera. Marlene was active in the Women's Guild of the New Orleans Opera and the Junior Woman's Committee of the New Orleans Symphony. She, as well as other members of her family, had a keen interest in their family lineage. They developed the Cressman Family Association to research their family genealogy and were able to trace their ancestry back to the 1500's to a small town in Pfungstadt, Hesse, Germany. Marlene is secretary of the association and editor of the association's newsletter.

Aside from their many activities, Marlene and Book found time to travel. They toured the United States, London, Paris, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Costa Rica, Nassau, Hawaii, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Marlene and Book have been through some difficult times, but for the most part, their life has been filled with happiness. Tiffany is employed as a pet care manager at PetSmart and has given them a granddaughter and grandson. Book, a Louisiana-based Army Reserve officer who served in the Judge Advocate General Corps, retired in 1994 as a Colonel. Marlene and Book rebuilt and continued on with their lives; they have their friends, their daughter, their grandchildren, and they have each other. Marlene, Book and Tiffany do not live in or dwell on the past; they look forward, with confidence, to the future and what lies before them.