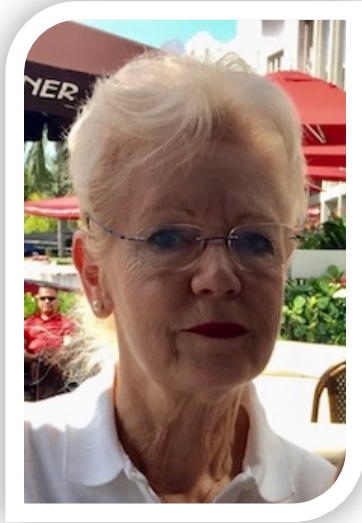


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Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Let me start off by saying 'No, we don't have any alligators in our backyard!' That's the first question everyone asks me when I tell them I live in Louisiana.

Our life in Louisiana started in October 1968 when my husband was offered a position with a company in New Orleans. Our daughter was 2 years old at the time. We felt this was a good professional opportunity for my husband, so we packed up and moved south to New Orleans. New Orleans is world-renowned for its distinct music, Creole cuisine, unique dialect, and its annual celebrations, and more festivals than you can ever imagine. And let's not forget the biggest event of the year - - Mardi Gras! If you've never been to Mardi Gras you don't know what you're missing. The historic heart of the city is the French Quarter, known for its French and Spanish Creole architecture and vibrant nightlife along Bourbon Street. The city also has a solid economic base: it is the largest city in Louisiana, it is a major tourist destination, and is the medical, industrial, and educational center of the state. New Orleans is located on the [Mississippi River](#) and has one of the country's largest port systems.

After living in New Orleans for a number of years we moved to a small town outside of Lafayette. Real Cajun country! All our neighbors had last names like Prejean, Thibodaux, Latour, Boudreaux, Savoy, Guidry, and Robert (pronounced A-bear). We were the only family with the name Hopkins. The Cajuns were very friendly and welcomed us with open arms. Our neighbor started teaching our daughter French and they would take her for rides on their horses. After a few years in Cajun Country, my husband decided he wanted to become a Louisiana attorney and open a law practice in New Orleans. He was already a Pennsylvania attorney, but the Civil Law in Louisiana is based on the Napoleonic Code and is different from all the other states. My husband enrolled in Loyola Law School, was admitted to the Louisiana Bar. So, back to New Orleans we went.

We had always enjoyed the Mississippi Coast and many weekends we took our sailboat to Bay St. Louis or Pass Christian, Mississippi and sailed in the Gulf of Mexico. We always loved that area of the Gulf Coast, so around 1984 we moved to Pass Christian, Mississippi. Living only a half block from the beach was perfect and I enjoyed taking the grandkids to the beach every chance I could. Pass Christian is a beautiful place. It doesn't have the hustle and bustle of New Orleans, it's more laid back, but still has plenty of amusements and entertainment. Although there are no casinos in Pass Christian, there are many along the rest of the coastline. Many New Orleanians have summer homes in the Pass. The coast is lined with many anti-bellum mansions. The Jefferson Davis home is still standing and gives tours. At that time my husband was the in-house counsel for a franchise company located in Baton Rouge and he would commute from Pass Christian to Baton Rouge. In 2005 Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Katrina was a Category 5 hurricane. We evacuated to Pensacola and when we were able to return to Mississippi we learned our home and everything we possessed had been destroyed. Since the company my husband worked for was located in Baton Rouge it made sense to go to Baton Rouge until we decided what our next step would be, i.e. rebuild in Pass Christian or relocate to Baton Rouge.

I've been living in Baton Rouge since the end of August, 2005. Baton Rouge means "Red Stick" in French. In 1699, French explorer Iberville was traveling up the Mississippi River and saw a bloodied, red pole on the shore. The "red stick" was marking the boundaries between two indigenous tribes, the Houma Indian Tribe and the

Bayougoula Indian Tribe. To settle a border conflict between them, the tribes used a cypress pole to mark the boundary dividing their hunting grounds. Iberville named the location le bâton rouge. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, Baton Rouge was a rather quiet little town. Louisiana State University was the most outstanding attraction at that time. However, following Katrina the town grew enormously with evacuees like ourselves and now rivals New Orleans. As for things to do in Baton Rouge, I do enjoy the Baton Rouge Symphony, Community Theater, and LSU has an excellent School of Theater providing outstanding operas and plays. There are several casinos, and many venues for live entertainment and music. The USS Kidd battleship is docked here in Baton Rouge and is a National Landmark. There are many city parks and national parks in the area, as well as the Baton Rouge Zoo and the Bluebonnet Swamp and Nature Center, museums, the Botanical Gardens, and music festivals of all genres. In many ways Baton Rouge is much like New Orleans. During the Christmas season people who live along the Mississippi River levy build huge bonfires. These bonfires light the way for Papa Noel (Santa Clause) to find his way to the homes of children who live in the bayous. Many of those who live along the levy invite the bonfire visitors into their homes for food and refreshment. Hospitality is always evident in Baton Rouge.

The difference between Bethlehem and Baton Rouge is like the difference between night and day. Here everyone is friendly, warm and outgoing. And, of course the biggest difference is the weather. The summers in Bethlehem are too short and the winters are too cold and too long. Although, in Baton Rouge the summers are hotter and more humid, you adapt and get used to it. It's a lot easier than trying to get used to cold, freezing weather. We do, however, get a snowfall about once every 7-10 years. It's no more than an inch of snow and quickly melts away - - but lingers long enough for all the children to run outside and make snow angels and snowmen and have snowball fights. Things I don't like about living in Louisiana: we have the highest state sales tax (9.52), very high auto insurance, and hurricanes!

As they say in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and all around South Louisiana: "laissez les bon temps rouler" (LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL!!) .

Yes, I do plan to attend our 60th reunion next year. Yikes, how did 60 years pass so quickly?