

Part II: Write a 3-5 page (word-processed, double-spaced) autobiography.

Yes, I grew up in Utah. Yes, I ski. No, I'm not Mormon. Now that we have that out of the way we can get started.

I was born in Pasadena, California May 10, 1974. Nothing incredibly remarkable to report, except my Mom would have told you her original due date was February 28. (To which I have to wonder, just how off was her math?) My only-child status was short lived with the birth of my sister, Mindy, April 15, 1977. It was not long after Mindy's arrival we packed up everything and moved on a whim to Park City, Utah. A whim is the only way to describe it, one day we were driving back from South Dakota to California and two weeks later we were unpacking a U-Haul in the snow.

If you were to ask my parents, the move to Utah from California was to create a situation where we would be equidistant from both sets of Grandparents – one in California, one in South Dakota. Maybe that was part of it, in truth I was going on school-age and my parents did not want to send me into the Catholic school system my Father was a product of. This is also ironic because my Mom worked at the Catholic school I would attend. Thus I started school in Park City, one of a handful of non-Mormon California refugees.

In order to compensate for treacherous roads between Utah and South Dakota in the winter, my Mother and Grandmother struck a deal that my sister and I would spend every summer in Edgemont, South Dakota. It was with her I learned to dance, swim and appreciate homemade mashed potatoes and yard sale bargaining. My Grandfather, who at the time was the Mayor, took us to City Hall and political chicken dinners and patiently taught us to read. No similar deal was made with my paternal grandparents and we saw them rarely.

It was in High School I started the journey I am on today. By some set of coincidences I found myself competing in the International Science and Engineering Fair with my project "Interplanetary Botanical Survival". As I charmed the judges with "Dri Water" (a colloidal gel made of vegetable gum, alum and water) and my ideas of growing plants on a space station I found my way into the group prize winners from NASA. That same science fair project also qualified me as a winner of the Utah Science Talent Search and an internship at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

With all of this science background I was determined to study biology at the University of Utah. I knew what direction I was headed when I first started college, until I found out my chosen path didn't match my given talents. With a great deal of exploration in everything from biology to music - six majors later I graduated with a degree in public relations. Yes, I changed my mind six times and I earned an abundance of extra credit hours to show for it. What I learned is that I can love science, without doing science. With a degree in PR I could combine my love of technology with my aptitude for communication.

It was the NASA connection I made in high school that led me to apply for and land an internship at the NASA Langley Research Center. At Langley I was one of three communications majors of the more than 100 interns, my assignment to serve as an events planner. I constantly found myself explaining that without people like me, no one would know what the "engineers" were up to. It was during my second summer at NASA I met Matt Oser, the man I would eventually marry.

Despite the fact that we were two time zones apart for more than a year and a half we managed to maintain our relationship. When Matt told me he had gotten a job at Boeing I was so excited I exclaimed "Awesome, Seattle." To which he responded "No, St. Louis." Huh? "St.

Louis? Where is that?" Despite the many objections of my Mother I packed up everything I owned -- and quite a few things that were not my own -- in a U-Haul and headed off into the unknown.

Life in St. Louis opened a new chapter in my life. After 200+ resumes and countless interviews I was offered a position at O'Connor & Partners Public Relations. At the agency I provided media relations and strategic communications support for more than a dozen clients simultaneously. It was not a perfect fit, but I learned more in the nearly five years I was there than I would have anywhere else. The Y2K issue was my most challenging public relations assignment, as the general public wrestled with their trust in technology and misconceptions were the flavor de jour. We were challenged to correct the public record and create a sense of security that Missouri had the problem under control. Our team's work on the Y2K program earned our team the Silver Anvil, the Oscar of public relations.

At that time websites were in their infancy and the idea of PR on the web was fascinating to me. I wanted to find any and everything I could to about the subject. I enrolled in countless classes ranging from HTML programming and website design to digital music management.

About the time I was looking for a change and an opportunity literally landed in my lap. With a baby on the way I knew I would need to find a job that allowed me to balance being a Mom and continuing to be involved in the professional world. I was offered a part-time job at Brown Smith Wallace Consulting group. This position allowed me to utilize my skills as a practitioner and bring them to the web. I've been fortunate to bring several websites, webinars and other unique online initiatives to fruition.

Things were going along with a few hiccups here and there until Christmas vacation 2005. My parents arrived and I knew all was not well. I knew my Mom was sick, I just didn't

know how sick. In a period of five days my mother arrived in St. Louis, went to the emergency room with a bad cough (pneumonia) and died of a staph infection. Who does that? Who goes on vacation and never goes home? The death of my Mother threw my life into absolute upheaval. My already fragile mental state (I was diagnosed with depression in 2000) was decimated. But we went on. We hosted a celebration of her life on what would have been her 61st birthday. The house was the setting of a festive luau – with seven inflatable palm trees buried in the yard, dozens of pink plastic flamingos and Corona chilling in the snow. The margarita fountain was flowing; the food delicious and the tears were drowned by laughter. It was exactly what she would have wanted.

It has been nearly five years since she passed and there is not a day that I don't think of her, but time and a lot of therapy has helped me to put things in perspective. I have two amazing sons who are as different as night and day and they have so much to teach me. I'm balancing my hybrid mom lifestyle – keeping my toe in the professional water – while maintaining that my full-time job is Mom. I don't know that it's where I thought I would be, but I don't know that I ever knew where that would be and that's OK. It's always something and I'll just wait and see.

If you're interested in the details of my day-to-day life check out my blog: Quiet Morgan You'll Wake The Dinosaurs <https://wakethedinosaurs.wordpress.com/>