

Chapter One: Flo Lived There—The Location Connection

Early 20th Century North Dakota collides with late 20th Century Seattle

In the mid-70s, before additions to the fronting apartment blocked the vantage, the balcony of the Boyd's apartment on Lee Street provided a breathtaking view of Seattle from the south-east side of Queen Anne Hill.

To the south, Mount Rainier stands in the near distance—hulking, beckoning, nearly threatening: truly majestic. Almost directly in front, just to the west, the Space Needle stretches toward the sky; its proximity to the apartment contributes to the inaccurate perception of the Space Needle as taller than the great mountain to its left. Behind the Needle, to the center and right, downtown Seattle stretches across the skyline. No longer there, and even then just out of view, the Kingdome, one-time home of the Seattle Mariners, Seahawks, SuperSonics, and Sounders, stood to the south while the Waterfront Market, to the west, bustles with shops and stalls providing food, beverages, and hand-thrown fish. At water's edge, the Pier promises passage, via Puget Sound ferries, to Bainbridge Island, the Olympic Peninsula, and the Pacific Ocean to the west and the San Juan Islands and Victoria BC to the north-west.

Walk to the north-east corner of the Boyd's balcony and look to the left where sails, boaters, and fisher-people putter around Lake Union's calm expansive waters while hurried drivers and local homeowners cross and surround it. Looking right to the east, beyond the lake, boat-docks, freeways, bridges, and the University of Washington. Far off in the distance, the Cascade Range closes the valley between the mountains and, eventually, the ocean. The view from that balcony evoked a combined sense of natural wonder and urban awe.

Bill Sr. and wife Joan Boyd owned the building. Bill Sr., Joan, and youngest off-spring daughter Jane occupied the four-bedroom two-bath apartment covering the top floor of the complex while renting the three units on the ground level below. In the 1970s, William Earl (Jr.) Boyd's home provided a base of operation for "Willie Bill," second oldest of five by-then-adult Boyd offspring, and a welcome retreat from the Pullman/Moscow prairie for both Bill and I, Bill's graduate school roommate.

The five-and-one-half-hour drive between the Palouse and Seattle provides numerous stark contrasts and boringly predictable natural features. A few hours out of Pullman, across seemingly unending acres and miles of wheat fields, travelers pass over the Columbia River Gorge toward the Cascade Mountains. The mountain pass is safely stunning in all but winter. Once the cold, ice, and snow arrive, the already too long five-and-one-half-hours threaten to turn into "all day" or "all night" if Snoqualmie Pass proves badly clogged or impassable.

Once across the Cascades—exhale—although Seattle is still another hour or so away depending on the traffic west of Issaquah, and maybe worse, when taking too long to cross the bridges onto and beyond Mercer Island and into town. In other words, five-and-one-half-hours is the low-end estimate/acceptable average travel time between Seattle and Pullman/Moscow. In winter, seven and/or eight hours threaten like a dark looming storm brewing over the Sound.

February 2, 2018 my best friend, William Earl Boyd, passed away

Across two academic years, 1975-76 and 76-77, Bill and I took graduate courses together at Washington State University while Bill worked on a Master's degree in the Department of Mass Communication and I studied for a Master's in the Department of Speech Communication.

Although Bill was a year ahead, and we were not in the same academic department, we attended many of the same classes and spent time studying, smoking, drinking, double-dating, and, eventually, sharing two apartments as roommates. First, we lived with undergraduate friend Frank in a small, somewhat dirty, basement apartment; then, we shared space in the Valley View Apartments the first year of two that I spent as an apartment manager before leaving Pullman. Bill and I developed a life-long friendship.

I often teased Bill about Bill's "advanced age," even though during parts of the year we sported the same number of years. The difference was enough to put Bill in the preceding high school graduation class and one year ahead in graduate studies. He finished his MA and headed back to Seattle for a Ph.D. at the University of Washington the year before I should have completed the MA at WSU.

At nearly six-foot, Bill had six inches on me but we shared lean and muscular body types. I stayed in shape by running up and down the stairs at the WSU football stadium and playing slow-pitch softball; Bill's physique was sculpted by intense weight-lifting and rowing-machine work-outs. While I had lasted a little over a month at freshman football and a couple of seasons on the high school baseball team, Bill spent four years starring in the defensive backfield of his high school football squad as well as starting on the baseball team. Until a month before he died, Bill's handshake and grip were fiercely strong. Bespectacled and nearly always neatly dressed in pressed blue jeans and a crisp shirt, Bill's blond hair flowed just short of collar length. In answer to my teasing, he'd say "I keep it this way to protect my head in case there's a mishap on my bike." While that retort worked when he owned and road motorcycles as an undergraduate, Bill drove only cars in Pullman.

Bill's look was styled after Waylon Jennings and he loved country music enough to claim unofficial membership in the "Outlaw" fan club. In fact, I eventually hired him to spin country records at P.W. Hoseapples, in Moscow Idaho, when I ran the restaurant/bar/disco there. As the lead DJ and Music Director, I preferred to hire-out the task of accommodating the country music crowd on Wednesday nights. Bill was more than happy to play his favorite tunes while locals, who would not venture into the club the nights I spun R&B, funk, and disco, danced happily in jeans, calico dresses, cowboy boots, hats, and bandanas.

During my four years in Pullman/Moscow, Bill's family home, the apartment on Queen Ann Hill in Seattle, served as our sanctuary, get-away, and holiday headquarters. When, a year after receiving the Master's degree at WSU and living in Seattle (managing an apartment and auditing three classes at the University of Washington), I married Cheryl Johnson in Clarkston Washington, Bill served as my best man. A couple years later I traveled, from Eugene Oregon to Clarkson, New York, for Bill's wedding to his first wife. By 1985, when I finished the Ph.D. at University of Oregon and moved to Peoria Illinois, Bill had divorced, remarried, and moved to a Virginia suburb of Washington DC. We stayed in touch across the decades, visited each other from time-to-time, and remained emotionally close though seldom physically co-present.

Most of our face-to-face visits were short. In the early 1990s we shared a cup of coffee in Washington, DC during my visit to meet with various Federal agencies on behalf of the grants office I was running, on an interim basis, at Bradley University. In the mid-90s we met at the annual National Communication Association convention, that year in Louisville, KY. After the meeting, we drove together to Peoria; Bill continued to Chicago for business before flying home to Virginia. In the mid-2000s, when I testified on Capitol Hill at a Library of Congress copyright

hearing, I stayed with Bill and his second wife Toni, commuting from their home in Falls Church, VA. Twice, while attending academic conferences held in Seattle (Bill still lived on the East Coast), I visited and stayed with Bill's now-widowed mother in the apartment on Queen Ann Hill.

Ten years before he died, Bill received a prostate cancer diagnosis. Continuing to work an arduous schedule that included long hours and extensive travel, Bill endured repeated treatments, therapies, and health regimes. Always a robust exerciser, Bill remained strong and gave the appearance of good health. The treatments slowed but did not halt the cancer. Eventually, Bill and Toni moved to Seattle—Bill moving “back” home; Toni living there for the first time. They bought a house toward the top of Queen Ann Hill so Bill could be close to his mother, siblings and top-notch cancer care at the University of Washington where Bill had earned both the BS and, later, the Ph.D. after leaving Pullman and me behind.

About a month before Bill lost that 10-year battle, I traveled to Seattle for a final visit: we knew that we were saying goodbye without using the word. Bill was still functional enough to enjoy the visit even though our time together was limited to an hour or two between his trips upstairs for treatment and rest. While there, I stayed with Bill's mother Joan in the Boyd's apartment on the southeast side of Queen Ann Hill.

Two weeks after Bill died, I searched the obituaries in the online *Seattle Times*. I did not find an entry for Bill on the Legacy.com site, but as I scanned through three-days-worth of listings, I scrolled past a name that caught my eye: Pung. The name didn't register the first time I skimmed past it but “something” caught my attention as I combed the names and photos, not finding Bill Boyd among them. Re-scanning, suddenly, there it was: Florence Kathryn Pung.

The obituary reminded me that Flo “was born in Calio, North Dakota . . . one of ten children.” I recognized her last name because Flo was Roman Pung’s last living sibling. Roman Pung, her brother, dated my mother, Evangeline Bechtel (later Lamoureux; then Ravneberg), in Langdon and Devils Lake, North Dakota before and after WWII. The couple was engaged just after the war. For reasons clouded in mystery, Evangeline called off the wedding the week it was to take place.

I told a number of people about the odd coincidence of finding Roman Pung’s sister’s obituary—that she’d lived on Queen Ann Hill and died the same week as my buddy Bill. Inside the month, I went back online to copy the obituary. The entry was no longer posted on the page for people who passed February 2, 2018. I searched the *Times/Legacy.com* site for Florence Kathryn Pung and found that Florence died February 2, 2017, **a full year before Bill**. Her obituary first appeared in the *Seattle Times/Legacy.com* the week of January 29–February 4, 2017; it now appears as “Published by *The Seattle Times* on Feb. 2, 2018.

Had I not been looking for Bill’s obituary, I would not have seen Florence’s. If I had immediately found Bill’s obituary, I would not have scanned the page and found Florence’s. Had Florence’s obituary not been mis-published, a year after her death and exactly when I was looking for Bill’s at the *Seattle Times/Legacy.com* site, I would not have seen Roman Pung’s sister’s obituary at all. Yet, there it was.

More, the last remaining sibling in Roman Pung’s family lived, for over thirty years, on the same south-east side of Queen Ann Hill as the Boyd family, mere blocks away. I visited that neighborhood many times while Flo lived there, quite unaware of her presence.

I was **shown** that Flo had been present in a familiar neighborhood, by way of a mis-publication of her death notice, the day that I looked at obituaries on the *Seattle Times*/Legacy.com website for my best friend's obituary; an obituary that was neither published online nor in a printed newspaper. Flo's brother, Roman, almost married my mother. Older cousins, who were young girls at the time of the ill-fated non-event, tell of having fun at the two bridal showers, then being *so* disappointed by having to help send back all the wedding presents. My mother never mentioned Roman and no friend or relative claimed to know the real reason why Evangeline backed out so abruptly and cancelled that wedding just days before it was to take place (though she told them that "he drank and she didn't want to marry a man with a drinking problem"). Yet, I was shown that Flo lived there—where I had often been—for decades.

Many years later, while glancing through a hand-written "gifts" book that Evangeline kept after her marriage to Roger, I found the name "Flo Pung" listed as a person who sent a card. While other Pungs had appeared in earlier address books (particularly Roman's brother and parents), Flo is the only Pung who responded to the Bechtel/Lamoureux wedding. Roman did not appear in any of the address books that I inherited.

Flo lived there, in Seattle, for decades. And, apparently, stayed in touch with my mom, Evangeline, along the way.