

Staying Connected

PCC Retirees Association

Nov 2015

PCC Honors Norm Abbey with One-Man Exhibit

Retiree Norm Abbey, professor emeritus and artist extraordinaire, returned to PCC's Art Gallery in August and September to showcase a retrospective of his artwork.

During the five-week exhibition, hundreds of friends, colleagues and former students turned out to view the show, which featured just a sampling of the large body of artwork he has created during his career.

An impressive tabletop book, "Norm Abbey, Painting, Graphic Design and Photography," complemented the exhibition. The 148-page book plus cover includes 159 images cherry picked from Norm's 55 years in various worlds of art. He said he included highlights or images that had personal stories of note. The book is divided into three sections, and each section begins with an introduction including a quick history of events and experiences.

On the last day of the exhibition, members of the retirees' board were treated to a personal tour of the show with Norm as the guide. Every image had a story, and he kept everyone spellbound as he related how he managed to capture so many spectacular images from all over the world.

His art career began after he graduated from UCLA in 1958. His first goal was to become a great painter and live in Karlsruhe, Germany and Paris, France while teaching for the Army. Unfortunately, Army life did not leave him much time to paint.

However, he did have a little free time during which he was able to attract the attention of a young woman from North Hollywood, whom he married in Basel, Switzerland.

While teaching in Paris, Norm received a job offer from PCC to teach painting. Since he hadn't become the great painter he wanted to be while he was in Europe, Norm left with his wife and daughter to try to become a great painter in Pasadena.

He taught drawing and painting for six years at PCC while completing his master's degree. He started entering competitive shows in the area, and won a purchase prize from the Long Beach Museum (1967). He also had a one-man show at the Downey Museum (1969) while just starting to sell his work.

Norm said he never achieved the great painter status he had hoped for, but he had good success in the pop/op environment. Those who attended his exhibition and viewed some of his paintings might take issue with that statement.

Because Norm did not have the success that he wanted in the fine arts world, he started a graphic design business (about 1970). The business grew steadily and included photography assignments all over the Pacific for travel brochure clients that included about 25 trips to Tahiti, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea and more. He built a business over the last 45 years that had two different partners and 22 employees at various times. His clients included Dodgers, Playboy, Maxicare, Public Storage, MCA, Jetamerica, Huntington Hospital, African Travel and 11 other travel wholesalers and the L.A. Zoo.

The most exciting thing for Norm was to go into the classroom and teach the subjects he was immersed in. He created a two-semester photography class that emphasized creativity and nontraditional processes, and in 1963 his creation became the most popular class in the area.

Norm not only has talent, but he has vision. When he was teaching, he always kept the photography and design programs at PCC ahead of the curve. He was able to bring the digital world to the design section at PCC in 1992 by finding an outside source to donate \$300,000 and by building a curriculum that included Photoshop, Illustrator and Quark.

Several people attending the exhibition commented that they couldn't believe that a person that talented was teaching at PCC. Although Norm is without a doubt a multi-talented artist, photographer and designer, he is also an exceptional teacher. Over the years, he has loved sharing his knowledge with the students who would become the next generation of artists and designers.

However, unlike many of his fellow retirees who prefer a more leisurely lifestyle, Norm still keeps busy by working full-time in his design business.

Scholarship Winner Marcus Franco Graduates and Thanks the Retirees for Their Support

I would like to begin this letter with gratitude for the help that all of you have given me. Pasadena City College Retirees have truly inspired me to achieve my goal.

On May 8, 2015, I graduated and received my certificate for Welding. I am the very first member in my family to graduate from college. I would not have gotten this far if it were not for your encouragement and belief in me.

After graduation, I have received two jobs in two different independent automotive shops.

Currently, I am working as a part-time mechanic in an independent Porsche Automotive shop on Walnut in Pasadena. In July, I will also start working as a fulltime mechanic in an independent Jaguar Automotive shop, which is also located in Pasadena.

I truly hope that all of you will continue to support students like myself to reach their dreams and make them a reality. The Pasadena Retirees Association is truly an asset to the college and the students.

Hopefully, someday I can repay the help you have given me by serving and giving back to the community. If there is any way or form for me to give a lending a hand to the Pasadena Retirees, please do not hesitate to contact me. There are no words to describe how thankful I am to the Committee for all the help, encouragement and belief all of you have given me.

The Pasadena Retirees Committee has driven me throughout my journey in college to achieve my goals.

Thank you for giving me a second chance in life when no one else did.

Very truly yours, Marcus Anthony Franco

Scholarship Winner Beatrice Segning Sends Update

Dear PCC Retirees Association:

I am so thankful to for your help. I have a sense that you might be reading my life. Here I am with a project and beside that multiple obstacles. I have been admitted to this exciting nursing program. I am very happy for that and willing to put in all the effort required to reach that goal.

The program is accelerated, and in 15 months I should have earned my bachelor's in nursing, and with a few months of preparation I will be qualified to take the NCLEX-RN board exam.

But as you know, I have this financial hardship that I frequently knocking on my door and is ready to deconcentrate me. I have been studying hard to keep up with good grades, and I am also having a positive learning experience during my clinical rotation.

However, when it comes time to finance school supplies and even to meet daily basic needs that need finance, the stress begins.

I have been tempted to work to cover some of those needs, but it is very difficult for me to handle a job and the heavy workload required by this program. So far, I have been resisting the temptation since I don't want anything to stop me from reaching that goal. Your help always came to me when I really need it. Thank you so much for that.

I am still confident that things are really playing in my favor and that by continuing to work hard, I will get to my goal no matter what obstacles I have to overcome.

Sincerely, Beatrice Segning

Scholarship Note:

When recipients of the Retirees Association Scholarships send us updates about their education, they are always a reminder of how important your donations are to ensure that we can continue to help struggling students.

So many of these students not only work hard to maintain high grades, they often struggle to pay rent or to make sure they have food to eat.

As the end of the year rolls around and you plan to make some tax-deductible donations, please send a check to the PCC Foundation and mark it for the Retirees Scholarship. Unlike other charities, we can guarantee that every cent that you send will be used for scholarships.

The Board of Trustees Selects Dr. Rajen Vurdien as the New President PCC

Pasadena City College has a new president, again. The Board of Trustees voted unanimously to name Dr. Rajen Vurdien the superintendent-president of PCC. Vurdien served as president of Fullerton College before accepting the PCC position. He beat out two other candidates for the job, including Dr. Robert Miller, who served as the interim president for seven months. The board has not had the best track record lately when it comes to appointing permanent presidents for the college, so everyone on campus is hoping the board finally picked a winner.

In the last eight years, five people have served as the PCC president. Vurdien is no. 5. When Dr. Jim Kossler retired in 2007, the search began for a replacement. The board selected Paulette Perfumo as the permanent president. She spent two controversial years at the college when she was pressured to resign in 2009.

The college entered a period of calm when Dr. Lisa Sugimoto served as interim-president for one year until the board passed her over and named Dr. Mark Rocha as the new permanent president in 2010. Rocha's tenure was controversial right from the start. During his four years on the job, he could not get along with the various factions on campus. The faculty, classified staff and the Associated Students gave Rocha votes of no confidence. Morale on the campus had plummeted to an all-time low when finally he agreed to step down. However, his agreement to resign in 2014 came with strings.

He got a \$400,000 severance package and a letter of recommendation from the board of trustees.

Once again the board selected an interim president, and this time it was Miller. He spent most of his seven months as president trying to fix the problems Rocha left behind. Morale improved, but when it came time to choose a permanent president, the board again passed over the local candidate.

Feedback from the staff and students since Vurdien took over the top post has been positive. Employees are happier than they have been in a long while. Faculty, staff and students are working together with the administration again.

The consensus on campus is that Dr.Vurdien is a very nice man who “*actually listens to what people’s concerns are.*”

Vurdien brought a wealth of experience to his position at PCC. Prior to serving as president of Fullerton College, he worked as vice president of instruction at Saddleback College for six years.

In the 1980s, Vurdien worked for the United Nations in China as part of the U.N. Development Program. He led the language programs. His other positions include director of Graduate Programs in Education and professor reading at Gwynedd Mercy College; associate professor and chair of reading at Long Island University, and closer to home, Vurdien worked as an instructor of reading and later dean of Language Art and Physical Education at Long Beach City College.

Ken Burns Chronicles the Life of Jackie Robinson for PBS Series

The life of PCC’s most famous alumnus Jackie Robinson has been chronicled in books, films, newspaper and magazine articles over the years, but rarely does his time at the college get more than a line or two. However, that may change when Ken Burns, this country’s most acclaimed documentarian, focuses on the life of Jackie Robinson in a two-part documentary slated for release in April 2016.

The series will cover Robinson’s life from his upbringing in rural Georgia until he broke professional baseball’s color line on April 15, 1947.

PCC supplied images – scanned from archival yearbooks – of Robinson during his days as a student at Pasadena Junior College. (PJC changed its name in 1954 to Pasadena City College.) From 1937 to 1939, Robinson was a four-sport star athlete at PJC and was elected to the All-Southland Junior College Team as a baseball player.

After graduating in 1939, Robinson transferred to UCLA, where he became the university’s first athlete to letter in four sports: baseball, basketball, football, and track.

Burns' production company has scanned more than 10,000 archival photos for the documentary.

If you watch the series when it is shown on PBS next April, you may actually get to see what life was like for Jackie Robinson before he attended UCLA.

The Angeloni Family Gets to See Panama and Rainforest Up Close and Personal

By Elvio Angeloni

Just as a blind man's description of an elephant might have to do with which part he touched, my family's experience in Panama would depend upon a similar contingency.

We could have simply taken a ship excursion through the canal, stayed at a hotel at either end of it or, as we finally wound up doing, stayed at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort Hotel at mid-point (and then taken a boat trip through half the canal with a taxi return to the hotel).

I think staying in the rainforest was the best way to see the country. It allowed us to visit Panama City (about 40 miles away) and still have easy access to the rainforest (where I could take my morning walks).

In addition to touring Panama City's "old town" (Casco Viejo) and taking in a dinner show with performances of the best folkloric ballet the country has to offer, we were able to embark upon various kinds of excursions (day and night) into the forest, using trucks, boats, canoes and aerial trams to see caiman, howler monkeys, capuchins, sloth, capybara and agouti as well as many kinds of birds, including parrots and eagles.

At night, there would be bats flying in the outdoor hotel corridors, frogs sleeping on the walls and one particular sloth resting in its favorite spot--a tree overlooking the parking lot!

It was also an enlightening experience in that we could see first-hand how the canal was built, from the original French failure to the final American success. I especially enjoyed it after having read David McCullough's wonderful book, "The Path between the Seas," and viewing documentaries relating to the politics involved. As Teddy Roosevelt put it, "We negotiated fairly for the canal before we stole it."

By visiting a traditional village and getting a talk from biologists running the local rescue center, we learned how Native Americans and the local wildlife are managing to cope with the changes that the canal has wrought.

The initial choice of accommodations does indeed have a lot to do with one's eventual experience—especially in Panama.

Jeanette Mann Steps Down After 32 Years as a Trustee

Dr. Jeanette Mann, who has been a member of the Board of Trustees for 32 years, will end her tenure on the board at the end of November. She decided it was time to step down, so she opted not to run for reelection.

Mann was the first woman elected to the board when she took office in 1983 representing Area 2, which covers Northeast Pasadena, East Altadena and Sierra Madre. When she took office, John Casey was president of the college.

During the years that Mann has been a trustee, eight people have filled the college president position—five of them in the last eight years. In the 34 years prior to the selection of Paulette Perfumo as president in 2007, only three men, Casey, Dr. Jack Scott and Dr. Jim Kossler served as the college president.

Mann, who has had a distinguished career as a trustee, has seen the college through good times and bad. But throughout all those years, PCC has remained one of the top community colleges in the nation.

Vacationing and Visiting Paleolithic Caves

By Alan Lamson

In late April of this year, Sheila and I met up with a small group organized by National Geographic at the airport in Bordeaux, France. We had all signed up for the expedition—“Human Origins in Southwestern France and Northern Spain”—during which we would “examine the most renowned cave art in Europe” with experts in the field.

From Bordeaux, we traveled by bus for two hours to the small town of Les Ezyies in the Dordogne Valley, an area especially rich in Paleolithic caves. The best known of these, at Lascaux, was closed in 1963 because of the damage being caused to the paintings by the large number of visitors to the cave. The only other site that contains paintings similar to those at Lascaux and still open to public is Fontde- Gaume. The number of visitors to the cave is limited to protect the paintings from the same elements that damaged those at Lascaux—carbon dioxide, heat, and humidity. As we drove up to the site, we saw a long line of people who had been waiting since early morning to reserve tickets. Ours had already been reserved, so we only waited a short time before entering the cave with a local guide.

We entered through a long narrow passage— nervously laughing about how narrow it was-- before we finally reached a spacious gallery at the center of the cave. Located in this gallery is one of the most extraordinary finds only recently uncovered— a frieze of

five bison, male and female. The frieze is located where the people did not live. People did inhabit the front part of the cave and did so over a period of thousands of years.

If you look closely at this painting of a male bison, you might notice that the artist uses the natural relief of the cave to give the painting three dimensions. An obvious question about this painting--and that of the others--is: why were they put here? Another, deeper question is: what purpose did they serve? Many writers have speculated about both questions. One of them is the mathematician and biologist, Jacob Bronowski in his book about man's cultural evolution, "The Ascent of Man." Bronowski thinks that the paintings provided some sort of magical power to those who viewed them. The power they gained, he thinks, is the power to anticipate the killing of the animal represented in the paintings.

Bronowski imagines that hunters were brought into this secret place to view animals that they would see and hunt--the bison, mammoth, horses, and reindeer. The bones of the reindeer, in particular, have been found in large quantity. But what of the animals whose bones aren't well represented? One writer thinks that animals such as bison and mammoth, not usually eaten by Paleolithic humans, were represented because they were the animals that were the most difficult to kill. In the same gallery is another extraordinary find. It shows a male reindeer licking the forehead of a female. It's a charming painting that seems very different than the bison painting. It may be that the painting merely shows a common scene viewed by hunters. But is it possible that it also conveys a feeling about something else--the affection of one being for another. Having said that, I realize that my feeling about the painting is that of a modern homo sapiens, not that of Paleolithic hunter living 15 to 20 thousand years ago. For our early ancestors, acquiring food must have been a primary motivation.

Altogether we visited six caves in southern France and a similar number in northern Spain, plus and an open-air site, Altapuerca (outside of Bilbao) where the oldest hominin (early human) remains in Europe have been discovered; these date to over one million years.

Our visit to the caves was certainly the highlight of the trip. But gathering together for meals with our traveling companions was also memorable.

If you enjoy travel, are interested in prehistoric art, aren't claustrophobic, and enjoy good food and wine, you would love this National Geographic tour of the Paleolithic caves of France and Spain.

Retirees Visit Japanese Garden

A couple of times a year, the retirees association plans excursions for members to interesting and fun places. The day trip, which allows members to try new things and get together with friends and colleagues, usually includes travel by bus and ends with lunch at a nearby restaurant.

The latest outing was a visit to a beautiful Japanese garden tucked away behind a reservoir in Van Nuys. Most people on the trip didn't have any idea this wonderful place was there. The tour guide said, "It is one of the best kept secrets in the Los Angeles." The garden, located on 6.5 acres on the grounds of a reclamation plant, celebrated its 30th anniversary last year.

Two New Members Join the Board of Trustees; Hilsman and Osterling Win

The Nov. 3 Board of Trustee elections resulted in one squeaker in Area 2 where Jim Osterling (as of this printing) received 2,149 votes to Tom Selinke's 2,035.

The contest in Area 4 was a runaway where Hoyt Hilsman polled about twice as many votes as incumbent Bill Thomson, who served on the board for eight years. He also defeated Marshall Lewis, former Student Trustee.

Area 2

Jim Osterling has lived in the Pasadena area for more than 30 years. He began his career as a CPA and has been an Associate Adjunct Professor at the Price School of Public Policy at USC, teaching real estate and finance courses.

His governance experience includes serving as Vice-Chairman of the Altadena Community Standards District, serving on the Board of Directors and Treasurer of the Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy and CFO, Executive Vice-President of Shea Homes. Osterling has also served as a youth sports coach for over 15 years, instructing a diverse group of children from kindergarten through high school for Pasadena and South Pasadena AYSO, Pasadena YMCA, East Altadena Little League and the Brotherhood Crusade Youth Sports Leagues.

Area 4

Hoyt Hilsman attended Columbia University and went on to receive a law degree from Columbia Law School. He has worked with the Federal Legal Services Program involving issues concerning the poor, unemployed and disabled.

He is also an award-winning screenwriter who has been a theater and television critic for "Daily Variety."

Hilsman, who is a 20-year resident of Pasadena and a former instructor at PCC, said, "It is time for new leadership on the PCC Board of Trustees."

He pledged to "address the failures of the recent past, uphold academic standards and community involvement at PCC, and preserve its strong record of transfers to 4-year universities."

The results of this election illustrate how important it is for everyone to vote. For days, only three votes separated the two candidates.

It was only after provisional ballots were counted did Osterling pull ahead by 92 votes.

Although the Registrar of Voters indicated that all precincts had reported, officials said some mail-in and provisional ballots had yet to be counted.

The County will not officially certify the election until the Nov. 23. On Nov. 24, the Board of Supervisors is scheduled to declare the election results official.

In their campaigns, both men pointed out the need for change at the college and on the board of trustees.

Fixing the college's problems with its accreditation status and the climate of distrust on campus were issues both candidates said they wanted to address.

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges placed the PCC on probation over the summer.

ACCJC found a "climate of distrust" and a "lack of respect" among employees. Hilsman and Osterling both emphasized in their campaigns that the issue of low morale on campus needed to be fixed.

The accrediting commission also listed a number of other issues that must be addressed in the next two years, including the lack of shared governance. If these issues are not resolved, the college risks losing its accreditation.

While Thomson felt that the campaign should focus on the college's positive qualities and not on past issues, his opponents and the voters did not agree.

The majority of the problems now facing the college came during the presidency of Dr. Mark Rocha, all of whose actions came with the full support of the current trustees.

Thompson expressed surprise that he lost the race for reelection. He said that he felt his opponents ran a negative campaign.

Both Osterling and Hilsman will be sworn at the Dec. 9 Board of Trustees Meeting in the Crevling Lounge.

In Memoriam

Philip Cornelius, Professor & Ceramist

Philip G. Cornelius, an artist, mentor, and longtime professor of ceramics at Pasadena City College, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, May 19 at the age of 80.

Born in San Bernardino in 1934, Philip grew up in Ontario, CA and graduated from Chaffey High School. He led a colorful life traveling several paths as a young grocery bagger, a U.S. Army soldier, a science major at San Jose State University. He was also a certificated pilot, and as an acclaimed artist and professor. He obtained his MFA degree in 1965 at the Claremont Graduate School and has been working as an artist and ceramist ever since.

While many universities have closed their ceramics programs over the years, Philip is credited with making the Pasadena City College Ceramic Department a premier studio and envy of art programs everywhere. His science background served him well when he discovered his passion for ceramics and in the early 1970s developed his signature "thinware," which is ultra-thin and fired "right to the edge." Philip once said he was very aware of his ability to "do the wrong thing and have it come out right." Colleagues believe he shattered the old image of ceramics as a craft and he boldly moved this age-old skill into the world of fine arts.

His abstract expressionism, cutting edge construction and imagery are seen within all his art. Philip's work includes his signature porcelain pieces, which resemble tanks, airplanes, and ships in the form of an abstract teapot.

The teapots represent so much more than what the eye beholds. Many of his pieces can be seen in major museum collections throughout the world including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

His recent passing is a huge loss to the art community, as well as to family and friends.

Alice Corey Was a Founding Member of Retirees Association

Alice Corey, retired professor in the physical science department, passed away on May 8, 2015. Her thirst for knowledge throughout her life began at an early age in Massena, New York. She skipped a grade in school and was valedictorian of her high school class. She continued her education at the University of Michigan where she earned a BS and MS in the School of Science. It was also in the university chapel where she married her late husband, Al Corey.

She joined the geology department at PCC in 1960 as a mineralogist, and she became department chair in 1974. She retired in 1986.

Alice was a quietly generous person. When the college was in need of improving the parking lot, she gave a donation to that cause. When her department needed new

equipment, she went out and purchased it. When friends were in need of financial help, she answered the call. Her acts of kindness were done without fanfare.

Alice was one of the founding members of the PCC Retirees Association.

She edited the organization's newsletter for 14 years, and was a generous supporter of the Retirees Scholarship Fund. Pasadena City College was most important in her life, and it was her intention that students in the future receive the financial help they might need in the form of scholarship aid to help with their education.

In her will, Alice left a bequest for the Retirees Scholarship.

Lennox Tierney, Asian Art Advocate, Gave Tours When He Was 100 Years Old

Lennox Tierney, chairman of the art department at PCC until 1971 and well known advocate for Asian Art in Southern California, passed away at age 101 in Salt Lake City, Utah. He moved to Salt Lake when he retired from the college.

During his tenure at PCC, he fought for years to save a historic building that city officials had considered tearing down. Not only did his hard work pay off, the building became the Pacific Asia Museum. Tierney's first job as a teenager was watering gardens and unpacking Asian artworks at the site he would one day save.

Retirement was not in the cards for Tierney. When he moved to Salt Lake, he became the founding dean of the university's Asian art program.

Tierney, who graduated from UCLA and earned a master's degree in Asian art at Columbia University, served as a civilian cultural advisor to Gen. Douglas MacArthur after World War II to help oversee Japan's recovery. Among his assignments was to preserve and repair cultural sites and track down artwork that had been secreted away to avoid destruction amid the chaos of heavy bombardment." He was one of the original "Monument Men."

Tierney never lost his love for Asian art. He was still giving tours of the Japanese Friendship Garden in San Diego when he was 100 years old.

Anna Mae Jones

Anna Mae Jones, who retired from PCC in 2011, passed away in April due to complications from an infection. Anna Mae, who had worked in the Foundation Office for five years, planned to spend her retirement in Kansas.

Her colleagues in the Foundation have set up a scholarship for veterans in her name. To donate by check, make it out to PCC Foundation, and on the memo line, write “In Memory of Anna Mae Jones Veteran’s Scholarship Fund.” If you prefer to make a credit card donation, go to <https://give.pasadena.edu/>. In the designation line, indicate other and then type “In Memory of Anna Mae Jones Veteran’s Scholarship.”

Jean Jordan, Bookstore Cashier, Passed Away at 98

Jean Jordan, a cashier at the bookstore for 30 years, passed away on Aug. 2, at her assisted living home in Payson, AZ. She was 98. Retirees, who were at PCC during the 60s and 70s, will remember Jean. She greeted everyone who walked in the door with a smile.

Al DePonte, former bookstore manager, said that Jean was a wonderful employee.

“No matter what you asked her to do, you could always rely on Jean to get it done.” She loved working in the bookstore, and it showed because she got along with everyone—faculty, staff and students. She loved them, and they loved her.

Jean was always ready to lend a hand. She drove another long-time employee, Theresa Soeten, to work every day because Theresa didn’t drive. Jean worked at the cash register, and Theresa was the secretary in the office.

Those two made a great team. Not only were they co-workers, but they were good friends and neighbors.

Jean is survived by two daughters, Susan Morgan of Payson, AZ, and Linda Brady of Gainesville, GA.

Both daughters are graduates of Pasadena High School and attended the school when PHS was on the PCC campus. Jean is also survived by four grandchildren and seven-great grandchildren.

Melissa Bargsten, Executive Assistant in Business Services

Melissa Bargsten retired from PCC in July of 2014 and was diagnosed with lung cancer six months later.

She started working at PCC in 1991 and worked in several campus offices during her 23 on campus. Melissa’s first job at PCC was working Anne Reynolds. Then she moved to the Continuing Education and Extended Learning Department to work for Nino Valmassoi.

When a position became available in Business Services, Melissa applied to transfer. She got the job and worked for Sherry Hassan as a Senior Clerk until Sherry retired.

Gale Cooper moved into the Business Services slot, and Melissa stayed on. She was eventually promoted to Executive Assistant where she still got to work on contracts, but she became more involved with the legal side of the job.

A lot of people on campus counted Melissa as a good friend. She had such a positive attitude that people loved to be around her.

Melissa loved life and loved to laugh. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Gloria Hodges Muldoon Was an Interpreter for the Deaf at PCC

Gloria Hodges Muldoon, a long-time interpreter for the deaf at PCC, passed away Oct 30, 2015 after saying goodbye to her loved ones.

Gloria was born to deaf parents Harley and Maude Stottler on May 11, 1925 in Pontiac, Michigan. She was an excellent student earning perfect attendance awards and was very popular in high school. Gloria loved dancing, and she started early in her life. She first appeared in the Juvenile Dance Review of 1938 at Pontiac High School Auditorium. She spent vacations in Canada at the Dardanella Dance Pavilion, Wasaga Beach Ontario.

It was on a vacation to Florida in 1941 when Gloria became a blonde, the look she would be remembered for the rest of her life.

Gloria's first job was working at the AAA Club in Pontiac, MI; however, her love of dance led her to teach at the Arthur Murray Dance Studio.

But longing for a change in her life, she decided to make the move to California. This is where she met her husband John, who was selling cars. She loved to tell the story how the guys would whistle at her as she walked home from work, but John didn't. She finally crossed the street to talk to him because she was impressed with his John Wayne looks. They soon married. John and Gloria separated as friends and remained close until John's death in 1998. However, Gloria found herself in a new phase of her life—raising her two sons, Kevin and Kirk, alone.

Being on her own, she turned to the only skill she knew—sign language. Gloria began interpreting for Herb Tours, a first of its kind travel agency aimed at the deaf. Gloria traveled the world, handling not only sightseeing and interpreting, but also the day-to-day logistics of traveling overseas. Needing more in her life, she heard of an opening for an interpreter at Cal State Northridge. Gloria went on to become the first interpreter for

the deaf at CSUN. After setting up that program she moved on and joined Pasadena City College in a new department that just opened as an interpreter for the deaf.

After years of part time work, Gloria was recognized as essential part of the college and was offered full time employment where she stayed until retirement. Gloria loved working at PCC and left a lasting impression on generations of students. Gloria was often the most asked for interpreter at PCC because of her basic spelling style that allowed students a better understanding of what was being said.

After retirement Gloria went back to her true love, dancing, taking up square dancing with a passion.