

Kirsten Loumeau

I was born and raised in Trondheim, Norway and went to school there through high school (artium). As you know, Norway was occupied by Germany for 5 years 1940-1945. It was a very difficult time for the population with little food and medical supplies. There were no legal communications except from the occupying forces. There was a curfew, and in Trondheim there were constant bombing attacks because of the natural harbor and the strategic location, where there was a submarine base being built mainly by East-European prisoners of war. They marched to and from the harbor in front of our house barefooted or in rags in some of the coldest winters Norway has ever had.

Most of schools and universities were closed in 1942 and most the educators and clergy were sent to concentration camps. My class was fortunate to have a very dedicated teacher who at great risk taught 4 to 5 students at a time for 2 hours per week at her dining room table.

Several in my family were involved in the underground. At 8 years old I would deliver messages to members who needed to flee because their cover had been blown. Children were used for this purpose because the Germans did not bother or suspect children. One time I came too late. The Germans were arresting one of my cousins, and I felt like a failure.

I was a competition swimmer until I was 12 when I broke my back skiing. The prognosis was that I would spend the rest of my life in a wheel chair, paralyzed from the waist down. By some miracle, a Catholic nun found this young, energetic and brilliant doctor that was willing to try a new procedure and it worked.

When I graduated from highschool, rumors were circulating about a draft for women. To avoid any possibility of a draft, (which, by the way never put into law) I volunteered for the Navy, passed security clearance and was assigned to Crypto. It was very interesting, but also demanding during NATO maneuvers when we could spend as much as 3 days in a bunker 100 feet below ground deciphering codes and relaying same.

After this, I started traveling (after some training) as a Hostess for foreign tourists on the Coastal Steamer (Hurtigruta) that traveled between Bergen and Kirkenes. After 3 seasons I went to work for a Swedish firm as a guide for overseas (USA & Australia mainly) passengers through Europe. In the off season I did various jobs. I started in banking and worked for 2 years for Boendernes Bank in Trondheim.

Then I was offered a special job as a Bank Hostess for Andresens Bank in Oslo. I received special training from all departments in the bank and 1 year of banking school. The idea was that the bank hostess could take care of all of a customer's transactions with the bank thus saving the client having to go to several different departments for his/her needs. I was the first banking hostess in Norway and it was a lot to do about it at that time. I was on the front page on every newspaper in Norway.

After a few years I desired to be transferred to foreign exchange/arbitrage which is buying and selling currencies on the open market (for clients). This was a lot of fun. After 2 years, I thought it would be a good idea to get some experience in the USA and asked for a leave of absence which was granted. I landed a job with Bank of America in San Francisco; however when I arrived and they found out that I was a woman, they would not give me the agreed job in the foreign exchange department, because a woman could not possible handle such a job. They offered me a job as a teller which I refused. Other banks had the same attitude. Fortunately I had friends to lean on.

Out of the blue I was offered a job managing a duck ranch in Chino, Ca. I knew nothing about ducks and told them so. "You will learn" and I did. Took some courses at University of Davis, Ca in poultry husbandry, became a poultry meat inspector, reorganized the ranch which was a mess, expanded the processing plant and built a feather factory, not in that order.

After 3 years I had enough of the ranch, started my own bookkeeping business and went to UCLA at night for about 3 years and finally got my college degree at La Verne University, Ca. Then I studied for the CPA exam, passed, and went to work for a larger local CPA firm for 6 years.

I decided it was then time to start my own firm which I did about 25 years ago. I am still working, but not so hard anymore.

My hobbies are traveling, painting, reading, theater/opera, sailing and skiing. Through my husband Dick who I have been married to for 27 years, we have 5 children, 19 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild.

Kirsten