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Two individuals in Moraga's Wells Fargo Bank mural identified

By Vera Kochan



Joan Holt receives framed replica of WFB mural that depicts her siblings in the back row (second from left) Sharron Levy and (second from right) Sam Levy at Willow Springs School in 1957
Photo Vera Kochan

Lamorinda Weekly received a phone call from someone who could identify two family members in the Willow Spring School photo.

Joan (Huff) Holt, who grew up in Moraga, was able to confirm that her older brother (Sam) and sister (Sharron), who were twins, were in the photo taken when they were 14 years old. Their last name was Levy from their mom's first marriage. Back in the day, Holt said that locals referred to Willow Spring School as "Old Moraga School".

Another sister had seen Lamorinda Weekly's Feb.19, 2020 article about the mural's original installation on a social media site and forwarded it to Sam's caregiver. "He had suffered a stroke, and his memory comes and goes," explained Holt. "When he saw the photo from the article he recognized it and knew that it was him and his sister." Sharron passed away in January 2017, but Sam will turn 81 in May, and since the photo brought him so much joy, Holt made the six hour, round-trip drive from her home in West Point, Calif. to visit Moraga and pick up the framed replica of the mural as a birthday gift for her brother. She plans on making another six hour drive to visit Sam, who now lives in Winnemucca, Nevada.

"My brother liked to joke that the reason he was born with a bent nose is that Sharron kept pushing on it in the womb," chuckled Holt, while pointing to Sam in the mural. Her six member family (two parents and four siblings) grew up on Larch Avenue near St. Monica Catholic Church. She herself never attended Willow Spring, but did go from school to school in the Moraga system, as was typical back in the day, to finally graduate from Campolindo High School.

Holt's family moved to Moraga in 1951, when Larch was a gravel-covered, one-lane street. She grew up knowing the Carr, Sanders, Larch, and Baitx families, and her father, John Huff, was a captain for the Moraga Fire Department, located on School Street, between 1955-1976. Their one-acre lot was home to a few horses, which was not unusual during those early years.

Occasionally driving to Moraga to visit with old friends, Holt remarked about the changes she's noticed to the town, "It's so packed! It's so crowded! There are so many people living here." In this case, crowded is truly in the eye of the beholder.

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