

Greene turns 100 on Sept. 26

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baby had gone for a few harrowing moments to the wrong mother.

“I spent 10 full days in the hospital,” says Dottie.

She remembers Ilene at 4 years old: “She had the most beautiful black curls on her. And those brown eyes. She could have been in the movies.”

The year the marriage ended, Reid took Dottie for dinner with actor Anthony Quinn.

The marriage lasted only seven years, but the two were always in touch, always friendly, and when doctors said Ilene needed a warmer climate, Reid gladly raised Ilene for five years in the warmer city of Santa Monica, Calif.

Dottie married Ray Lloyd Greene in 1950, but Ray “hated Oregon weather.” After a short stay in The Dalles, the couple moved to Bakersfield, Calif.

They arrived in Bakersfield, she says, with a minimal stake. She had seven quarts of fruit that she sold for \$1 each, and he had \$3 in his pocket. It lasted them through 41 years of marriage.

She remembers riding after work in their 1948 yellow-and-white Mercury convertible with the top down.

“It was nice and warm,” she says.

And she remembers that “he made the best leg of lamb you ever had in your life,” and that “everybody in his family was a natural musician.” There wasn’t anything Ray couldn’t play on a guitar or a piano. “He played by ear,” says Dottie. “He mostly played church hymns because that’s the way he was brought up.”

Ray supplemented their stake as a mechanic and Dottie did her part as a housekeeper and nurses’ aide for some 30 years in two local hospitals: Moss Gardens and Mercy Hospital’s convalescent section.

Together, they had a daughter, Shelley Greene Bertolucci, now of Bakersfield.

They lost boy/girl twins before birth.

Shelley gave Dottie two grandchildren, Heather, of Salt Lake City, and Joe, who lives in Independence. Heather’s daughter, Holly Ann Rasmussen, also lives in Salt Lake City.

Dottie’s daughter, Ilene, gave Dottie a grandson in Korey Busby of McMinnville and a granddaughter in Regina Wilson of Pensacola, Fla. Their brother, Carl Anderson, died in a truck accident in 2000.

The thing about Carl’s death, says Dottie, is she saw it happen before it happened. She was sedated for cancer surgery at the time. And this was not the only instance of clairvoyance. As a child, she spotted a house fire and a chimney fire before they got out of hand.

At 9 years old, she was out with a group collecting chittam bark. She had a good memory for sounds and it helped her identify a huge cougar in the hills without the cougar ever showing its face. Her father and Arthur Mercier tracked it down the next day and shot it, earning each of them \$75 for the hide.

On the other hand, she lived through earthquake after earthquake in Bakersfield without ever seeing one coming. After one early morning temblor, however, she said she looked out the window and “I never saw so many bare bottoms in my life.”

Dottie retired from Mercy Hospital in 1984 after stories of a living patient being brought, mistakenly, to the morgue, and of getting locked in there herself.

“It’s lucky there was a phone to the outside in there,” she says, “because inside, there sure was nobody to talk to.”

Her mother always knew that Dottie would take care of people.

“Mom said when I was a little girl, I was out there patching up my dolls, so she always knew what ‘my Dot was going to do.’”

In 1985, she returned to the Tribe, where she served on the Health Committee for 10 years, applying all that she had learned working in hospitals. She served on the Powwow Committee for eight years and on Tribal Council in the late 1980s.

Ilene suffered with cirrhosis of the liver. Sitting with her first daughter “day and night” during that time before she died in 1994 made up one of the saddest chapters of her life, Dottie says.

“How she suffered. I didn’t know anybody could suffer that much.”

Dottie has always been involved in crafts, including crocheting and making jewelry. She is crazy about jewelry, she says, and is herself an ongoing work of art. She regularly has her fingernails and toenails brightened up and her hair styled. She still dresses, she says, the way her mother taught her.

Perhaps her best skills remain in the story-telling department. Dottie remembers so many important moments of her life as if they were scenes in a movie.

Picture Dot, as she was called at 2 years of age, sitting in a chair on

the front porch of their home by Salt Creek, near Salem.

“My mom’s standing in the doorway watching me when this bull knocked down the fence and came charging the porch. Mom had her heart in her mouth,” says Dottie, from the vantage of nearly 90 years, safely sitting in her living room in Tribal Elder housing on Beaver Court. “It came that close,” she said, meaning about eight feet, “and then turned around and went back over the fence.”

Or this: Picture Dot and a boy named Riley Porter (4 and 5 years old) sitting on stumps, their faces covered with chocolate and doughnuts. That was when the family lived at the Holtz (logging) camp and Dot ran around with Riley.

They used to take off together for the loggers’ bunkhouse that was maybe a third of a mile away. Imagine how her mother felt about them having to crawl under a railroad box car to get to the camp, when she found out.

“Those box cars,” said Dottie. “They often broke free.”

“The men would sit us up on stumps and give us doughnuts and chocolate and things.”

The time they were discovered, Dottie’s mother and her friend, Celia Sorenson, “looked around and wondered where us kids were.” They tracked them to the camp.

“They were so angry they wanted to spank us, but our faces were all chocolate and doughnut crumbs and the loggers said, ‘No don’t spank them. They’re just having fun,’ and Dottie’s mom was saying, ‘but they’re not supposed to sneak off.’”

The lesson was not lost on Dot: “Riley and I, we were no dummies.” ■

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