

Ian Geoffrey Kennedy. The Authorised Autobiography (Reader's Digest Version)

We think too seldom of each other, because we are busy with our lives and businesses. But occasional reflection will do us no harm, for otherwise our aging memories will only store what happened today and the special or outstanding things that happened in High School! The matric Academic class photo shows me surrounded by three people who have become doctors in different walks of life: Martin, Ronald (Ronnie) and Seymour, so our teachers did some things right. I guess the Business class has made more money than they expected to. Thanks, Harrison, Estelle, Lynsky, the Mrs Gordons, Mrs Corbett, Wally with his wonderful artistic blackboards full of coloured works of spirogyra or body organs, and even Dromer ("no' books today!"). {Girls, now grannies, help me to remember the other names?} Sensitive readers need to be aware that the following text contains banned four-letter words, such as *inch*, *mile* and *pint*, as well as archaic and non-politically correct words that you may need to look up in a dictionary.

Kew

I was born 1945-03-29, although they did not write the dates back to front like that then. I lived in 10th Road Kew for about 2 years. The house is now extended into a factory. My dad sensibly sensed the industrialisation of Kew, and we moved to the bottom of Kelvin Road Bramley.

Bramley

I attended Bramley Nursery School (then in Corlett Drive), where in the first year I saw the *upper class* learning about men falling down manholes (to learn subtraction). I wished that I was in the *upper class*. Next year (believe me!) I was promoted to the *upper class*, and wished that I could go home earlier like the *lower class*! When my mother could not fetch me, our gardener Samson, carried me home aloft on his tall shoulders. (How's my English doing, Mr. Lynsky?)

My brother Brian Malcolm was born 1950-12-10. We both attended the same schools. He died of cancer in 1996. You may remember him as a cyclist.

We would walk (yes!) the half *mile* to Scott Street Waverley, where we would buy fresh produce from the Portuguese Market Gardens, now a garage. We had fresh fruit delivered to our home by the Indian trader (Ramsammy), who used real *pound* weights to weigh out the produce on the back of his open van. Milk was delivered daily. Meat came on the butcher *boy's* bike. We also had Gallagher's Bakery deliver fresh bread in a van that came all the way from Gallagher's Corner, Orange Grove. Gray, Smith and Company, also in Orange Grove, delivered groceries on account to our doorstep. Sometimes, my mother travelled by Joh'burg Municipal Transport bus to settle the account in Orange Grove, where this was sorted out using a pneumatic *tube* between downstairs and upstairs. We still have two JMT *tram* seats, inherited from an uncle who worked for them. There was little need for my mother to learn to drive (not that we could afford a second car.) We did have a double garage, but half was permanently occupied by the workshop. At home, my dad did handyman plumbing, carpentry, and building. He installed a *hydraulic ram* next to the waterfall, and it powerlessly pumped river water to our garden day and night, making tree-icicles in the middle of winter when we forgot to turn it off. The garden taps were a bacteriological threat to any Scouts that came to drink water on the way to their scout-hall at the river.

At Bramley School, Mrs Barron showed us shown pictures of Rome from an encyclopedia projected in

the darkened classroom by means of this new device, an *epidiascope*. At the School we had a feeding scheme, where we had cocoa that was burnt, served in tin mugs in winter, and orange juice or milk in half *pint* bottles with circular cardboard lids. I have put into my forgettery the hot mince meat and mash on tin plates or soup in tin mugs. On Temperance Day we were each treated to a brown *paper* packet containing a *pound* of grapes. Each Wednesday we were driven in a Putco (!) bus to Rosedale tea Gardens near Alexandra Township, where we learned a few things, but not much about how to swim.

Northview days

Eventually I was promoted to *Form I* at Northview High School (believe me!). Suddenly I was no longer at the top of the class. Kate was so goody at Latin. Martin was magic at mental Maths. Then at chess, the champion Pretoria Boys beat us so badly on their home ground that I gave up chess. (How is home ground such an advantage for chess players?).

At Northview we also had no cool school pool (say it 3x, fast) and had to walk to Balfour Park. They always only seemed to make a pool at the school when we had left. There we also learned a few things that were not in the syllabus. Balfour Park is now a shopping mall.

Wally Walpole taught us Biology with beautiful masterpieces drawn using only 5 colours of chalk on the board. He only blushed while teaching us human anatomy.

Eitzman had been invited by Harrison to start up a school lab, as the school had only being going for a year when we joined it. He was a soft target for rolfing (not in the dictionary), but I respected him and helped out in the Science storeroom. It was me who turned down the Bunsen burner in Eitzman's demonstration (ostensibly to help me hear him better), probably {I admit no more} causing the flask of bubbling chemicals to explode. In 2007, Eitzman's son, and his son too were both practicing dentists in Glenhazel. They closely resembled our teacher.

Peter Lynsky inspired us with his acting in class and on stage. "Standing on the corner watching all the girls go by". He had a hawk eye, and it did not take him long to detect my attempt once to record him surreptitiously in class. It is much easier today. I remember just one lesson, where we had to analyse the motives that an advert was appealing to. I chose a Readers' Digest ad, and did a good analysis.

Also, Mrs Lorna Gordon taught us English. I remember just one lesson where we had to paint a picture and write a poem. It was a good exercise in getting the creativity flowing. Mrs Ann Gordon taught us Guidance for what it was worth. Today it is a defunct subject.

Van Opstal taught us music. I remember him bravely showing us a 16mm *film* of Marian Anderson. He taught us to play the recorder. Subsequently I bought a clarinet to play as it has similar fingering.

Miss Estelle nee Kagan Brodie developed my interest in Maths, and drilled us daily. Fresh from Teachers' Training College, she did a good job, and I managed to get an 'A' for Matric Maths. She taught me the fundamentals of Statistics in our school projects.

Our Matric dance had gifts on the tables of symbolic wooden ships for the guys who were sailing away. I still have mine. And you?

We were hard working and hard worked pupils. Those were the magic days and The Wonder Years. Our parents trusted us. I cannot recall that any of my dates ever introducing me to their parents until well

after a first date. We were given the freedom to find ourselves, and only shyness prevented us from getting into trouble. By the way, who was that girl who anonymously phoned me at 40-1050 to say she was a fan of mine? You were joking, right?

Witwatersrand

I decided on doing a more practical career in Engineering than doing a pure Science degree such as that which Derek Roux followed. First and second year Maths were tough, and I only survived via supplementary exams. Applied Maths I was easy, since Miss Kagan had fortunately taught it to us from Arthur Bleksley's same textbook as a seventh subject, Mechanics. Applied Maths II was survived through the mechanism of religiously working through old exam papers beforehand.

Design was a favourite subject as it was creative, and I remember getting an 'A' for my design of a compact cherry-picker truck. Later I passed electronics design through somehow mysteriously picking appropriate values for transistor biasing resistors. It was a paper design, so I never found out if it worked. Final year design also let me achieve an 'A' for our electro-magnetic uniselector and relay design of a traffic generator and recorder for research purposes. Today it would be ten lines of code.

The Johannesburg City Council expropriated our Bramley residence for the M1 highway. It affected my mom badly. My father was more philosophical, joking that we would have to move, otherwise we would always be picking up the corner of our lounge carpet, to let the cars go by. We moved to Sunnyside Road Birnam, where we did not have to strain ourselves so much to hear when a cricketer was caught out at the Wanderers. Brian gained a bedroom. Today the house is a car park and Melrose Arch is nearby.

In December 1966 I applied to a few places for work after graduation. One led to an interview, where the boss (a Mr. Mole!) asked only one interview question of me: Are you a communist? I still wonder if the interviewee had been a communist, would he have admitted it? I worked for a year at the company, Motorola (SA), conveniently situated in Louis Botha Avenue, and managed to bank 90% of my salary. Halcyon days. But somehow, the only girls who broke my heart were blondes.

Off to Bloemfontein

After a few local convenience dates and interesting experiences with computer dates (“Send R50 to this Joubert Park Address and we will send you five addresses and phone numbers”), I discovered Rosemary Mitchell at a Camp preparation meeting. She went to Northview after me and also has the same birthday as me, so I have no difficulty I remembering it. I, sight unseen, was offered a post as an assistant house-master and teacher of Science, Maths and Additional Maths at St. Andrews School, after a year earlier having applied for such a post in Rosettenville. (The power of secret networks!) I said to myself: If this is meant to be, it will last the separation. It did. We 'went steady' while she completed her nursing training at the Johburg Gen, became engaged in January 1969. She started her midwifery training at Grey's Hospital, Pietermaritzburg in June 1969. Still going steady today.

Up to Pretoria

In Bloemfontein, I was reading the (defunct) newspaper “The Friend”, and saw a one column-*inch* mention of educational research being started at the National Building Research Institute of the CSIR. I applied for a new (non-existent, non-advertised) post as a research officer, and after the compulsory chest X-ray and manual dexterity test (rolling ball bearings down wire rails!) I was duly appointed. Life lesson #1: Jobs are not advertised, they are created.

We married in 1970 and honeymooned in *Natal* as it was then called. We lived in Meintjieskop Flats, Arcadia, and later Beverley Hills, Sunnyside, before designing, building and moving to our present abode in Waterkloof Glen, in 1974, where this is being written today.

In 1971 I joined the Department of Posts and *Telegraphs*. So much for me ignoring Miss Kagan's advice never to work for the Government or become a teacher! Trapped in an organisation that stamped out innovation, I managed to obtain two degrees at their expense. Mr. Harrison had written a letter of recommendation for me, and mentioned that I was "honours material". Rediscovering the letter, I decided to do my Masters at Wits (by research). Then, in 1990 I phoned a lecturer at Wits and he reassured me that they had "lots of PhD candidates who were long in the tooth", so I duly registered. I did a stint as a visiting professor at UCT and UP, and cultivated myself for an academic role.

We have had and brought up four daughters, Lee-Ann, Cheral, Gayle and Laura. Born 1972-5-19; 1976-1-9; 1977-5-10; 1979-5-9. (Thanks for those dates, Rosemary, my dear database). Three daughters are married, and we are blessed with a total of three grandsons and a granddaughter. We have done our job in ensuring that our genes survive. By my arithmetic, four times four quarters works out that my gene pool has now been successfully replicated into a further generation!

Working for Wits

While working for what is now Telkom, I was offered work by Miss Kagan, who wanted me to lecture Networks, and also more fittingly by Hu Hanrahan. In 1999 I acceded to the daily commute to Johannesburg, and accepted what was to turn out to be a busy post as a Senior Research Officer in the Electrical Engineering Department on the West Campus at Wits. In 2005, when my term had expired, I was headhunted by the Construction Engineering Department on the East Campus. My papers from these productive periods can be found via Google Scholar and many may be downloaded from ResearchGate.

Travelling A-Z

Here is a list of some towns, cities and countries that I have stayed at while consulting colleagues or to present a conference paper. Australia, Banff, Cairns, Durban, England, Finland, Glasgow, Hawaii, Isle of Man, Johannesburg, Kingston, Lesotho, Maputo, Natal, Orlando (FL), Pattaya, Queensland, Rand, Spain, Thailand, Umtata, Vendlan, Wild Coast, Xai-Xai, York and Zambia.

Retirement

I am now working for Mrs Rosemary Kennedy. In my spare time I have written an interesting and humorous E-book: "Styles of Styles", and a textbook "How to do Research: Today's Tools and Tips" which I am currently editing. Both need to be marketed this year.



Illustration 1: Bottom-top: Thomas, Gayle his mother & Rosemary, her mother



Illustration 2:



Illustration 3: Julia (Gayle's daughter)



Illustration 4: Keenan (Lee-Ann's 2nd)



Illustration 5: Dominic (Lee-Ann's 1st)



Illustration 6: Laura, our last



Illustration 7: Cheral our second



Illustration 8: All my daughters: Gayle #3 with her son Thomas, Lee-Ann (eldest), Laura (last), Cheral #2 with bear



Illustration 9: Gayle, our third, at her house, not squinting into the sun



Illustration 10: Lee-Ann, our first born