

The Gertrude Danielson Perrine House



Gertrude Danielson Perrine

Gertrude was born in Sweden in 1904. She lived with her parents and a younger sister in Stockholm. The girls were orphaned in 1915. Her sister was sent to live with Grandma in southern Sweden while she was sent to Anaconda, MT. Her grandfather, his second wife, and five of his siblings lived there. Anaconda was the site of a large copper smelter and everyone in the town worked there. (The soil around the area was so poisoned that trees didn't grow there.) She didn't have any real family there so when she was old enough she left for Seattle. She lived with a dentist's family in exchange for childcare and graduated from Broadway High School in Seattle in 1924.

As a student at University of Washington she met and married (1-1-26) Charles Perrine. She resented becoming pregnant, as it was not compatible with her promised graduation from the University. She loved her two little girls deeply and when the older girl died suddenly at age five, she took the younger girl to southern California. She never remarried. She felt that one parent was better than two arguing parents.

As a young single mother in the depression of the 1930's she had several different secretarial jobs. Around 1938 she was in the typing pool at M.G.M. She had stories of eating in the commissary with the Munchkins from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Gertrude and her daughter lived in Santa Monica, which was known for its good school system. Both knew very early on that graduating from college was a requirement. Part of Santa Monica was zoned for duplexes and Gertrude was always able to find a neighbor to care for her daughter after school.

During World War II, she worked on the assembly line at Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica. On weekends she was a Red Cross Nurses' aide at the nearby VA Hospital. In 1945 she became a secretary and then an Administrative Assistant at the University of California Los Angeles (about four miles from Santa Monica). She "ran" the Meteorology, Geophysics and Physics departments until she retired in 1962.

Her daughter graduated from UCLA with a B.A. in Mathematics and a high school teaching credential. They continued to live together and pooled their income to buy a four unit apartment in West LA. By doing the cleaning, painting, gardening, roof repair etc. by themselves, they were able to add the five-unit apartment next door. The development of this property has made the donations to PCEI in her memory possible.

Gertrude was a devotee of night school held at the local high schools. She credited some of her love for wood to her early memories of Sweden. She turned bowls and smiled as the finishing brought out the beautiful grain. She made tables, chairs, couches, a dresser and a cradle for her granddaughters. Then she made cradles and cribs for their dolls. Finally she made a jungle gym with a playhouse on top.

She read and traveled to Europe, North Africa, Central and South America. She was always curious and learning. Her greatest joy was her girls. Her two granddaughters had doll houses, matching knit sweaters, rag dolls all made by Momo. She loved sitting with them for a night or a couple of weeks. Though she did admit that sometimes the three of them had to sit, REST, and read together.

Gertrude died of brain cancer in 1972, at the age of 68. She would have been a supporter of PCEI as she loved nature and had the "can do" spirit of the participants of the Women's Mountain Bike Clinic.



Gertrude Danielson Perrine (right, middle), and her family

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