

THE CROFT CHRONICLE

December 2016

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Dear

My good intentions of having my newsletter printed and distributed by Christmas, again have failed, so here are my belated greetings. I hope you had a very Merry Christmas and I wish you a healthy, happy and safe New Year. Thank you for your cards and emails, it is always great to hear from those near and dear.

What a year it has been – floods and droughts in many Countries, including Australia. Conflicts in Thailand, Afghanistan, Syria and the offensive to wipe out I.S.I.S in Mosel (Iraq) with hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing into Lebanon, Turkey, Italy, Germany, France etc. The world seems to be in turmoil and just recently, we have seen hurricane "Matthew" pounding the Carribean with so much destruction and deaths of over one thousand in Haiti. In November, a severe earthquake occurred in Perugia, Italy, a 7.8 magnitude quake and after-shocks in Kaikoura, north of Christchurch on the South Island of New Zealand. It is just five years since a devastating earthquake hit Christchurch, killing over two hundred. During these last months, earthquakes have occurred in Fukushima, Japan, one in El Salvador, one in Indonesia and a 7.8 quake in the Solomon Islands.

At long last, the American Election is over. The media had a ball, driving us all mad, even in Australia, with the reporting on the campaigns of Hilary Clinton (Democrats) and Donald Trump (Republicans). Finally, unbelievably, Donald Trump emerged as the victor and will be the 45th President of the most powerful Country in the world. As Hilary Clinton said, "All Americans must now be united and should give Donald Trump the chance to lead. Let us hope he can keep his commitments to get people back to work in the car industry in Detroit, fix unemployment in Ohio (steel mills) and in Pennsylvania (coal mines). His slogan "Make America Great Again" was persuasive. The Times magazine named him "Person of the Year".

In this part of the world, I am sure it must have been the coldest Winter for many years with continuing cold winds blowing from the Antarctic. I missed the early months of our Winter as my youngest daughter Jeanette and I spent ten weeks in America from 29th April to 17th July. In America we wore shorts nearly every day but on arriving back in Australia, I was so cold I was shivering. Cold weather extended into our Spring months of September, October and November. Summer has finally arrived and we look forward to lots of sunny days.

My eldest daughter, Suzanne, was at the airport to meet us and after a short get-together, Jeanette was off on a 10:00am flight to Sydney which is 600 miles north of Melbourne. She had to front up for work the next morning. Jeanette's two boys, Ben (25) works for an automotive tyre Company and Christopher (23) has still eighteen months at University to complete his Mechanical Engineering and Physics Degree. He says that he wants to work for N.A.S.A in America. Both boys have dual American/Australian citizenship.

In America, Jeanette virtually drove from the East Coast to the West Coast and even managed the hectic bumper to bumper traffic on the freeways in Los Angeles. We were lucky to have so many friends spread around the Country and it was great to see them all again. We flew non-stop – Melbourne to Los Angeles – with United Airlines for fourteen hours. On arrival, we were met by Lou and Sandy Acosta and spent three days with them before flying to Vancouver, Canada where we stayed with Sheila Vaney who went to the same school as Joan in Bombay. We also spent time with Lesley Kulhanian and Alex & Sheryl Kwai.

Vancouver is a lovely City. We visited all the city sights including the Gas Light Area, the fantastic Canada Place Shipping Terminal from where all the cruise ships leave for Alaska and we had a wonderful day on top of Grouse Mountain where we saw grizzly bears.

The reason we flew from there to New York State was because we had planned to be in Baltimore by 19th May for the graduation of my Granddaughter Madelaine, but this was postponed until December. We stayed with Sudi Layranan in her lovely home in Spencer Port near Rochester. The three of us had a great day at Niagara Falls and went on the boat "Maid of the Mist" which sails right up to the falls. Sudi also took us for a guided tour through the mansion of George Eastman, founder of Kodak and also to the home of Susan B. Anthony who won the rights for women to vote. Sudi is a Pastor in the Presbyterian Church and now has accepted a new position as Pastor of a church in Big Bay, Michigan which is near Lake Superior and very cold in Winter. She stayed with us for a week when we lived in Heathmont and is planning another trip to Australia in 2018.

We spent seven days in New York City with Manya Weg at her apartment on East 14th Street. Manya is a friend of Vilma La Dani who also went to the same school as Joan in India. Vilma lives in New York and we saw her each day. We visited Harlem, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Centre, the 9/11 site, Broadway, United Nations, Times Square and Central Park etc. What a busy city – the City that never sleeps.

From New York we took the AMTRAK train from Grand Central Station to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and spent two days with Joe and Michelle Rush at their home in Donnington. Joe was best man at my son Robert and Paula's wedding in 1989. We visited Market Street and Independence Hall where the Liberty Bell is housed. This bell was tolled during the first public reading of the declaration of Independence. We visited the grave of Benjamin Franklin and even ran up the steps where Sylvester Stallone ran up in the movie "Rocky" in which he starred.

Joe drove us to my son's home in Severn, Maryland, just south of Baltimore. It was great to see Robert and Paula and their children Chelsea (24), Madelaine (22) and James (20). Robert has lived in America for twenty-seven years and we spent ten days with he, Paula and family. We visited Annapolis, Home of the American Naval Academy and saw the Blue Angels flying over in formation. We also visited Washington DC, Arlington Cemetery, the graves of John F. Kennedy and his wife, Robert Kennedy, Joe Louis, Lee Marvin and Audie Murphy, movie star and the most decorated U.S. soldier in the Second World War. We also went to Robert E. Lee's house, witnessed the changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Sparta, North Carolina was our next stop where we stayed a few days with good friends, Gill and Vicki Thadani. They have four children, all married and living in the Carolinas. Gill is from India and was, at one time, Mayor of Sparta. He owns a Co-operative and operates a clothing store in the town. From Sparta we drove to Nashville, Tennessee, the home of Country music and the Grand Old Opry. The Johnny Cash museum is one not to be missed. We also drove out to Hendersonville where he and his wife June Carter lived and are both buried in the Cemetery there.

At the Opryland Hotel, there is a two acre glass walled conservatory filled with 10,000 tropical plants and a skylighted cascade area with indoor streams and a lake. In Centennial Park stands the Parthenon, an exact replica of the original in Athens. We also had a great day touring the mansion "The Hermitage" built by Andrew Jackson, the 7th U.S. President. Both he and his wife are entombed on the property.

We went south to visit a friend of Jeanette's, Suzie in Huntsville, Alabama. She was an aupair for Jeanette, many years ago in Sydney. She is now married to an American, Hugh, and they have two children. Hugh works at the U.S. Space Centre where the N.A.S.A. Laboratories and Shuttle test sites are situated. Also there is a great outdoor park filled with Space Craft as well as a museum.

On the way to Memphis near Tusculumbia we called at the birthplace of Helen Keller, called "Ivy Green". At the age of 19 months, she was unable to hear or see, yet in her adult life, she became an author and lecturer. With the help of her teacher, she graduated with honours in 1904 and became a champion for all those with similar disabilities.

At Memphis, at Sun Studios is where Elvis Presley, B.B. King and Roy Orbison launched their careers. The motel Lorraine where Martin Luther King was assassinated is now the very interesting Civil Rights Museum. A big tourist attraction is the Peabody Hotel's ducks which are

kept in very comfortable accommodation on the top of the twelve storey hotel. At 11 am each morning, they descent in the lift, stroll out on the red carpet that leads to the marble fountain in the middle of the foyer, get into the water and swim around all day. At 5pm, the reverse takes place. They jump out of the fountain, stroll back along the red carpet then into the lift and up to their home for the night. Of course, this is great publicity for the hotel with the help of the Ringmaster.

Beale Street is the centre of activity with Clubs, Music Bars and Restaurants. At one bar, we were entertained by wonderful musicians while we enjoyed spare ribs and a beer. We had a trip on a paddle steamer on the Mississippi River and finally a day at Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley. We saw his two private jets, his gold covered piano and his glittering stage costumes. He achieved so much in his short life. He was only 42 when he died. At our hotel, we met a couple from South Australia, Kevin and Karen Frances. They each had a motorbike which they shipped over and were riding from the most southern tip of South America to the tip of Alaska. We had a pleasant evening with them over a few beers and nibbles.

We crossed the Mississippi into Arkansas and travelled along the river to St. Louis, Missouri where we spent a happy time with a cousin of mine Michelle De Guire. She is married to an American, Mike and they have two sons Daniel and Adam. Michelle grew up in Wangaratta and has not been back to Australia for over twenty years. It was great to meet up with her. We had a trip to the top of the Gateway Arch which rises 630ft above the Mississippi River. A tram goes up the inside of each leg to an observation room where the view is terrific. The underground visitor section is a museum.

We had a tour through the world's largest brewery "Anheuser-Busch" makers of Budweiser beer. We saw some of the Clydesdale horses and stables where they were kept. The Cathedral of St. Louis has a collection of mosaics which cover the walls, ceilings and the three domes.

In Denver, Colorado we walked along the Mall which is part of 16th Street. The only vehicle allowed is the free shuttle bus which travels along the 16th Street stretch. We also had a tour through the Molly Brown House Museum. Molly was one of the survivors of the tragic sinking of the Titanic.

From Denver we drove to North Platte, Nebraska and spent a few days with my Granddaughter, Chelsea Croft who works for the local T.V. Station as a News and Sports Presenter. The night we arrived, she was covering the "Miss Nebraska" pageant. We had a tour of Buffalo Bill's House also.

The drive to South Dakota was through flat open plains and we detoured to a little town called St. Francis where we looked through a very interesting museum of the Lakota Indians "The Sioux". Then to the Badlands National Park which is 80 miles east of Rapid City. It was like being on another planet. Millions of years of erosion have left this area with desolate gorges, rivers and canyons. It is called "The Badlands" because no-one could possibly live there. In

Rapid City, we stayed with John and Becky Boyce who were at my son's wedding in 1989, Becky sang "Ave Maria" which was fantastic.

We went to the Custer National Park where we saw herds of bison (buffalo). Also, we visited the famous attraction, The Mount Rushmore National Memorial where the faces of Presidents, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt are carved on the granite cliff. The sculptor, Gutzon Borglum labored at this monumental task for more than 14 years. It was finally finished by his son. We also had a day in Deadwood, a once infamous gold mining boom town. This is the old west town where wild Bill Hickok was shot during a poker game. At Mariall Cemetery close by is where Hickok and Calamity-Jane are buried.

We drove back to Colorado through Wyoming via Cheyenne to Colorado Springs where we stayed with friends, Dave and Nancy Lippincott. It was great to see them again. We had a wonderful day going on the Cog Railway to the top of Pike's Peak. The views were breathtaking. We visited the U.S Air Force Academy there and the Garden of the Gods. Dave and Nancy are coming to Australia in February 2017.

Silverton, Durango was our next call to the Four Corners Monument where the States of Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico all meet. From there we drove into Utah and Monument Valley where many Western Movies were made starring John Wayne. Then we moved to Arizona where we stayed at a motel in Juba City which is within the Indian Navajo Reservation. Jeanette and I sat on the balcony and drank a couple of beers. Later on, however, we found out that alcohol is not allowed on Indian Reservations. From there we visited the Grand Canyon and was so amazed with the fantastic panoramic views. We stayed with friends, Matt and Lynette Mitchell in Flagstaff. From there we went to Sedona, Hoover Dam and Las Vegas, Nevada. We stayed at "Hooters", walked along The Strip in the evening and visited the Liberace Museum etc.

Finally, back in California we arrived in Los Angeles on 1st July in time to find the Australian Embassy and put in our vote for the Australian Election which was held on the 2nd July.

Our last fortnight in the U.S. was hectic. We stayed in Simi Valley with Gracie Lerno who was at school with Joan in Bombay. We kept busy by visiting sights such as the Santa Monica Pier, Venice and Manhattan beaches, Hollywood Walk of Fame, Wax Museum, Warner Brothers Studios, Griffiths Park, L.A. Observatory by Hollywood Sign, the Library and Museum of President Richard Nixon at Yorba, Linda and Ronald Reagan at Simi Valley, up and down the beautiful streets in Hollywood near Rodeo Drive, the Beverly Hills Hotel and various cemeteries where movie stars are buried. In my lifetime, I have never met any movie stars but I know where they are buried.

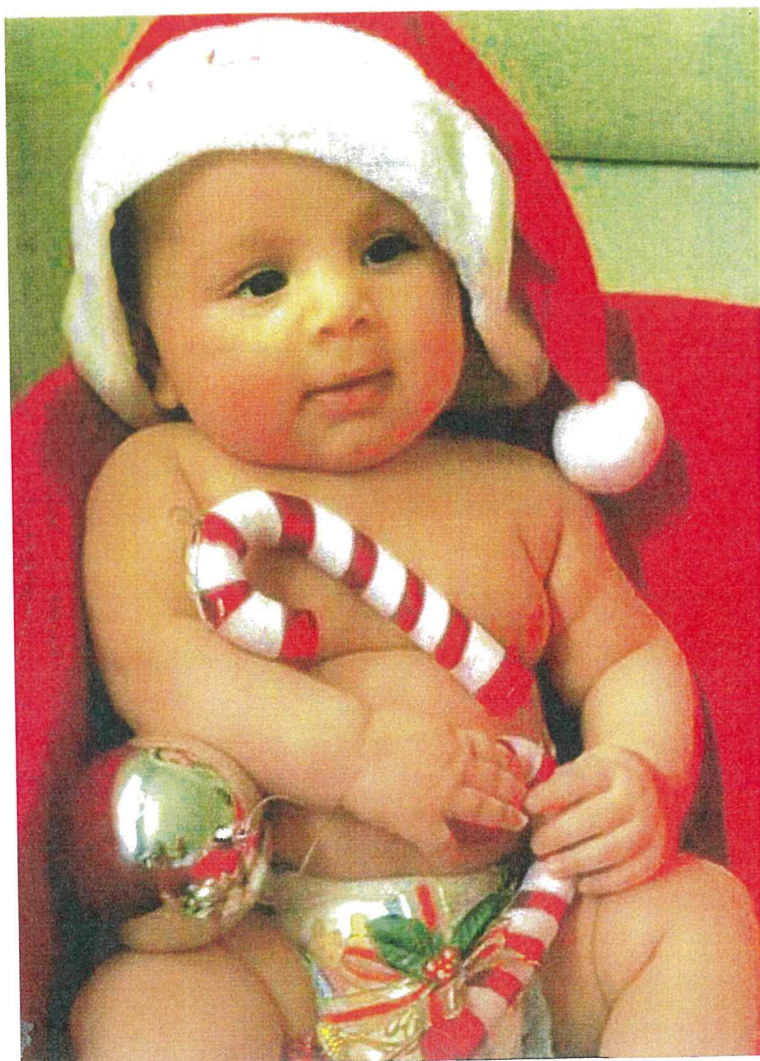
We drove up the coast on 4th July weekend to Santa Barbara, Carmel & Monterrey and back to spend the evening in Malibu with Joan's cousin, Shirley Hague and husband Bill to celebrate the 4th July.

Our final night was with Lou and Sandy Acosta and their friends at a Mexican Restaurant in El Segundo. They took us to the Los Angeles Airport for our flight home on 15th July. We had a wonderful ten weeks in America and a big thanks to all our American friends for their excellent hospitality.

I am now a Great-grandfather. My eldest granddaughter Danielle (29) gave birth to a bouncing boy on 9th August 2016. They called him Maximus. Danielle is married to a Greek boy. Her sister, Melissa Croft (27) is getting married on 5th March 2017.

It is now 2½ years since Joan died and we miss her so much. I think of you often and look forward to a visit from you one day. Please keep in touch.

Love to All.



Maximus dressed and ready for his first Christmas



Chelsea Croft at the news desk – T.V.STN Nebraska

CEMETERIES WHERE MOVIE STARS ARE BURIED IN LOS ANGELES

WESTWOOD	HOLLYWOOD FOREVER	HILLSIDE
1218 Glendon Ave	6000 Santa Monica Blvd	6001 W. Centinela Ave
WESTWOOD	HOLLYWOOD	CULVER CITY
Marilyn Monroe	Mickey Rooney	Al Jolsen
Natalie Wood	Tyrone Power	Lorne Green
Donna Reed	Peter Lorre	Michael Langdon
Dean Martin	Peter Finch	Jeff Chandler
Jack Lemon	Douglas Fairbanks	Jack Benny
Walter Matthau	Rudolf Valentino	David Janssen
Cornel Wilde	Nelson Eddy	Leonard Nimoy
Burt Lancaster	Eleanor Powell	Cyd Charisse
Bob Crane	Don Adams	Tony Martin
James Coburn	Darren McGavin	Vic Morrow
Farrah Fawcett	Clifton Webb	Suzanne Plushette
Peter Falk	Janet Gaynor	Shelly Winters
Peggy Lee	Estelle Getty	Dinah Shore
Janet Leigh	Charlie Chaplin Jnr	Milton Berle
Karl Maldon	Rick Jason	Gene Barry
Louis Jourdan	David White	Eydie Gorme
Eddie Albert	Woody Herman	Eddie Cantor
Roy Orbiston	Cecil D De Mille	Moe Howard
Roger Dangerfield etc	John Huston etc	Sheldon Leonard etc
FOREST LAWN	FOREST Lawn	HOLY CROSS
1712 Glendale Ave	6300 Forest Lawn Drive	5835 W. Slauson Ave
Glendale	Hollywood Hills	Culver City
Elizabeth Taylor	Bette Davis	Bing Crosby
Alan Ladd	Liberace	Rita Hayworth
Nat King Cole	Charles Laughton	Sharon Tate
Clark Gable	Rod Steiger	Jack P. Galey
Carol Lombard	George Raft	Bonita Granville
Jimmy Stewart	Telly Savalas	Charles Boyer
Red Skelton	Forrest Tucker	Loretta Young
Spencer Tracy	Sandra Dee	Rosalind Russell
Janet MacDonald	Lou Rawls	Fred MacMurray
Michael Jackson	Andy Gibb	Ann Miller
Sammy Davis Jnr	Stan Laurel	Jimmy Durante
Humphrey Bogart	Gene Autry	Ray Bolger
Dick Powell etc	Jack Webb	MacDonald Carey
Errol Flynn	Dorothy Lamour	Pat O'Brien
Robert Young	Majorie Main	Edmond O'Brien
Robert Taylor	John Ritter	Vince Edwards
Robert Cummings	Ricky Nelson	Mario Lanza
Walt Disney	Wandra Hendrix	Jose Iturbi
George Burns	Pamela Britton	Spike Jones
Gracie Allen		Jackie Coogan
James Arness		Mary Frann
Dan Daily		Mary Astor etc

JENNIFER

FOREST LAWN cemetery at Glendale would be the world's most famous cemetery (over 300 acres). It attracts over one million visitors per year - approx. 60,000 people have been married there, including Ronald Reagan who tied the knot with his first wife "Jane Wyman" at the "Wee Kirk 'O the Heather Chapel" in 1940

No other cemetery can match the sheer number of Hollywood movie star that are buried there. You need a directory and a map to find where the stars are in their final resting place, but it is well worth a visit. A map of the grounds is available at the information kiosk.

If you are in to visiting the graves of the movie stars it is a lot easier at smaller locations, particularly at Westwood. Others are Hollywood Forever, Holy Cross and Hillside.

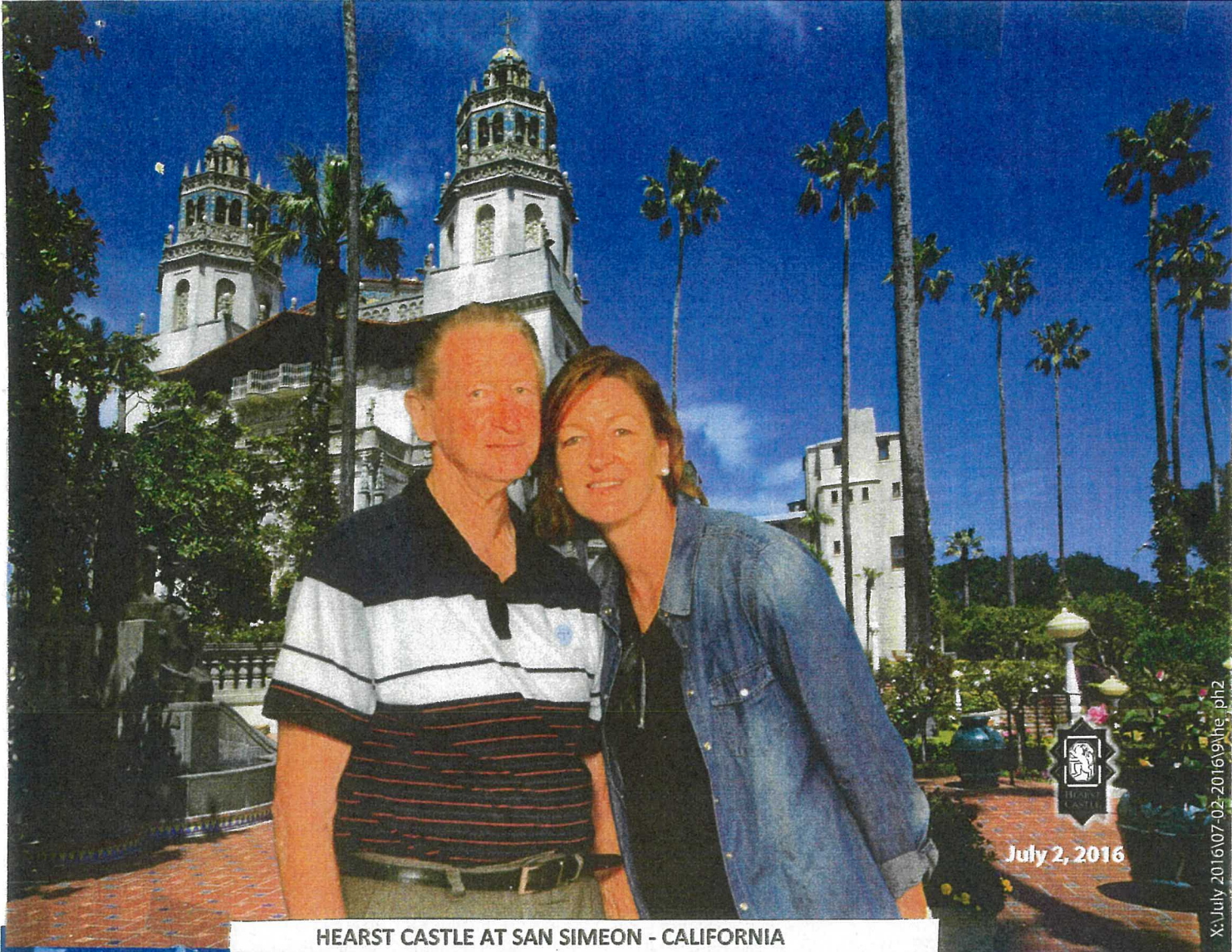
At Hillside the most impressive memorial is that of Al Jolson – seconded only by Douglas Fairbanks at Hollywood Forever. Gregory Peck is in a crypt at the Cathedral of our Lady of the Angels at 555 Temple St. Downtown Los Angeles. Free access is available for anyone to visit. Just enter the Cathedral and go down the stairs.

John Wayne is in Pacific View, 3500 Pacific View Drive, Corona Del Mar (New Port Beach). This is 15 miles south of L.A.

Frank Sinatra, Sonny Bono and Betty Hutton are way west of L.A. at Desert Memorial Park, Palm Springs and Jayne Wyman is in a cemetery close by.

There are lots of smaller cemeteries where only a few movie stars are buried

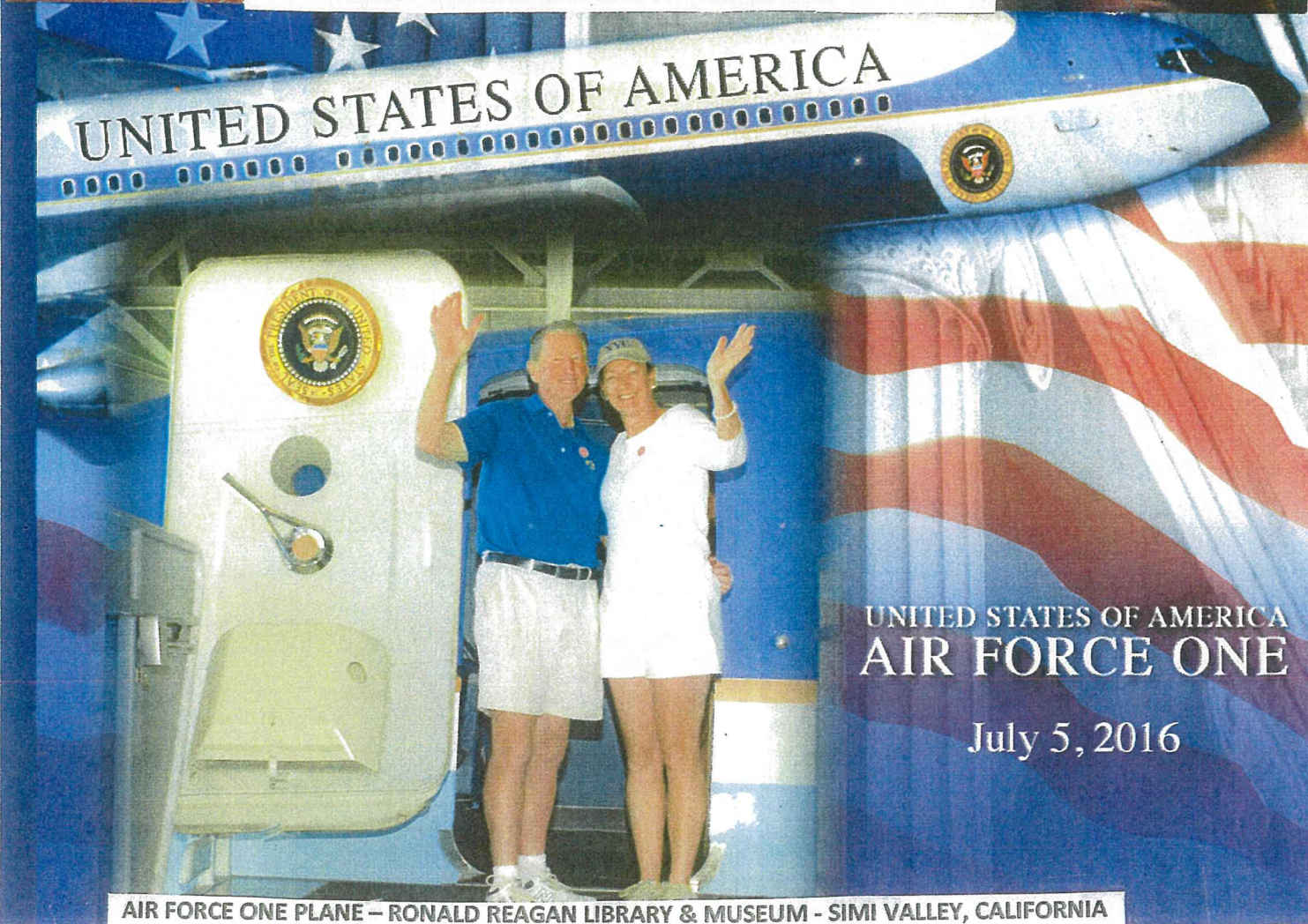
OAKWOOD	WOOD LAWN	INGLEWOOD	SAN FERNANDO MISSION CEMETERY
22600 LASSEN ST.	1847 – 14 TH ST	720 E. FLORENCE AVE	11160 STRANWOOD AVE
CHATSWORTH	SANTA MONICA	INGLEWOOD	MISSION HILLS
Fred Astaire	Glen Ford	Betty Grable	Walter Brennan
Ginger Rogers	Harvey Korman	Ray Charles	William Bendix
Gloria Graham	Hal Smith	Ella Fitzgerald	Edward Arnold
Monte Montana	Irene Ryan	Etta James	Ed Begley
Stephen Boyd	Ted Bessell	Sugar Ray Robinson	Richie Valens
(Messala in Ben Hur)	Barbara Billingsley	Gypsy Rose Lee	Willian Frawley
	Doug McClure	Cesar Romero	Jerry Colonna
	Leo Carrillo	Edgar Bergen	
	Audra Lindley	Tom Bradley (1 st Black Mayor of L.A.)	Clarence Nash (Voice of Donald Duck)
	Paul Hendried (Ingrid Bergman's husband in Casa Blanca)	Allan "Rocky" Lane (Voice of Mr Ed.)	Bob Hope (Next door in the Mission itself)
		Hoot Gibson	Chuck Connors (Rifleman)



HEARST CASTLE AT SAN SIMEON - CALIFORNIA

July 2, 2016

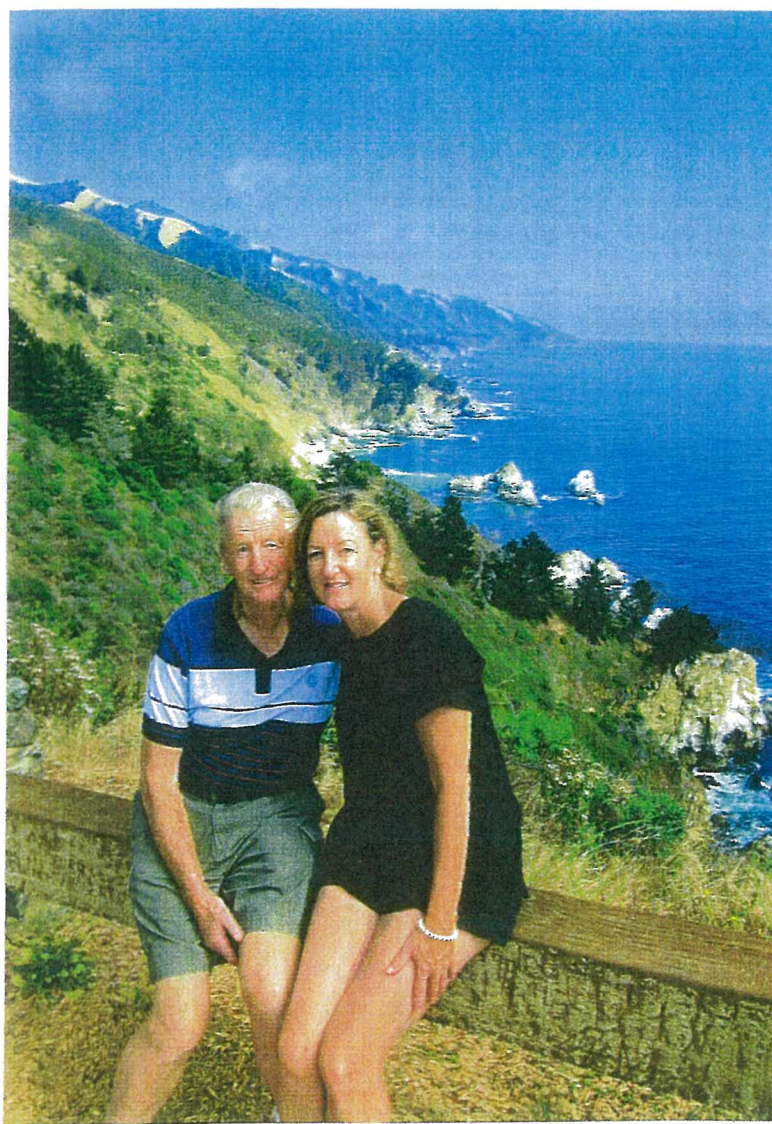
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AIR FORCE ONE

July 5, 2016

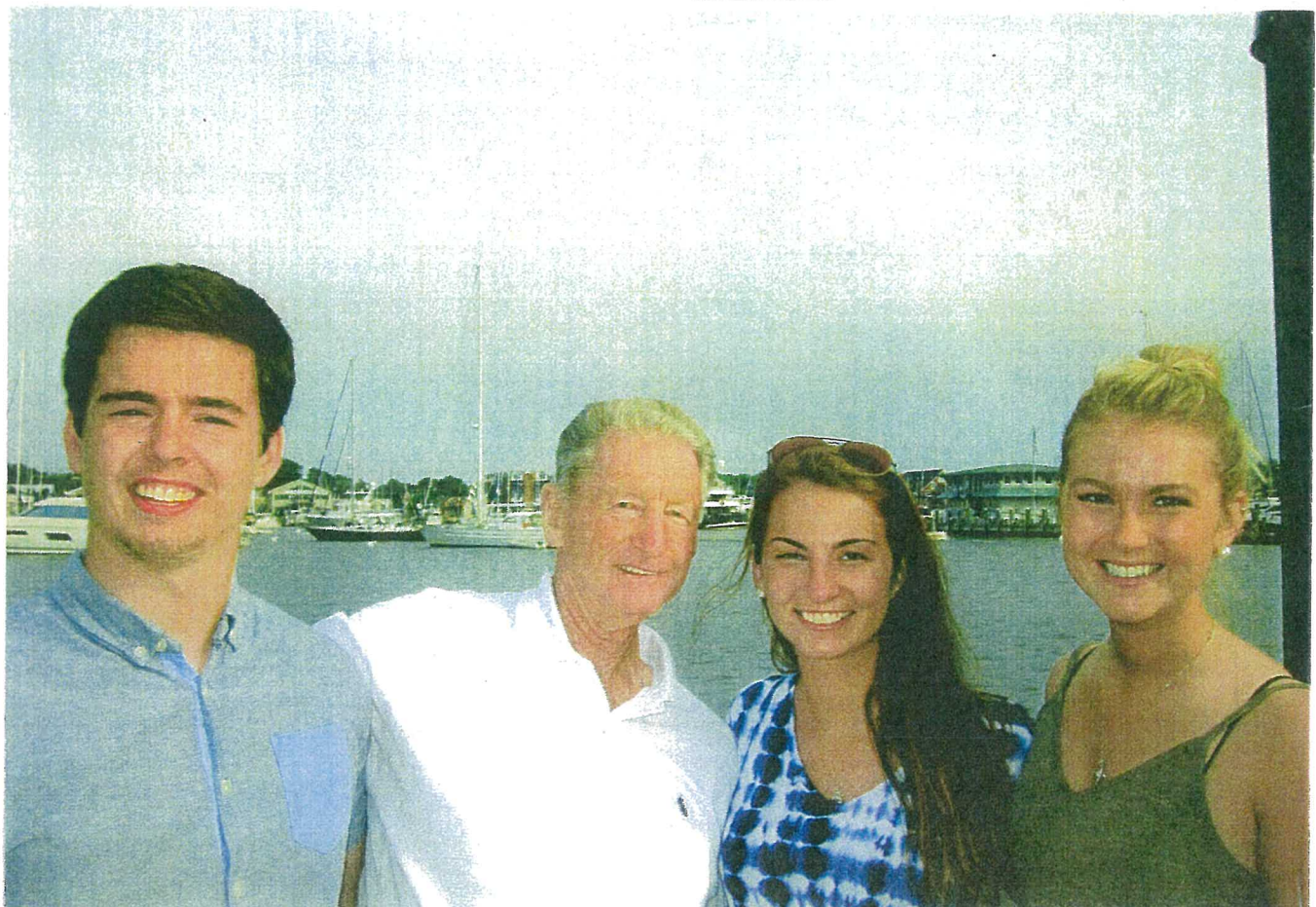
AIR FORCE ONE PLANE - RONALD REAGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM - SIMI VALLEY, CALIFORNIA



ON WEST COAST OF AMERICA NEAR CARMEL – CALIFORNIA



GRACIE LERNO & JEANETTE AT THE GRAVE OF AL JOLSON
HILLSIDE JEWISH MEMORIAL CEMETERY – LOS ANGELES



JOHN WITH HIS AMERICAN GRANDCHILDREN – MARYLAND U.S.A.

JAMES

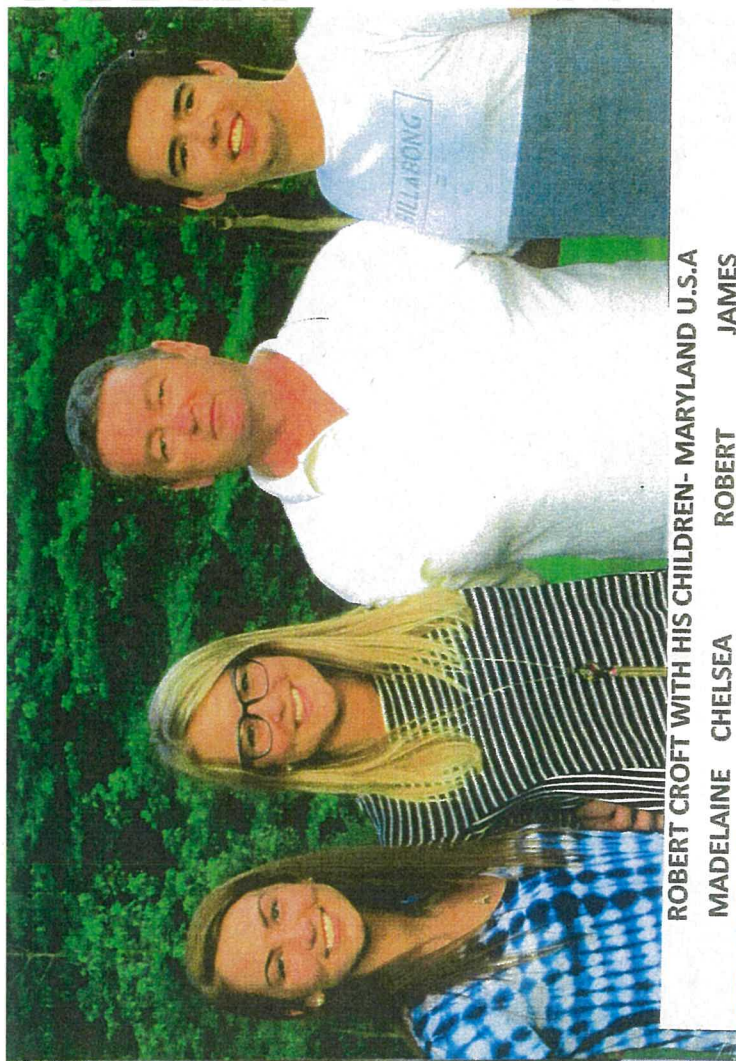
JOHN

MADELAINE

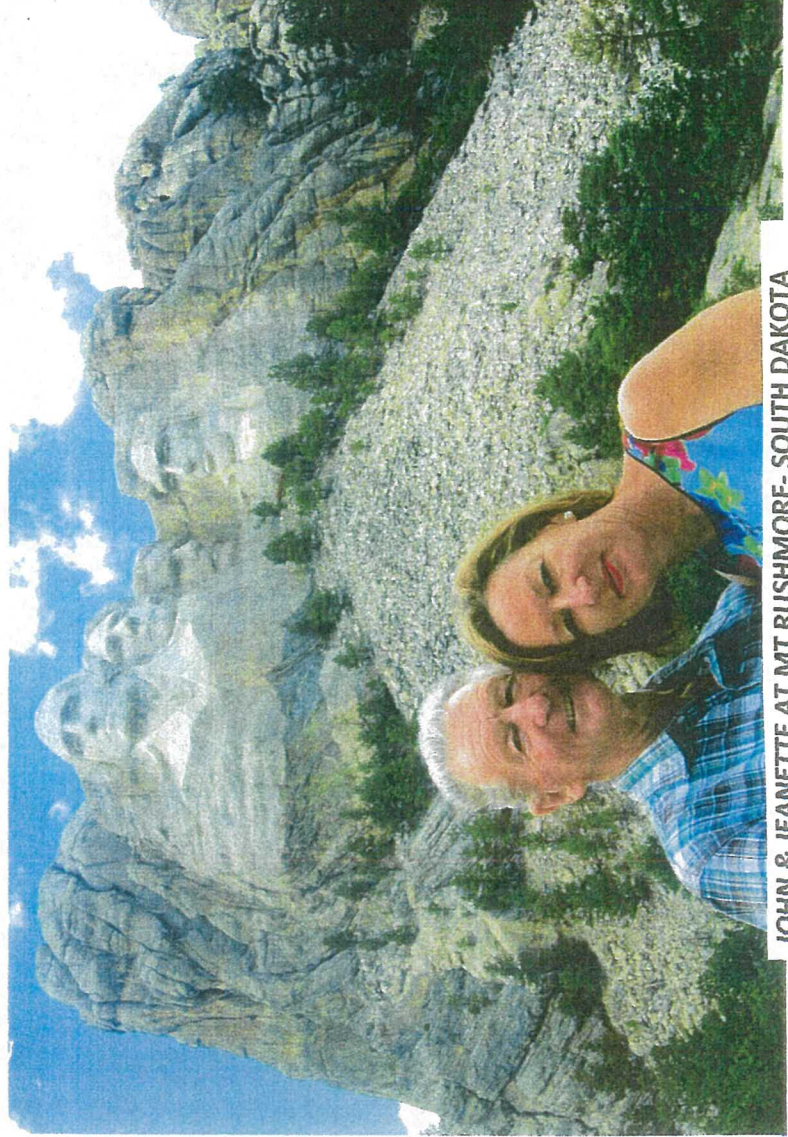
CHELSEA



JOHN WITH PAULA CROFT (DAUGHTER-IN-LAW)



ROBERT CROFT WITH HIS CHILDREN - MARYLAND U.S.A
MADELAINE CHELSEA ROBERT JAMES



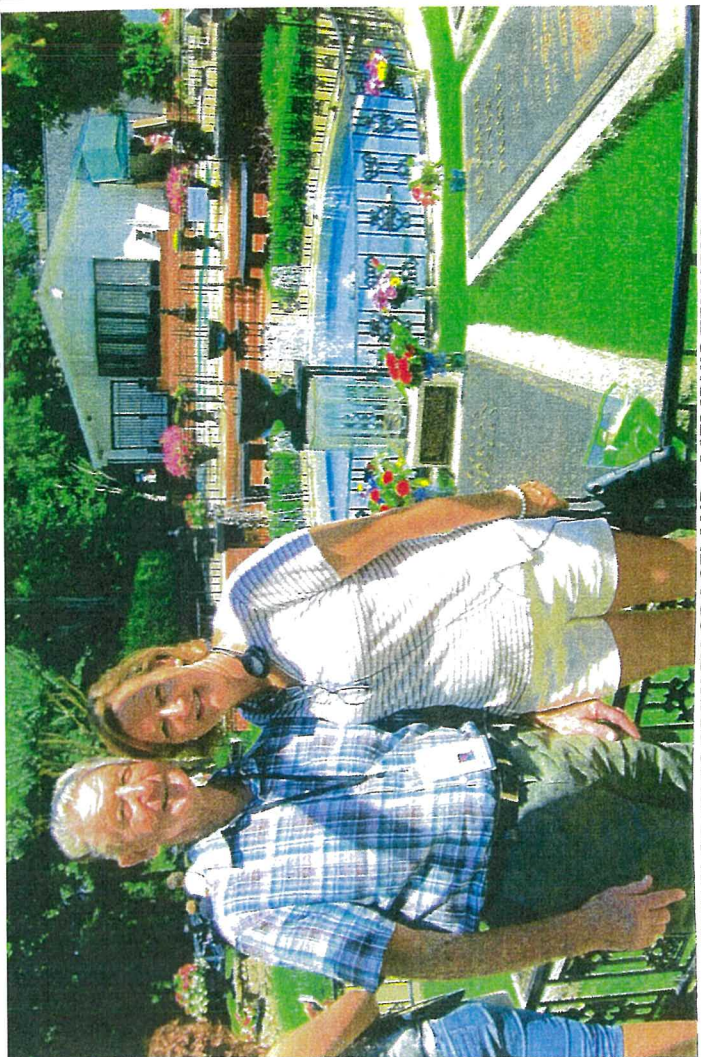
JOHN & JEANETTE AT MT RUSHMORE- SOUTH DAKOTA



LAS VEGAS - NEVADA



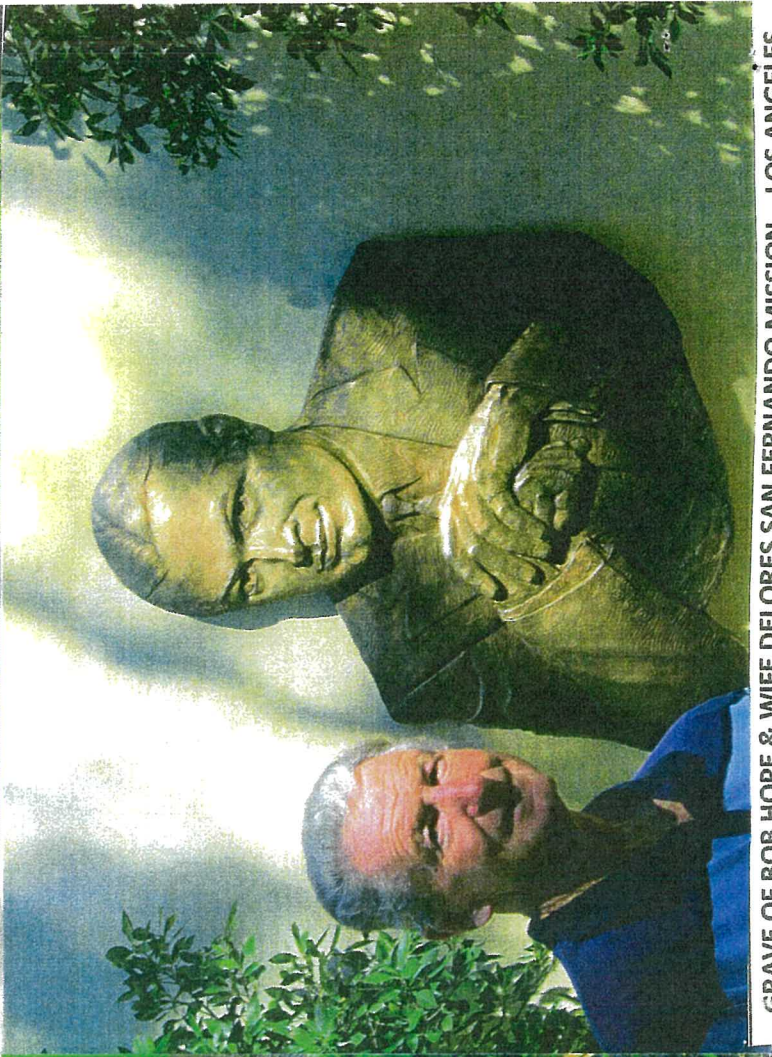
CRYPT OF MARILYN MONROE - WEST WOOD MEMORIAL CEMETERY LOS ANGELES



GRAVE OF ELVIS PRESLEY GRACELAND - MEMPHIS TENNESSEE



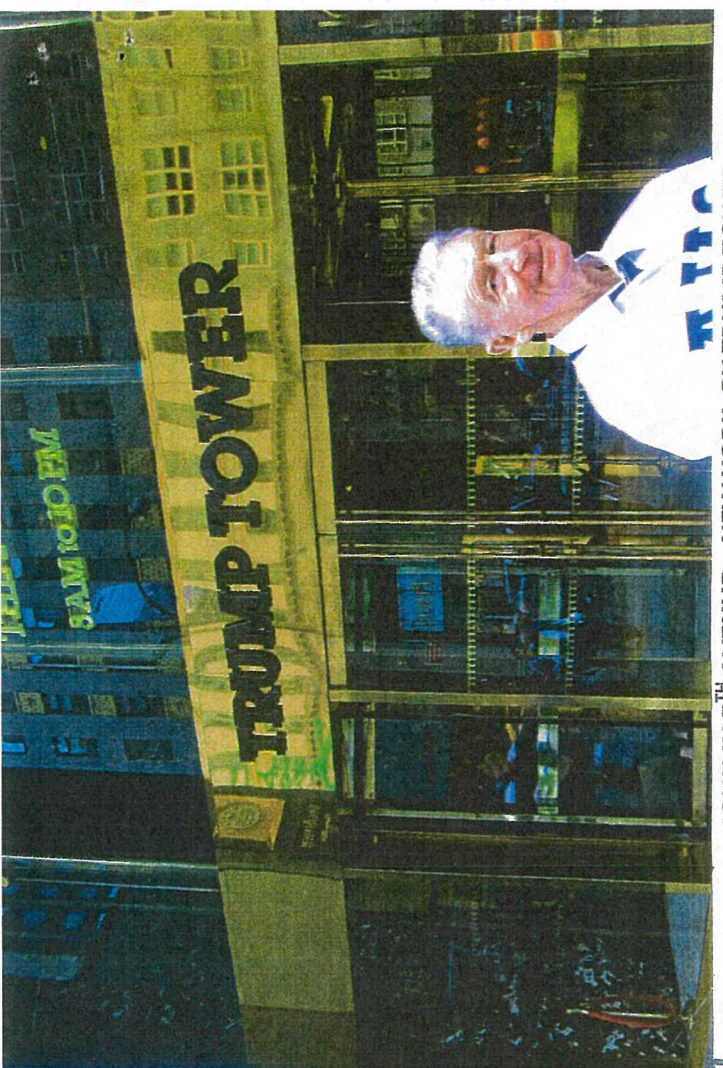
GRAVE OF JOHNNY CASH & WIFE JUNE CARTER CASH NASHVILLE - TENNESSEE



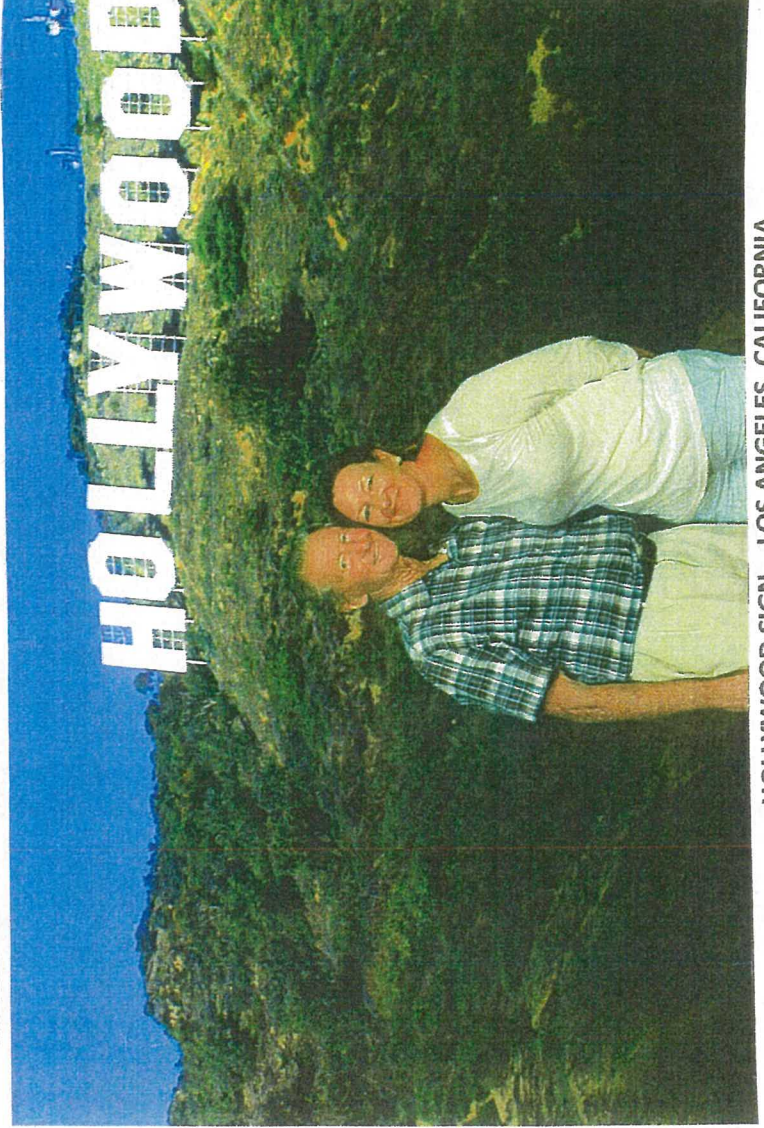
GRAVE OF BOB HOPE & WIFE DELORES SAN FERNANDO MISSION - LOS ANGELES



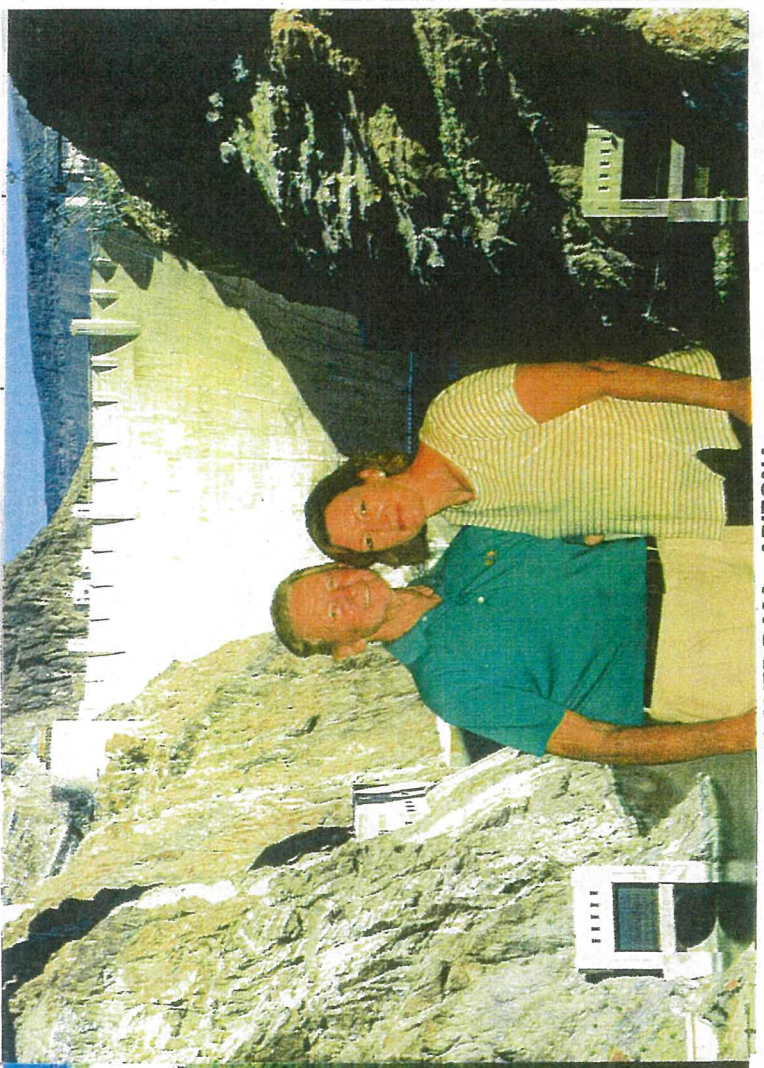
ROBERT WITH HIS DAD AT IWO JIMA MEMORIAL - WASHINGTON D.C. U.S.A



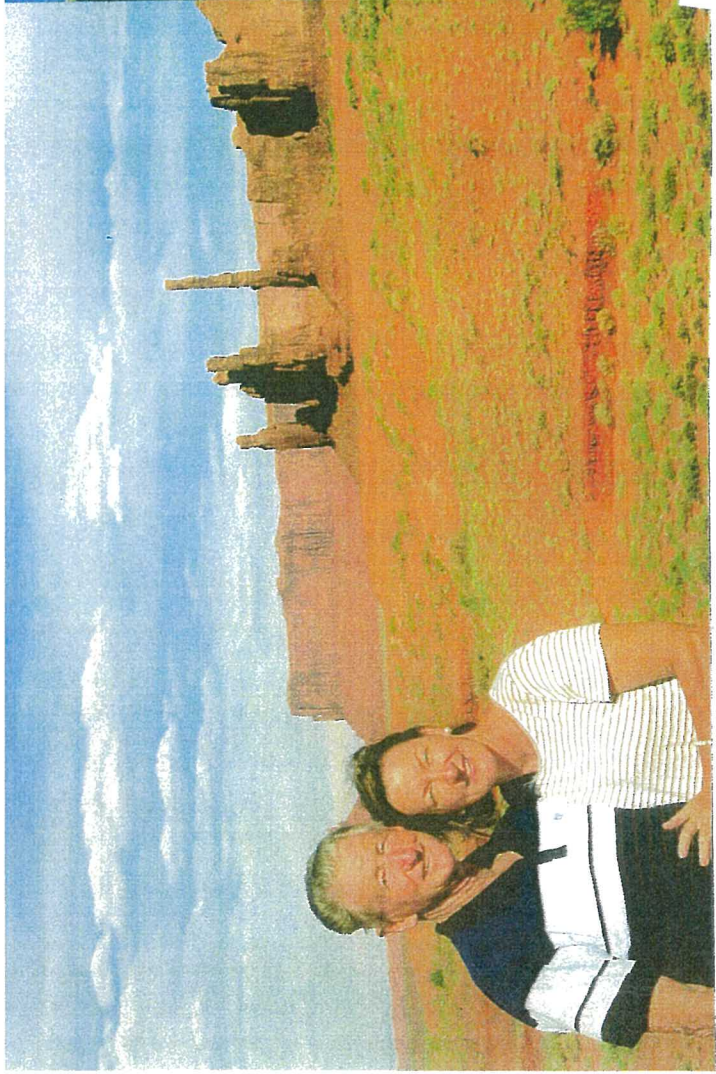
JOHN IN 5TH AVENUE - NEW YORK - BY TRUMP TOWER



HOLLYWOOD SIGN - LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



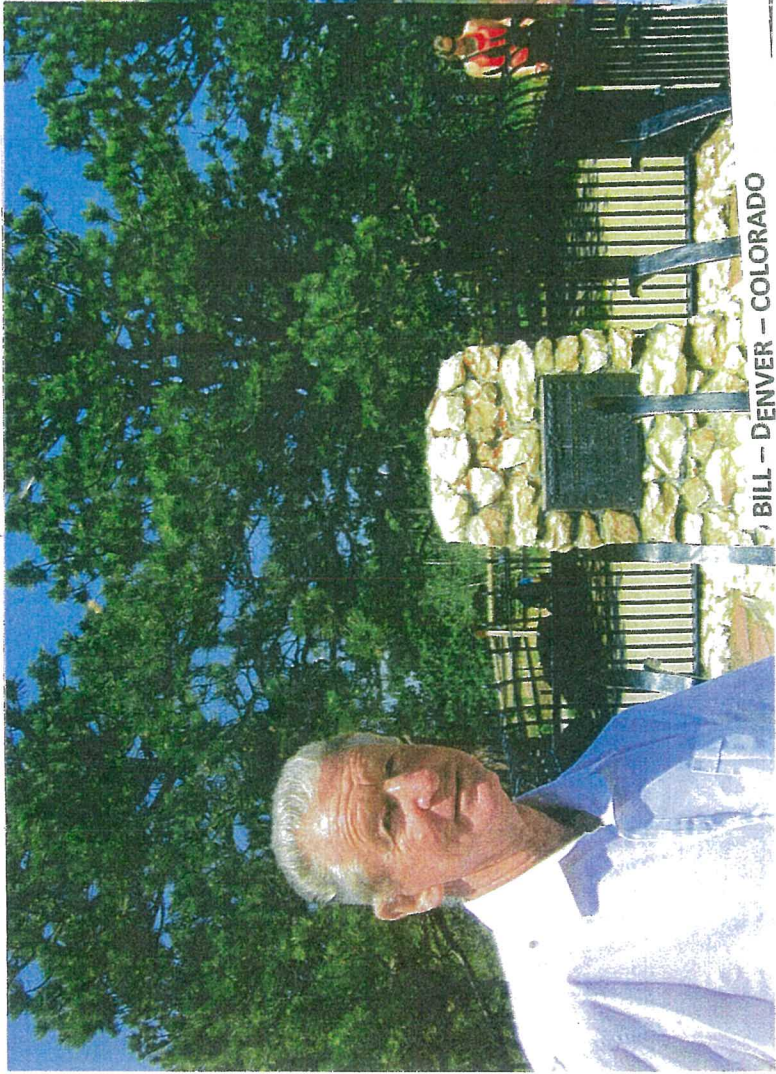
HOOVER DAM - ARIZONA



MONUMENT VALLEY -- UTAH



JOHN & JEANETTE WITH EDEL COCHRANE -- PALM SPRINGS -- CALIFORNIA



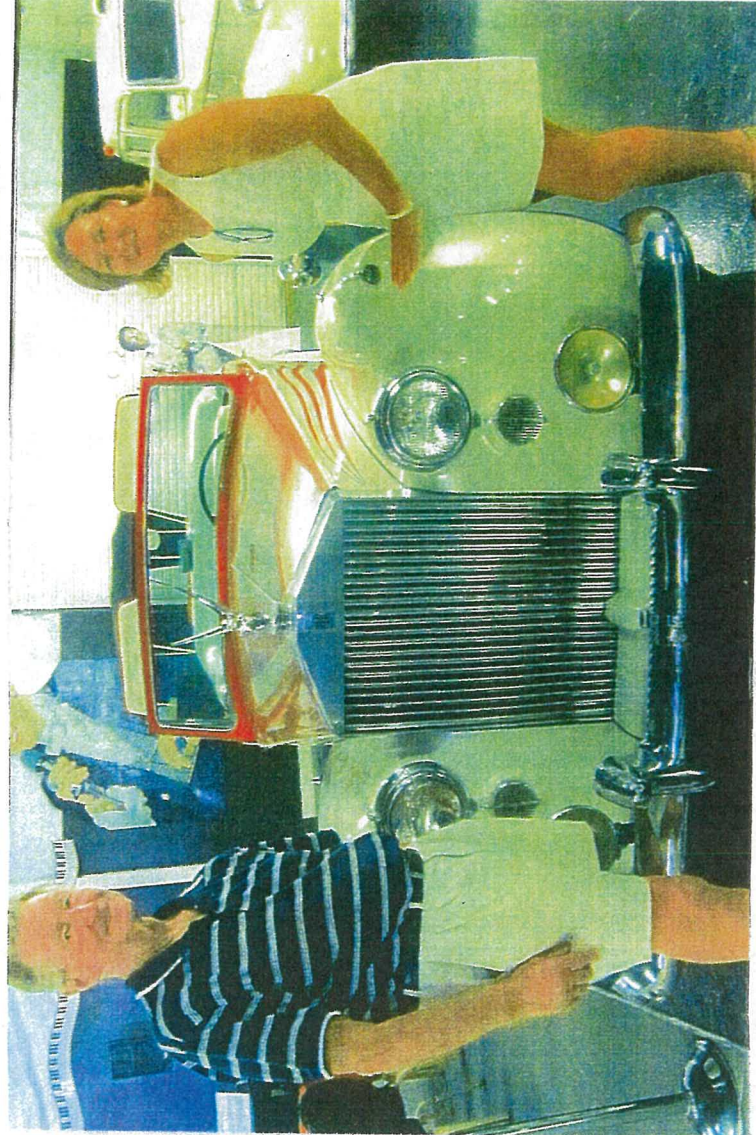
BILL -- DENVER -- COLORADO



JEANETTE WITH FRIENDS -- SANDY & LOU ACOSTA AT EL SEGUNDO, LOS ANGELES



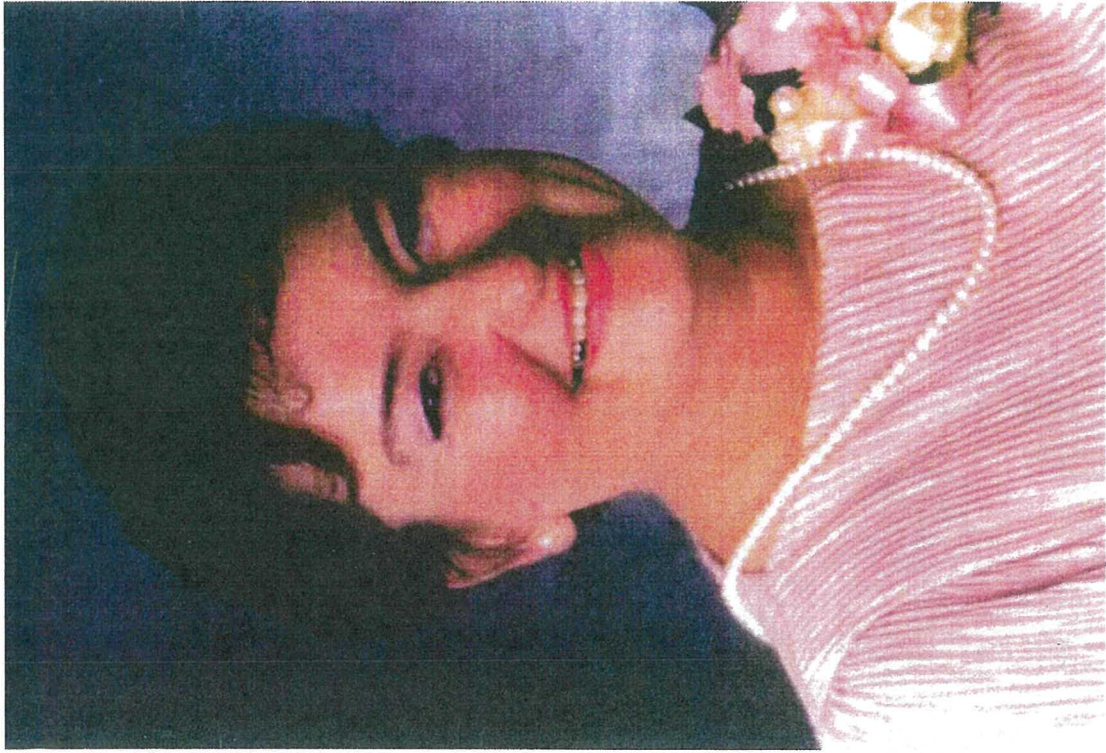
JOHN SEATED AT LIBERACE'S PIANO, LIBERACE MUSEUM - LAS VEGAS



ONE OF THE CARS OF LIBERACE AT HIS MUSEUM



MY ELDEST DAUGHTER SUZANNE & HUSBAND ROSS AT THE PUB THEY RECENTLY SOLD



In Loving Memory
Of
Joan Anne Croft
18 October 1937 - 17 June 2014



JOHN & JOAN CROFT WITH THEIR CHILDREN
JOHN JNR, SUZANNE, JEANETTE & ROBERT (AT JOHNS 70TH BIRTHDAY IN 2001)

