

A Brief Biography of Marine Yanikian-Sutton

Marine as Armenian



I address this extensively in my book, so I won't go into too much detail here. However, I will say that our 2013 trip to Armenia lived up to everything she had hoped for. The food, the religious sites, and the language made her feel deeply connected to her heritage. My bedroom is still filled with the carvings, the flag, and the paintings we purchased there; in fact, we bought more items on that trip than all of our other travels combined.

An aside: I am not sure exactly how many pounds of apricots we consumed on that trip, but it was a staggering amount.

Every April 24th, one of two things happened: we were either marching in remembrance, or she was in the classroom teaching her students about the genocide.

Marine as East Hollywood

From the age of one, Marine lived in East Hollywood. While we eventually owned a house in Grass Valley, for a long time it was simply the place we went during school breaks. Growing up, she would walk to the Cahuenga Library on Santa Monica Boulevard; later, when we had children of our own, we took them to the Los Feliz branch for art classes.

She attended King Middle School and then Marshall High School. In both places, she focused on writing with the dream of one day becoming a journalist. At Marshall, she was a member of the *Campus News* staff, which remained one of her fondest high school memories.

For more details, you can read more here: [Link](#)

Marine as Educator

Why did she become a teacher? You can blame that on me.

While she was a sophomore at USC, she came to watch me teach a lesson where students analyzed various artworks to determine their historical eras. She watched as students—who had started the period acting like "wannabe gangsters"—competed to out-identify one another while using the formal academic language I required. She was hooked. She changed her major shortly after.

While we were backpacking through Europe on our honeymoon, the principal at Monlux Elementary was trying to offer her a position. This was before the era of cell phones, so it took some luck to coordinate, but the contact was made. Marine began her teaching career there with a fourth-grade class.

During her tenure at Monlux, she taught a K-1 split, 4th grade, and 5th grade, all while working to improve the school through her writing. She authored grants that funded two playgrounds and a campus garden. She also wrote the California Distinguished School application and report, which led to the school receiving that prestigious title in 2006.

Marine took two years off following the birth of our son, Elyas. When she returned to the classroom, she helped open New World Academy at the RFK complex in Los Angeles. There, she taught 4th and 5th grades and continued her grant-writing efforts. [\[Additional Information\]](#)

After a year at Carthay—where she was named one of Los Angeles' [most inspirational teachers by United Way](#)—she joined me at Bancroft as a Language Arts coach. She spent the remainder of her career at Bancroft in various roles, always seeking out the students who needed the most attention. She created student groups that evolved yearly based on where the challenges were greatest. One year, she worked with several male students who were making destructive decisions; the following year, she founded the "Serenity Club" for a group of female students in need of support. She continued to teach whenever possible, including a 2016 Saturday class for recently immigrated English Learner (EL) students. She guided them through the writing process, and they each wrote their immigration stories, which she eventually had published as an anthology with the support of Scholarly Authors.

Marine and Cancer

Much of this is touched on in the book, so I will not go into detail here. But I do want to provide you with some links so you can read her posts directly.

[Light Blazer Instagram](#)

[Medium Posts](#)

[8 faces of cancer](#): Click on the blog within the posts.

