

Being Famous: Jan McCoy

I was having dinner with a friend who'd lived in the south of France on Le Cote d'Azur for two years. Many rich and famous people either live along the French Riviera or come south for the summer. My friend had had a few brushes with the so-called Rich and Famous. I had planned to ask her about them.

'What was the most exciting brush?'

'Roger Moore. I was at the Antibes food and wine festival and there was James Bond himself at the same tasting table. I said *hello*. He raised his glass and said *cheers*.'

'What was it like being Paul Gallico's secretary?'

'Fabulous. He dictated story or poetry. Said he woke at 5 a.m. every day and planned what he would write. He didn't work with notes ... just spoke the story as he'd planned it. Amazing. I'd type it up from my shorthand in the afternoon and leave it on his desk. He hardly ever changed anything he wrote.'

'Did you meet any other famous people through the Gallicos?'

'Paul was a great friend of Grace Kelly, and I typed a poem Paul wrote for her 40th birthday. Grace and Rainier were coming to dinner, and I finished work at 6, so I was introduced to them on my way out.'

'Much later I met Caroline as well. Virginia was Patron of a Library Princess Caroline was establishing in Grace's honour. I accompanied Virginia to Monaco to meet Caroline in the house she'd purchased to accommodate the Library. Virginia asked me to play the piano for Caroline, so I looked through the music in the piano stool and found something I could manage.'

'The most amusing was working for Alistair Maclean. He'd rented a villa and I was employed to do some cleaning. He followed me round the house as I dusted, just so he could have some English conversation.'

So...it turns out that being famous comes to one who has special gifts or is just born into a rich and famous family or society.

However, one woman has become famous through sheer devotion to working to make other peoples' lives better. She uses her gift of giving and recently won the award of Northern Beaches Senior Citizen of the Year, 2023. This is *real* fame...giving one's own time, energy, effort, encouragement and service to others.