

Tom and Linda Bennett

The following is the Life Sketch delivered by Art Earll at their Funeral Services held on February 26, 1990, in Loma Linda, California.

To many, Tom and Linda Bennett represented an American Classic, mirroring our image of pioneers, striving through courage and determination to achieve their goals. This is because of their strongly held values, a belief that honesty, hard work and care for one's fellow man are the principles to be followed, not because they are prudent, but because they are right.

These values were not chosen or decided upon, but were ingrained during their younger years. In Tom and Linda's, there was a paring of values which was complementary, a case in which the whole was truly greater than the sum of the parts.

Tom Ray Bennett was born on April 16, 1948, in Las Vegas, Clark county Nevada, to Leonard Nathan and Clela (Johnston) Bennett. He distinguished himself immediately as the largest baby delivered at the Las Vegas Hospital, setting a record which stood for several years.

Linda Jeanine (Stonebrook) Bennett was born on May 31, 1949, at the Paradise Valley Sanitarium, near San Diego, California.

The Chaplin there knew that Ivan and Grace Stonebrook of Amarillo, Texas, were looking for another daughter to be a sister to Shirley, whom they had adopted eleven months earlier. Grace came out to take her home. The Stonebrooks continued to live in Amarillo for six years, where Ivan worked in the Seventh-day Adventist education system.

The Bennett family consisted of four boys and one girl. Jack and Dale were born before World War II; Don, Tom and Chris were born after it, but the older boys were good about including the little kids in their activities.

In 1950, the Bennetts moved a house from the small town of Tonapa, Nevada, to a two acre parcel of land on the outskirts of north Las Vegas. This was done so that they could continue the rural tradition which was so much a part of their lives. Tom took to farm life at once, so much that his older brother Don would have to bribe him to play ball instead of playing with the cows or horses.

Clela, Tom's mother, had a need to care for some aging family members, and with typical Bennett pragmatism, went back to school to become a Registered Nurse and opened a small nursing home next door to her own home.

In 1955, denominational leaders called Ivan Stonebrook to lead a youth and educational activities in New England, and Linda and her family moved to South Landcaster, Massachusetts just in time for the girls to start the first grade with Mrs. Hurt. In winter, they had to walk to school through the snow for what seemed like miles to little legs.

Linda and Shirley's first bicycles were from their grandfather. Shirley always liked Linda's best.