

Biography: Rene (Phyllis) Averett



Motto - "Any time but the present."

You could say the name change is indicative of the confusion in my life regarding who I am, but the truth is that the school years were the only time I was "Phyllis" and only at school thanks to a first grade teacher who insisted on calling me by my first name rather than the nickname from Irene, my middle name, that everyone used. Then the teacher informed my mother I was the stupidest child she'd ever known, didn't even know my own name. To which my mother replied that I had never even heard the name, but I had to learn it for school.

My mother and step-father, brother and I lived with my mother's parents in a brick house next to Washington Park. Grandfather had a nursery business, so my formative years were spent tagging after granddad in the fields of roses he raised, helping to water the shrubs and bushes that he got in every spring and dogging him into the greenhouse. At an early age, I learned how to help a customer and how to properly answer the phone. It was a family business. I also took to roller skating and used to go to the rink at the park regularly and played baseball with my brother. I remember taking the bus alone to downtown El Paso when I was a kid to go to the movies or shop when I was about 10 years old. I feel sad sometimes when I realize how much more dangerous this is to children now.

Technically, I was in the Burleson School district, but my mother got a waiver for me to go to Hillside School where my brother went. I met quite a few of the kids who would become my high school class at Burges while I was at Hillside. Even as a child I was not little. I was overweight and tall. By 6th grade, I was 5' 9" and I topped out at 5' 11". I think the only other girl who matched my height was Dorinda Dunagan. This made for some awkward moments and a lot of teasing while I was in school. Mostly, I was a loner, but I was also a dreamer and always writing and reading.

In high school, I played the flute and sometimes piccolo in the Varsity band. There I was, the biggest person in the band playing the smallest instrument while a little guy carried a sousaphone! I remember this clearly from half-time at football games to marching in parades. Under a lot of bravado, I was very shy and still am to some extent... except when writing. I was on staff for both Stampede and Hoofbeats for my junior and senior years and had planned to go into journalism. In July 1961, my life and plans changed when my mother passed away suddenly at 39. I almost didn't return to school that year.

After graduation, I started work with the telephone company as a long distance operator. I transferred to Van Nuys, California with them and, following up on a tip from my brother to get into keypunch, transferred after a short time to the data processing center doing that. Leaping at an opening on the graveyard shift for a computer operator that no one else wanted, I moved into the developing computer industry. Best move I made. From there, I switched to a bank (what a mistake!) and moved to Las Vegas with my S.O. We were actually heading to Colorado and had stopped to visit Michael's parents when he got a job. Five years later, I moved to Reno on a transfer from Bank of Nevada and now call it home. Michael stayed in Las Vegas and is still a good friend.

Until November, 2006, when I retired to a life of leisure, working on web sites and running a fan club, I was employed by International Game Technology (IGT), a gaming manufacturer (slot and poker machines) and distributor in Reno, Nevada, as a Documentation Specialist (read "Jill-of-all-trades.") In my 20 years with the company, I worked with the on-line progressive games and was an Operations Supervisor, Technical Writer, Trainer, Web Designer and administrator of several other stray bits of technical or design work needed in the work group.

As a child, I roller-skated a lot and often came home with skinned knees and sprained ankles and wrists. When I moved to LA, I switched to ice-skating and that was where I met Michael. There's not much actual skating any more, but I still love figure skating and watch hockey now and then. A dabbler at heart, I have done some painting and other arts and crafts, worked in little theater as a techie, written four screenplays and four novels but found marketing them to be harder than writing, although with e-publishing at Amazon an option now, I would like to dust them off, rewrite them and publish, if I can just focus on it. I used to play the flute but found it hard to sing while blowing, so now I play the guitar and sing folk music. I'm also a sometimes poet and have had several poems selected for publication. A lifelong fan of fantasy and science fiction - ever since I first read the "Oz" series - I have also been involved in fandom from "Star Trek" to "Star Wars" and "Highlander" and have gone to many science fiction conventions. Having an interest in medieval history, I "played" in the SCA (Society for Creative Anachronisms) for over a decade. I was involved in the Reno Celtic Celebration for several years, designing and maintaining their web site as well as booking talent for it, and was a member of the Sierra Nevada Celtic Society until it more or less disbanded, although we still meet for afternoon tea now and then.



I have lived with my roommate and best friend Patti, who moved in with me in 1979 to save money to go to the World Science Fiction Convention in Brighton, England. She never left and we've been through good times, bad times, boyfriends, job changes and family crises together. Through her, we have been involved in the Washoe County Sheriff's Dept. K-9 program and have helped raise money to outfit and care for these four-legged officers.

As I mentioned, I am president of a fan club for an actor who has now returned to medical school, so I am running a fan club for a future doctor. How bizarre is that? Through that, I help with fundraising for his charity, which in turn benefits UNICEF and the work they are doing to prevent child mortality around the world.

I have had some amazing experiences in my life and traveled a lot, both with my job and with the fan club doing conventions. I actually started doing international travel when I was about 30 and decided I didn't want to wait until I retired to see the world. I've toured Scandinavia, Holland, Germany, France, Spain, Greece, Morocco and visited the British Isles several times. I've sailed around the Virgin Islands, been to Peru, Canada, and Baja California. It's exciting and fun, but it also makes you appreciate the United States more and the freedoms and lifestyle we have. I've also traveled to or through most of the 50 states of our country. Biggest trip would have to be Australia and New Zealand and they were all wonderful experiences.

In the past few years, I have, I hope, come to a resolution with my up and down weight problem and while not skinny, I am a pretty healthy weight and I have changed my eating habits. Part of it has been an understanding of how my body uses food and what it doesn't use and learning to make substitutions. This has led to my current project, which is a food blog with recipes for a low-carbohydrate lifestyle. I am now planning a cookbook or two, so let's see how that goes. Check it out at blog.ReneAverett.me

I believe in reincarnation and even though my heritage is mixed with a strong shot of Norse, I truly have a Celtic soul with a deep love for Ireland and Wales. When an Irishman asked if I was Irish, I told him I was mostly Norse and he smiled, "Ah, well, then you're Irish." And perhaps that's all I need to know about who I am.



From our Portland Convention in 2012 – my favorite actor (and good friend), Peter Wingfield, now my favorite medical student.