

# Joyce Luethy

*"Encouraging girls to choose science"*



Joyce Ross Tremaine Luethy, U.E., B. A. Political Science, B.Sc. Microbiology, B.Ed. Science Education  
Photo of Joyce speaking (2001) as Executive Director, Alberta Women's Science Network and Operation  
Minerva co-founder Photo courtesy of Joyce Luethy

Joyce was born in Gilroy, California. Her parents were both dentists. They had met in Boston when they were both taking post graduate courses at the Forsyth Institute. When Joyce was 6 years old her parents separated and she and her mother moved to Northern California. For grade one Joyce was enrolled in an Ursaline Convent – a most interesting experience because she wasn't a Catholic. She was the youngest student at the Convent. Her parents were divorced when Joyce was nine years old and her father died when she was eleven. At the age of nine she lived for a year with her grandparents, Janet Telfer Burgess Mollins and Vernon Gustin Mollins, in Burgessville, Ontario, and she also spent many happy summers with them.



Left photo shows Joyce with her grandfather Mollins at Horseshoe Bay, B.C., in 1959. Photo courtesy of Joyce Luethy



As an elementary grade school student Joyce rode horses on trail rides on the huge Jack London Ranch with Jill Sheppard, a school mate who was also the niece of Jack London, a well- known American writer in the early 1900s. These experiences led to her love of horses.

Photo courtesy of Joyce Luethy

The family love of learning was inherited by Joyce who attended Mills College in Oakland, California. Joyce transferred to the University of California in Berkeley and received her B. A. in Political Science in 1952 and a B.Sc. in Microbiology in 1955. Joyce had the good fortune to be accepted as an undergraduate resident at the Berkeley International House, a Rockefeller sponsored residence for foreign students and she met her Swiss husband, Ivor Charles Edward Luethy, in an International Law course in 1952 at Berkeley. After completing his Masters degree in International Economics, Ivor returned to Switzerland in 1954 to work for the Swiss National Tourist Office and he and Joyce were married in 1955 in Zurich. Joyce worked at the University of Zurich Hygiene Institute and developed an enthusiasm for medical research while assisting Dr. Anna Rivkin, a medical researcher from Geneva.

Joyce and Ivor then immigrated to Vancouver, Canada, in 1956 where Ivor worked as a ski instructor before getting an M.A. in French at the University of British Columbia (UBC). He also was an instructor for two years at the University of British Columbia. In the four years they were there, Joyce continued her studies in science and enrolled in a Biochemistry course at UBC. She also worked for the G.F. Strong Research Laboratory and the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society in Vancouver specializing in arthritis research.

Ivor and Joyce moved to Seattle in 1960 where Joyce continued to work on the immunology of arthritis and other auto immune diseases in the Division of Arthritis at the University of Washington Medical School. She also took first year courses at the University of Washington Medical School from 1962 -1963 which included a course in Histology and a graduate seminar where she presented a paper on Fetal Immunology. When Ivor received his PhD in French and German Literature and was hired by the University of Calgary in 1964 as a professor of Modern Languages, he and Joyce moved to Calgary with their two year old daughter Andrena. Their second daughter, Monica, was born in Calgary.

Since there was no Medical School in Calgary at that time, Joyce began teaching science at T.B. Riley Jr. High School in Bowness in 1967 and obtained her B.Ed. in 1970 from the University of Calgary. She was a science consultant for the Calgary Board of Education from 1972-1976 and later became an Assistant

Principal at Melville Scott Junior High School, H.D. Cartwright Junior High School and George P. Vanier Junior High School.

Joyce and Ivor have two daughters; Monica, a dentist, and Andrena, an information technology specialist for the Calgary Herald. Ivor and Joyce have three grandchildren; Anya, Maron, and Sophie, ages 17, 16 & 12.



Joyce continued her commitment to mentoring and encouraging junior high girls to choose science careers in 1988 with her involvement in a committee initiating a project for girls called Operation Minerva-Calgary.<sup>2</sup> The committee published a Conference and Job Shadowing Handbook in 2001. Joyce also published the Operation Minerva Conference Workshop Resources Handbook.

In 1993, in concert with WISEST at the University of Alberta, the Alberta Women's Science Network (AWSN) was created. Joyce has been the Executive Director of AWSN since 1993.

Joyce received a Woman of Vision award (left) in 2000 in recognition of her work with Operation Minerva and she accepted the ASTech Science and Technology Award and Trophy in 2001 on behalf of Operation Minerva for Excellence in Science and Technology and Public Awareness.

Joyce retired from the Alberta Women's Science Network at the end of 2012 but she will be organizing AWSN materials to be archived at the Athabasca University Centre for Science.

Joyce was fascinated by horses from an early age and upon retirement, began competing with her horse, Oporto Tar – formerly a race horse – at various shows including the Spruce Meadows Battle of the Breeds where she entered in the English equitation classes and represented the Performance Standardbreds.



Joyce and Oporto Tar at Spruce Meadows Photo courtesy of Joyce Luethy

Ivor and Joyce spent many years after retirement traveling in various countries including Brazil, Kenya, Russia, France, China, Japan, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand, Madagascar, Tahiti and of course Switzerland. Joyce also travelled to Oslo, Norway in 2000 to make an Operation Minerva presentation to Norwegian educators. In November 2012 they cruised to Hawaii and visited Kauai, Maui, and Oahu. For many years Maui was the place to spend Christmas and summers.

Ivor and Joyce have been tennis players for many years and continue to take lessons from a former Davis Cup professional from Romania during the winter months they spend in Palm Springs. They also play Senior Tennis at the Calgary Winter Club.<sup>1</sup>

## LOYALIST ANCESTOR INFORMATION <sup>3</sup>

Generation 1: **Joyce Ross Tremaine Luethy**

Generation 2: **Florence Norma Mollins Tremaine** (b. 1902; d. 1970)

Generation 3: **Vernon Gustin Mollins** (b. 1873; d. 1964) and Janet Telfer Burgess Mollins



Vernon (left) received his B.Sc. from the University of Toronto in 1897.

Photo courtesy of Joyce Luethy

Janet was a teacher who was educated at Woodstock Collegiate and Vernon, owned a lumber mill in Haliburton County.

Vernon was a staunch Tommy Douglas (CCF/NDP) supporter and a feminist who insisted that his daughters Norma and Margaret both have university educations. When he and Janet were married he asked that the word “obey” be deleted from the marriage vows. He was also an Agnostic and had his daughters memorize a passage from Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* before they could attend Sunday School.<sup>1</sup>

*Gagen & Fraser*  
79 KING STREET WEST TORONTO

Generation 4: **Ruth Philina Augusta Grey Mollins** (m. 22 Dec. 1869)



Photo (left) of Ruth Philina Augusta Grey Mollins

Photo courtesy of Joyce Luethy



Generation 5: **Rebecca Ann Wood Grey** (b.2 Dec. 1829; d. 28 Nov. 1890)

Generation 6: **James Wood** (b. 11 July, 1791; m. 19 Jan., 1817; d. 12 Oct. 1865)

Generation 7: **Israel Wood** (b. 28 Jan., 1749; d.12 May, 1829)

Generation 8: **Caleb Wood** (b. 29 Aug., 1723; d.1794)

Caleb Wood is Joyce Luethy's 5<sup>th</sup> great grandfather and her proven Loyalist Ancestor.

Caleb's ancestors had arrived in the American Colonies in 1635 from Yorkshire, England, and were merchants in Massachusetts until the American Revolution.

He and his wife, Mary Vail Wood, travelled to Shelburne, Nova Scotia in 1783 from Long Island. Caleb, having been a merchant had supplied British troops in Islip and consequently, he was imprisoned briefly by the Rebels. He fought with the Loyal American Regiment in Christopher Hatch's company. Caleb was 60 when he became a refugee in New Brunswick. He found the work on the land difficult for someone his age who was formerly a merchant.

After his death in 1794 and his burial in the Loyalist cemetery in Halifax, Mary moved with their son, Israel, to Upper Canada.

## **EMIGRATION WEST OF ONTARIO**

Vernon Mollins owned a ranch property in 1910 near the present town of Airdrie as well as land where the Bow River meets the Elbow River. He was the first Loyalist in the family to own land in the West but only visited Alberta in the summer. He eventually sold the land.

Joyce's mother, Norma Mollins Tremaine, and her aunt Margaret Mollins were the first Loyalists in the family to move to western United States – California in particular. Norma Tremaine was a graduate in 1922 of the University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry. Margaret Mollins was a graduate of Mills College in Oakland, California, and was a Social Studies Teacher at Sonoma High School where Joyce was a student.

Even though Vernon and Janet Mollins, Joyce's grandparents, bought a ranch close to Airdrie in 1910 for grazing cattle, they only spent the summer months there, so Joyce was the first member of her family to move and live full time in Alberta. Her route to Alberta was circuitous: California, Switzerland, Vancouver, Seattle, and finally Calgary in 1964.

As a child, Joyce had enjoyed her time with her grandparents in Ontario. She had visited Vancouver on a cruise stop-over when she was 16 years of age and was smitten by the city. She and Ivor decided that Canada was the best place for them to live and they emigrated from Switzerland to Vancouver in 1956. Ivor had always intended to pursue a higher degree in Modern Languages which he did at UBC and at the University of Washington where he received his PhD. The offer of a job for Ivor at the University of Calgary brought them to Calgary in 1964.

### **Literature cited:**

1. Luethy, Joyce, Personal Communication, 2013
2. Operation Minerva: Operation Minerva (OM) focused on encouraging Grade 8 girls to study engineering, mathematics, science, and IT. Funding was eventually secured from Science Culture Canada for the project in 1990 and OM-Calgary finally took place. In 1991 the Operation Minerva Committee published a Conference Handbook. There are now Operation Minerva events organized in Calgary, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Lethbridge.
3. UELAC certificate application for Caleb Wood, 2008