

# TWINLESS TIMES

SUMMER 2019

## HELPING TWINS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR TWIN



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I write this, I recently marked fifty-nine years without my twin. In 1960, we had just turned six. After my twin's death, our family had no choice but to carry on amid shattered lives. There was no internet. There were no support groups. As a parent, I feel such empathy for those twins who lost their twin young, and their parents who endure the struggle of child loss.

In the early 2000's, I saw a piece in the Twinless Times. It mentioned there was a Twinless Twins Yahoo group on the internet. I remember joining and reading every thread from the inception of the group. While many of the posts were not applicable to me, I was often reminded of the adage, if I only knew then what I know now. By this I mean, growing up without my twin. Some of my actions in retrospect indicated a difficulty dealing with my twin loss. How could I know?

Anyway, the information was empowering to me. In time, I went to local regional twin meetings. I also remember meeting a twin, who had attended a national conference, written about the experience in the Twinless Times, and wondered if there were any twins in the Toronto area. It turned out we worked about a five minute walk from each other in downtown Toronto. After several months, we finally met at a food court. It was amusing asking several people if they were Beverley, before finding the real Beverley.

In time, I worked on the local conference committee when Toronto was selected as the 2008 conference location. I suppose the efforts were noticed, when a couple of years later, I was asked to have my name put forward for a board position. I reluctantly accepted, as I truly felt there were superior candidates. Anyway, after a year, I was encouraged to run for the presidency, after my predecessor Renie Hallford retired.

So here it is, almost eight years later, and my time has come to an end. Serving as the President for these years, has been an amazing experience. I have made some wonderful friends, some of whom, I have imposed upon their hospitality and stayed with them (you know who you are). It has been a wonderful organization. Such a simple concept of peer to peer support! Imagine that bereaved twins can now do a simple word search and uncover TTSGI. Here they discover validation for many of their feelings, and most importantly find they are not alone.

So, as my last newsletter as your President, I thank you for allowing me to serve and for giving me the most impactful position in my life.

Ray Boyle, President



### IN THIS ISSUE...

PRESIDENT'S CORNER .....	1
THE EMPTY CHAIR.....	2
TTSGI GUIDING PRINCIPLES .....	2
TWINLESS IN OHIO .....	4
KEVIN'S CORNER .....	5
THE LAST ONE LEFT .....	6
2019 CONFERENCE.....	7
MEMORY WALK .....	13
GATHERINGS & UPDATES .....	16
AMONG THE ANGELS.....	23
A GIFT FOR MY TWIN .....	24
NY BIRTHDAY DINNER.....	24
THE GIFT I TOOK FOR GRANTED.....	25
RECOMMENDED BOOKS.....	26
WRITE FOR THE TIMES .....	27
SUBMISSION DEADLINES.....	27
REGIONAL COORDINATORS .....	28

### MISSION:

**TTSGI provides a safe and compassionate community within which twinless twins can experience healing, understanding, and the opportunity to help others cope with the loss of their twin.**





# THE EMPTY CHAIR

by Sandy Goad, twin to Jim

## WE WILL CARRY YOU

A few weeks ago, I came across a story on the internet that has been moving millions around the world. On July 31, 2018 National Public Radio stated “for a brief moment last week just off the coast of southwestern Canada, the typically grim outlook confronting orcas took on a hopeful hue. A whale watch operator, staring through binoculars, had caught sight of a healthy calf swimming beside its mother – a rare beacon for a population that had not seen a healthy infant in years. It was not to last, however. By the time experts with the Center for Whale Research arrived, just half an hour later, the calf had already died. But that’s not the end of the story.”

Angela Miller, an internationally known writer and speaker on grief and loss, continues the story: “The female orcas are taking turns helping the Mama Orca carry her dead baby across the sea... so the grieving Mama Orca can eat and rest... The whales are literally surrounding and uplifting this mama, helping to carry the weight of her grief. The female orcas are literally carrying this mama’s 400 pound baby across the ocean, with her and for her. Wow. What an incredibly powerful example of truly being with someone in pain.”

Is there anything more beautiful than this kind of love and support when someone is hurting? Grieving twins long for the kind of grief support the Mama Orca is receiving. They want someone to acknowledge and validate their pain. To companion them in their grief. Unfortunately, in our grief illiterate culture, grieving twins spend most of their time and energy defending their right to grieve.

For years, we as a group of twinless twins in TTSGI have been meeting together at our regional meetings and our national conferences to help twins carry the weight of their grief. It’s far too heavy for one person to carry alone. The twins have found someone to acknowledge and validate their pain, to companion them in their grief. Instead of rushing you to move on or get over it, twinless twins are lifting each other up and finding hope.

Come join us at our National Conference in Alabama this summer! You do not have to carry the burden alone.

## TTSGI GUIDING PRINCIPLES: ONCE A TWIN, ALWAYS A TWIN

TTSGI has four guiding principles:

1. Once A Twin, Always A Twin
2. You Are Not Alone
3. Healing by Helping
4. Journey to Healing

The Summer Edition will focus on the fourth one, which was described in the Empty Chair column and repeated below:

**JOURNEY TO HEALING** — The loss of a twin can affect many areas of a twin’s life for varying lengths of time. The ability to accept one’s loss and to move forward is valued and supported by TTSGI. Membership status offers a myriad of personal and informational resources and support in the form of small and larger meetings, newsletters, telephone and electronic communication, an official website, books and articles and other media. The organization honors each twin’s “journey to healing” and exists to help each person find her or his own time and way to accept and grow beyond loss.

## MY JOURNEY TO HEALING

By Russell Scott, twin to Ralph

Hi, my name is Russell Scott, and my identical twin brother is Ralph Scott. We were born September 29, 1953, and Ralph died in a truck wreck October 10, 2012. We were together 59 years and 11 days. Before we were born, the doctor Moma was going to suggest Moma go to another baby doctor, so she did. Dr. Pickett was our baby doctor and he was always tickled when Moma would bring us in for checkups. He said we were his favorite little red-headed twin boys. Later, Moma found out the first doctor could only hear one heart beat and thought we were conjoined twins instead of two, but we weren't. We were born at 8 months and weighed 4 pounds each. We started our life little, but we grew out of it!

We dressed alike every day our whole life. We were always in the same room at school, sometimes even with our younger brother and sister. They would combine classes at our small school.

After we got out on our own, we always lived together, worked together, and got fired together. Ralph always said "No matter how mad they are when they fired us, they wouldn't forget the two of us." We were always together; if we needed a gallon of milk, we would both go to the grocery store. The longest we were apart was 3 days in 1978.

We enjoyed riding snowmobiles together at Red River, New Mexico. We liked working at the John Deere dealer because we got to put together the new equipment. We dreamed about getting our own farm, and working together on it.

We started going to Twins Days Festival in 1987 and went 26 years in a row, and I have been another 6 years by myself. We also went to The International



Russell & Ralph  
3 years old



Russell & Ralph  
Twins Day Festival



Russell & Ralph  
International Twins Association

Twins Association convention. We always enjoyed meeting new twins every year. When we would talk to the twins it was like we had known them all of our lives. After I started going to Twinless Twins, it is still the same, except it is one twin.

At Ralph's funeral, there were about 50 twins, and they sat behind our family at the church, and the ladies of our church fixed lunch for us and twins, because they are our family. After Ralph died, twins and cloggers called me. I talked to twins every day, all day long, for about a week.

Moma always made birthday cake for us on our birthday every year. We had a great family life. We, our parents, brothers and sister all got along great. Ralph and I thought we had a perfect life, the best companionship ever and then my world and dreams were shattered when Ralph died in the truck wreck. I have found a lot of comfort in Grief Share sessions at church, and the best is at Twinless Twins. I have more great Twin Friends.

We had really great times at The Twin festivals and conventions, and also when we took up clogging. We would go to clogging workshops and competitions. We always clogged in the talent show at Twins Days Festival every year since 1990. I tried clogging at the next festival by myself and that was the hardest thing I had ever done. I still go to clogging workshops because, like twins festival, I have a lot of friends there. In 2012 at Twins Days Festival, Ralph and I got first place as most alike in our age group. Then one month later, at The International Twins Association convention, we got first place again as most alike in our age group. We thought that was really neat—two first place awards in the same year.

# TWINLESS IN OHIO

By Becca Scher, twin to Ian

Have you ever met a set of twins? Could you imagine only meeting one of them? This is my story, about being a twinless twin. My twinless twin journey began on September 15, 2016 but this journey will last a lifetime. That day will forever be ingrained in my mind.

What follows is some background information for clarification. My twin brother, Ian Alexander Scher, was as my loving, wonderful parents would say “all boy”. He had brown hair that matched milk chocolate under the right light. His smile could light up a room. His eyes, those eyes, I find mirror mine so much, yet they didn’t mirror mine enough. His eyes revealed that he was an old soul. He showed so much emotion in what I would call boring, muddy, dirt like brown eyes.

Ian had a rare genetic disorder that took him from walking to using a walker and leg braces to being wheelchair bound and 100% dependent on people. He had stopped eating earlier that week. No food at all and when he did eat it was small bits; almost crumb like bites at a time. Ian had also stopped drinking. Granted he didn’t drink much at all. He stopped drinking anything – no soda, no water; no liquid was going into his body unless it was for his medical needs.

So back to September 15, 2016, it was 5:45 am. My annoying school alarm would go off in about fifteen minutes. My mom came in my room to wake me up and she said “Boo (one of my many nicknames among my family members) it’s Ian...” She took a deep breath, almost as if she hadn’t been breathing; as if she was underwater for a long time and had just come up for air “Daddy and I were awakened by the nurse (who watched my brother so my parents could sleep) about 5 minutes ago. Ian is unresponsive. It’s time. We already made all the calls we had to.” Without a doubt, I paled. My peach skin took on the color of freshly fallen snow. I probably looked like I had just seen a ghost.

I instantly got out of bed and went into Ian’s room. In his room, I saw my twin brother. Half of myself and a person who is dearer to me than any other person would ever be. He was laying there like he was sleeping. Maybe he was or maybe he wasn’t. It’s hard to know even to this day if he was sleeping. Or had he already joined God in heaven? But there was this person I had never thought I would have to live without on his deathbed or already dead and back with the creator of life himself. At 7:00 am, Ian passed away and calls were made to my heartbroken family.

I personally felt as if my heart was in a million pieces that could never be put back together no matter how many years had passed. With this, my life as a twinless

twin began. After countless support groups for teens and children who lost a loved one, in April 2018, my mom finally found an organization called Twinless Twins Support Group International. As I attended my first regional meeting, I was a nervous mess with my heart pounding and my mind bubbling over with thoughts of “what if’s”. What if they didn’t like me? What if going to this was a mistake? But in the end, it was not a mistake even though I was the youngest person there by about 15-20 years. I had never felt more comfortable in a support group before. At the meeting it was mentioned there was a national conference in July 2018 for the organization and that I could get a scholarship to attend. Instantly my mind went to the thought of “What if there were people who were closer to my age there?” I didn’t give my parents a choice; I was going to Ohio for the conference!

In July, we packed our bags and drove to meet up with Michael, twin to Howard, another twinless twin. Being 15 I couldn’t drive so I set up camp in the back seat of the car. I had my blanket and pillow (which I always take with me on a long car ride), my headphones to listen to music, my iPad, some books, and more. My day in the car consisted of playing on my iPad, listening to music and reading. The time passed so fast it was like we were cheetahs sprinting through the savannah. Before we knew it, we were in Columbus, Ohio.

The closer we got to the hotel where we were staying the more the “what if’s” came back. My mother had found out I wasn’t going to be the youngest one at the conference (but more about that later). Once we pulled into the hotel everyone got out and we all dragged our tired bodies into the hotel to check in. After getting settled in our room my mom and I went to eat dinner at a Mexican restaurant. We had dinner with other twinless twins also attending the conference.

I noticed I was the youngest person at dinner and thought “Go figure”, but then I walked Lee Ann, twin to Jamie. Her brunette hair, cut just above her shoulders, looked like hot chocolate after I had put the milk in... Her bubbly personality and age made me a bit more comfortable. After the food got there (which took so long because we were such a big party) my mom and I went back to our hotel room to sleep and just decompress after the overwhelming evening I personally thought we had.

The next day we needed something to do before the conference started. Michael was going to be busy so hanging out with him was not an option. Lee Ann said she was planning on going to the zoo. Now that was something I would not pass up! (Being a huge animal



enthusiast and plus the zoo where I live in Baltimore is pretty bad). Once at the zoo I got a chance to animal geek out! All the animals were gorgeous! We went to see the elephants for my mom, the big cats for Lee Ann, and the red panda for me. Unfortunately, that cute little panda was not out and about that day. I had to practically be dragged out of the zoo.

Once back at the hotel, Lee Ann, my mom and I all went back to our rooms to get ready for the conference to start by attending the First Time Attendees Gathering and Dessert Reception. Being first timers, Lee Ann, my mom and I got to the reception 15 minutes early. After checking in, Lee Ann went off with some other twins she connected with. I sat at a table with my mom, I was so anxious my heart was pounding, I could barely think straight. "Deep breaths Becca. You all have something in common. You will be fine". I gave myself some reassurance in my head to calm my hammering heart and the anxiety that made it feel like I couldn't breathe. That's when Beth, twin to Mary Fae, walked in. She appeared to be a few years younger than me. "Do you want to go talk to her?" my mom asked.

Did I want to go talk to her? She seemed so overwhelmed, just like me. Beth had blond hair that reminded me of wheat under the spring or summer sun. She reminded me so much of myself in a new place. "No, I want to give it a few minutes. She looks so uncomfortable," I responded. Then, after about 5 minutes, Beth and her mom came over to our table. A woman with brown eyes and cocoa powder hair came up to us and said, "Hi, I'm Brandi and this is my daughter Beth." I then heard a soft "Hi, I'm Marci" my mom said, shaking Brandi's hand. "Becca" was all I said while shaking hands.

After a few minutes of getting dessert and talking, Beth and I decided to go sit in the lobby of the hotel and talk. Beth is a shy girl until she warms up to you, but once she warms up and starts to trust you she becomes a happy, easygoing 12-year-old. After about a half an hour, our moms came out and mentioned that we would see each other tomorrow. It was time for bed. Once we gave a hug to one another, my mom and I went up to our room.

It was official, I liked this. It was nice. There was a homey, warm, welcoming feeling at this conference. It was like the feeling you get when you smell chocolate chip cookies in your house. Or the feeling you get when you bite into that warm cookie and it practically melts in your mouth with the chocolate chips still warm.

Day 2 of the conference consisted of a few breakout sessions, a guest speaker and a time to tell your story. I told my story (here's a hint you already read it up top). As I told my story, I started crying and once I finished people clapped. I know clapping was the polite thing to do but it still confused me as to why they were clapping. We all had lost our twins, so we are all just as strong as each other. Therefore, they should be applauding themselves if they are applauding me.

In April 2019, I will be attending the Mid-Atlantic spring meeting with my mother and father as my support people. Then comes July, when the three of us will fly out to Huntsville for the 2019 conference. I can't wait to see Beth; Diana, twin to Kathleen; Phillip, twin to Aaron; Lee Ann; Rachel, twin to Rebecca; and Elliott, twin to Andrew. Hanging out with all of my twinless twin friends is home.



## KEVIN'S CORNER

By Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian - Twinless Times Correspondent

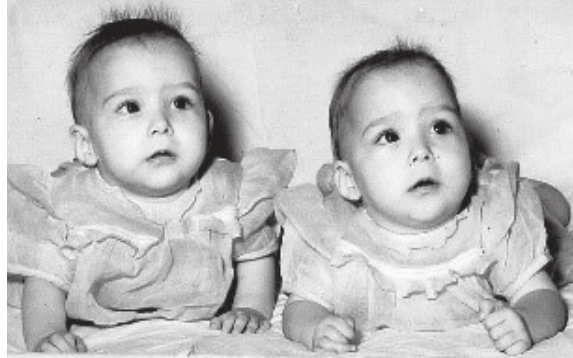
### ANGEL AWARD HONOREE

Since 2003, there have been 21 Angel Award honoree's but only 14 twin honorees. The Angel award was initially given out every year but now only every other year. I was an Honoree in 2008. No matter when someone has received this prestigious award, they keep serving our organization of TTSGI in every possible way. This past year the Angel Award was given to Janet, twin to Margaret. The award symbolizes the idea that we all have twin angels lifting us up and watching out for us. I know how shocked I was to hear my name when receiving this award because I wasn't expecting it. My family had kept it a very big secret which amazed me since nothing stays a secret, in my family, for long.

# THE LAST ONE LEFT: MY JOURNEY TO HEALING

By Dawn Barnett, twin to Daryl

Ten years ago, on July 15, 2009, is a day I will never forget and makes me sad every time it comes to mind. I was in the DFW airport waiting for my flight to Denver to go to the TTSGI conference when I received a call from my mother saying my sister had a massive stroke. I was in shock but able to get a flight out to Florida where she lived. By the time I could drive 2 hours from the Orlando airport her organs were shutting down and she had never recovered from the stroke of the night before. She passed away the night I arrived to the hospital at the age of 60; I never got to say goodbye.



You say "what does this have to do with twin loss" - my mother tried to raise the two of us as twins since we were only 9 months apart. She would dress us alike, we shared bedrooms, started first grade together, shared many things as we grew up. In retrospect, I think my mother was so grief-stricken over the loss of my twin she tried to make up for it by treating us like twins. Daryl and I were the first set of twins born at the Norman, OK municipal hospital, were identical mirror twins and in 1947 it was rare for twin births. She died 10 months later of a heart anomaly called Long QT Syndrome and after they kept me in the hospital for almost a month because they didn't know the cause of her death (Long QT wasn't discovered until 1992) I went home to another baby, my sister, Jackie. I'm sure that was confusing to me and as I got a little older at about the age of 3 my grandmother told me about Daryl. A year after Jackie was born my brother came on board and throughout our childhood Jackie and Mike were close and I kind of felt like a fifth wheel. I felt

like there was something missing and I was sad a lot but didn't understand this feeling of incredible loneliness.

Fast forward a number of years and Michael was in a car accident at the age of 17 which rendered him with brain damage for the rest of his life. He had the mentality of a teenager. It is too gruesome to go into his operations, etc. but I feel like I grieved for him all those years because we had really lost the old Mike.

As years went by, Jackie and I became closer but she was always asking me why I spent so much time with "this twin organization",

taking calls, being on the board and going to conferences meeting "strangers". On Aug 30, 2009 Michael had a massive heart attack and I was planning another funeral for the last of my siblings. I believe he died of a broken heart at the age of 59.

I had a dream on the day he died where he was perfectly normal again and I think he was trying to tell me everything would be okay. Jackie and Mike are both with my Daryl now and all three are my guardian angels. I practiced "healing by helping" the first couple of years after these losses by moderating the Facebook group and taking calls from twins. I can't tell you how that saying rang true for me because it did help me to get through the grieving. These last ten years have been tough thinking of how my siblings are with my twin and I'm left here to carry on, missing them so much. But I hope one day I will be with them again after my purpose here is done.

# 2019 TTSGI CONFERENCE – REGISTRATION

From a Twinless Twin who attended the Conference: “I expected to mostly sit and listen and to hear what to do to survive. What surprised me, though, was how the other twins genuinely wanted to hear my story. They asked about what I loved and missed so much about my twin. It was this love, in the simple gift of listening, that gave me my first feelings of hope.”

Surrounded by the comfort and support of other twinless twins, you will discover new tools and new twin friends to help you on your healing journey. You will leave feeling renewed in spirit and more informed about twin loss and grief. You will finally feel that you are not alone. Twinless twins and their supporters (spouses, significant others, family, and friends) are welcome.

We look forward to seeing you this year at our Annual Conference beginning 7 PM on July 11th and ending at 10 PM on July 13th in Huntsville, Alabama!

To join us, please follow the steps below:

## 1. Register for the Annual Conference

You must be a current paid member of TTSGI to attend the Annual Conference. Spouses, significant others, family, and friends may register as well when accompanying a paid member.

[Click here to register on-line.](#) If you would like to register for the conference by using a paper form, please contact us at [contact@twinlesstwins.org](mailto:contact@twinlesstwins.org) or 1-888-205-8962 and we will mail a registration form to you.

**Early Registration:**  
**Before March 1 – \$225 per person**

**Regular Registration:**  
**March 1 to April 30 – \$275 per person**

**Late Registration:**  
**May 1 to June 5 – \$300 per person**  
**\*(Online registration closes June 5th)**

**Walk-in/at door registration fee:**  
**\$325 per person**

**\*All attendees must register individually.**

## 2. Reserve your room in the room block at **Element Huntsville – Marriott** or calling **256-327-9000**.

\*Be sure to say you're coming for the Twinless Twins Support Group conference so you'll receive the reduced room rate of \$139/2 doubles or 1 king. Cost includes a breakfast buffet. A block of rooms has been reserved for this conference. However, the special room rate is only for a limited number of rooms so please book early.

## 3. Make your travel arrangements

We recommend you book your flights into the Huntsville International Airport (HSV). This has both international and domestic flights.

\* Most participants will arrive Thursday, July 11th in the early afternoon and depart Sunday, July 14th in the morning.

We'll see you in Huntsville!

If you have any questions or concerns, please consult your Regional Coordinator or contact us at [contact@twinlesstwins.org](mailto:contact@twinlesstwins.org).



## 2019 TTSGI CONFERENCE – SPEAKER



### DR. EILEEN M. PEARLMAN

Dr. Eileen M. Pearlman, Ph.D is a psychotherapist, educator and author. She specializes in the dynamic and challenging world of multiple births. She holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, a Master's Degree in Special Education and is a licensed Marriage, Family and Child Therapist. She has dedicated her life to understanding the twin relationship.

Dr. Pearlman, an identical (monozygotic) twin herself is married to a fraternal (dizygotic) twin, has been seen on ABC, NBC and the Discovery Health Channel. She is the Director of Twinsight which provides counseling, workshops and seminars to multiples and their families. Dr. Pearlman is the co-author of "Raising Twins: What Parents Want to Know (and What Twins want to Tell Them)".

## LIVE, SILENT AND RAFFLE AUCTIONS WE NEED YOUR HELP!

### THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!!

by Dena Stitt, twin to Dean

One of the most fun, as well as most important events at our Conference, are the Silent, Live and Raffle Auctions. This is our premiere fundraiser for the year. All of the items we auction are coming from you, our TTSGI family. By the way, the items donated are tax deductible, within the limits of the law. We have a lot of fun receiving your donations on Thursday evening; the first evening of the Conference.

Here is how you can help!

Live Auction: Airline tickets; destination get-aways (donation of condos, etc.), art pieces; sculpture pieces; items with the TTSGI logo; jewelry; and any donation you think would bring in a good amount for the organization.

Silent Auction/Raffle Auction: These are miscellaneous items of lesser value, but still highly desirable by our conference attendees. There is often a contest to see who gets what they have seen that they like, this makes it a lot of fun for those competing for items!

We are only as successful as you make us. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have, including how to ship the items safely, so please email me at [denastitt@mac.com](mailto:denastitt@mac.com). Please know, I look forward to seeing you in Huntsville in July!!



# 2019 TTSGI CONFERENCE – TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Note: This is a tentative schedule. However, the start time on Thursday and the end time on Saturday will not change. Please feel free to make transportation reservations based upon the start/end times in this schedule.

## Thursday, July 11, 2019

7:00pm	Registration Opens: first-time attendees
7:30pm – 8:00pm	First-time attendee gathering
7:30pm – 9:30pm	Registration opens for all
8:00pm – 9:30pm	Dessert Reception
9:30pm – 10:00pm	Bring all raffle and auction items

Note: Memorial Walk Banner will be available to sign at registration table

## Friday, July 12, 2019

7:30am– 8:30am	Breakfast on your own (included in room rate)
8:00am– 8:30am	Inspirations for the Day
8:30am–9:00am	Housekeeping & Announcements
9:00am– 9:30am	Remembering our twins
9:30am–10:30am	Keynote: Dr. Eileen Pearlman
10:30am– 11:00am	Break: Visit raffle and auction tables!
11:00am– 12:15pm	Self-introduction time
11:15am– 12:15pm	Breakout: TBD: Dr. Eileen Pearlman
12:15pm–2:00pm	Lunch on your own
2:00pm– 3:30pm	Twinless Twins Panelist Q&A
2:00pm – 5:30pm	Self-introduction time continued
5:30pm	Free Time: Enjoy time with new twin friends!
9:30pm SHARP!	Candle Lighting ceremony

## Saturday, July 13, 2019

7:30am – 8:30am	Breakfast on your own (included in room rate)
8:00am – 8:30am	Inspirations for the Day
8:45am – 9:30am	Annual TTSGI Business Meeting & Board Elections
9:30am – 9:45am	Break: visit the raffle & auction tables!
9:45am – 11:45am	Breakouts: Please choose one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early Loss (in-utero or shortly after birth)</li><li>• New &amp; Raw Grief: Processing the shock of it all</li><li>• Time has passed – Living with twin loss</li><li>• 10 Steps for Being More Resilient</li><li>• Healing through Laughter</li><li>• Loved Ones (family members and friends)</li></ul>
11:45am – 12:00pm	Last call of all bids and raffle tickets
11:45am – 1:00pm	Lunch on your own
12:00pm	Private drawing of raffle winners
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Keynote: Dr. Eileen Pearlman
2:00pm – 2:15pm	Pick-up you auction and raffle winnings
2:30pm SHARP!	Load Bus for Memorial Walk
3:00pm	Arrive at park
3:00pm – 4:00pm	Memorial Walk
4:00pm – 4:30pm	Balloon Ceremony
4:30pm	Load bus to return to hotel
5:00pm	Arrive at hotel
6:30pm – 8:00pm	Dinner & Awards
8:00pm – 9:30pm	Twinless Twins Annual Live Auction

# LIST OF PAST TTGSI CONFERENCE LOCATIONS

1994 First conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana

1995 Fort Wayne, Indiana

1996 Fort Wayne, Indiana

1997 Chicago, Illinois

1998 St. Louis, Missouri

1999 Memphis, Tennessee

2000 Cincinnati, Ohio

2001 Denver, Colorado

2002 Detroit, Michigan

2003 Delray Beach, Florida

2004 Chicago, Illinois

2005 San Francisco, California

2006 Delray Beach, Florida

2007 Dallas, Texas

2008 Toronto, Canada

2009 Denver, Colorado

2010 Detroit, Michigan

2011 Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

2012 Columbus, Ohio

2013 Los Angeles, California

2014 Baltimore, Maryland

2015 Nashville, Tennessee

2016 Detroit, Michigan

2017 Tucson, Arizona

2018 Dublin, Ohio

# 2019 TTSGI CONFERENCE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**WHEN IS THE 2019 CONFERENCE?** The conference begins the evening of Thursday, July 11 and ends at the closing banquet on Saturday, July 13. Plan to depart on Sunday, July 14.

**WHO MAY ATTEND THE CONFERENCE?** Current members of TTSGI and their guests (family, friends) are welcome to attend. A current member is one who has joined or renewed membership (\$50.00 annually) within the last 12 months.

**WHERE IS THE CONFERENCE?** The conference will be held in Huntsville, AL. Sleeping rooms for the conference will be at the Element Huntsville, and meeting space will be in the Westin Hotel. These hotels are connected. TTSGI has contracted a block of sleeping rooms for this event at a discounted room rate. Please make your reservation early, as we only held a limited number. The cost of the rooms in our block will be \$139.00/night (+tax), which includes breakfast. **Book your room at the group rate for Twinless Twins now.** The TTSGI room block will be held until June 14, 2019, unless all the rooms are reserved from the block before that date. **Important Reminder:** The link may allow you to book 3 days before/after the conference at our discounted rate if the hotel has availability. **However, the dates of the conference and the rooms held in our block are from July 11-14, 2019.**

**WHAT IS THE SCHEDULE FOR THE CONFERENCE?** A final 2019 Conference Schedule will be posted soon. See page 9 for a tentative schedule, to get an idea of what to expect.

**WHAT AIRPORT DO I FLY INTO?** Huntsville International Airport (HSV). This has both international and domestic flights.

**HOW DO I GET BACK AND FORTH FROM THE AIRPORT TO THE HOTEL?** There are several options for ground transportation from the Huntsville airport. Please follow the following

link to select the option that is best for you: <https://www.airportshu,les.com/huntsville.php>

**WHAT WILL THE WEATHER BE LIKE?** In July the average low is 71° and the average high is 91°. For more info visit [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com).

**WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?** The conference is a casual event. Most attendees wear comfortable clothes such as pants, t-shirt, blouse, jeans, shorts. The hotel meeting rooms will be air conditioned, so be prepared in case the hotel is cooler than you prefer. The Saturday night closing banquet is a bit dressier event. Men may wear a sports coat and ladies often wear dresses or nicer pant outfit.

**WHAT SHOULD I BRING?** Attendees often bring photographs of their twins to show to other twins they meet. Also, please consider bringing something to donate for the auctions, which help support the organization.

**I AM A FIRST-TIME ATTENDEE, WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AND WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME?** The first two items on the schedule are Check-in and the First Time Attendees Welcome Reception. At check-in, each first-time attendee will receive a name tag and a packet of information. Once checked-in, the attendee can go to the welcome reception. This event is designed to ease first-time attendees into the conference weekend. At this reception, attendees will have the opportunity to meet others attending for the first time. They will also meet Board Members and Regional Coordinators. After the 30-minute reception, first-time attendees will be invited to join the other conference attendees at a dessert reception. We recommend having dinner prior to check-in. During the conference, there will be keynote speaker sessions, breakout sessions, memorial events, and workshops. Our goal is to offer ample time for sharing. However, no one is required to speak. Between

# 2019 TTSGI CONFERENCE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

sessions, there will be scheduled free time for attendees to relax, reflect, and casually meet others. Finally, we will have a closing banquet on Saturday evening, followed by our annual charity auction. Plan to depart on Sunday.

## WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

Thursday – No dinner provided; Light dessert reception provided

Friday Breakfast – Hot breakfast is provided at the hotel and is included in your room rate

Friday Lunch – Not provided

Friday Dinner – Not provided

Saturday Breakfast – Hot breakfast is provided at the hotel and is included in your room rate

Saturday Lunch – Not provided

Saturday Dinner – Banquet meal provided

Sunday – Hot breakfast is provided at the hotel and is included in your room rate

**DOES THE HOTEL HAVE A FITNESS CENTER?** Yes, there is a complimentary 24-hour fitness room and a swimming pool (6:00am – 11:00pm).

## ARE ANY TOURIST ATTRACTIONS NEARBY?

There are many local attractions such as the Bridge Street Town Centre, Huntsville Botanical Gardens, and the U. S. Space and Rocket Center.

## WHAT IS THE COST TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE?

Conference Registration:

Early Bird Fee (Jan 2 – Feb 28):  
\$225.00/person

Regular Registration Fee (March 1 – April 30):  
\$275.00/person

Late Registration Fee (May 1 – June 5):

\$300.00/person

Walk-In/at door registration Fee:  
\$325.00/person

\*All attendees must register individually for the conference, which does not include hotel reservations.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE TO CANCEL AT THE LAST MINUTE?

Unfortunately, we are unable to refund any registration fees 30 days prior to the conference. The conference center requires our final attendee count one month prior to the conference, and they calculate our cost based on that number. The conference center is unable to make cost adjustments for last-minute cancellations. For hotel cancellation, please contact the hotel directly regarding their cancellations policy.

## WHAT IF I WANT TO ATTEND BUT AM UNABLE TO AFFORD THE CONFERENCE?

Please contact our Executive Director, Michelle Getchell at [contact@twinlesstwins.org](mailto:contact@twinlesstwins.org) to find out about possible assistance.

The Conference Committee, the Board of Directors and the Regional Coordinators are all looking forward to a great conference full of companionship, making connections, sharing our stories, a powerful keynote address, worthwhile break-out groups and most importantly seeing you all there!

If you have any further questions or concerns, please consult your Regional Coordinator or our Executive Director, Michelle Getchell at [contact@twinlesstwins.org](mailto:contact@twinlesstwins.org).



# MEMORY WALK – 2019



## “TOGETHER WE WALK”

**“I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness. We are all together, reaching out our hands for strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond what we could ever have imagined.”**

I am very pleased to announce that we will be holding our Annual Memory Walk at our 2019 International Conference in Huntsville, Alabama on **Saturday afternoon, July 13th**. I encourage everyone to join us for this incredible and moving experience.

Last year, the walk was held in Columbus, Ohio. As we joined hands on that beautiful Friday morning in July, the Memory Walk became about each twinless twin’s healing journey and as they took each step, they didn’t have to walk alone.

I am deeply grateful for the generosity and support of those who donated to our walk in past years. Your gift does make a difference. Because TTSGI is a non-profit organization, your gift helps us to continue to support twins and other multiples that have lost their twin due to death or estrangement.

I promise you that your donations to Twinless Twins will be used wisely.

Please consider giving in memory of your twin. Please ask family and friends to join you in this endeavor and add their names and details to the donation form in this newsletter. A number of twinless twins raised a considerable amount last year from family and friends (including asking via Facebook) and you can do the same – you’ll be surprised as to how generous others will be!

Please see the separate Frequently Asked Questions sheet and the Donation Form in the newsletter.

Or, if you would like to donate online, please go to our website: [twinlesstwins.org/donate](http://twinlesstwins.org/donate) and remember to indicate that your donation is for the Memory Walk.

Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie  
Chairman of the 2019 Memory Walk



# MEMORY WALK – 2019

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TTSGI MEMORY WALK

### **Q: What is the Twinless Twin's Memory Walk?**

A: The Memory Walk is an event to raise funds to provide support for twins and other multiples who have lost their twin due to death or estrangement at any age. We are a non-profit organization that depends on charitable donations from twinless twins, their friends and family and the community to fund our organization so we can continue to reach out to all twinless twins. We would like to take this opportunity to raise funds to support our mission of "healing through helping others" so that no twin ever has to walk alone. (Donations are optional and are not required to participate in the walk.)

### **Q: When and Where is the Memory Walk?**

A: The 2019 Twinless Twin Memory Walk will be held at our International Conference in Huntsville, Alabama on Saturday afternoon, July 13th at McMillian Double Helix Park.

### **Q: Do I need to be at the conference to raise money for the walk?**

A: No. You do not need to be an actual participant in our walk to take part in this fund-raiser. You can still participate by collecting donations in memory of your twin for TTSGI and another twinless twin, who will be there, will carry the name of your twin on our Memory Walk. You may also choose to walk where you live with twins, family and friends or at one of your regional gatherings. (Please be sure to email Margaret Daffin at [medaffin@aol.com](mailto:medaffin@aol.com) if you want you and your twin's name to be carried on our walk in Huntsville.) Many companies may have a matching gifts program. Matching gifts are a great way to increase the amount of money you can raise. You can check with your company's human relations department to see if they have such a program in place.

### **Q: How is the money collected?**

A. You can ask friends, family and businesses to support TTSGI with a flat donation. No donation is too great or too small - every amount helps. Use the donation sheet in the newsletter to keep track of your donations.

There will be three ways for you to get your donations to TTSGI.

1. Your donation sheet, along with your donations can be sent to Margaret Daffin, Chairman of the Memory Walk. If possible, Margaret would like to have all your donations mailed to her by July 1st. Please do not send cash. Margaret's mailing address is: Margaret Daffin, 9352 Briar Forest Drive, Houston, TX 77063. Please make checks payable to TTSGI and write Memory Walk on your envelope. If you are sending your donation sheet to Margaret, please indicate on the donation sheet if you will be attending the conference and be sure to put your twin's name along with your name on the sheet so we can walk in memory of your twin if you cannot attend.

2. Your friends, family and community have the option of donating to TTSGI online by using our website at [www.twinlesstwins.org](http://www.twinlesstwins.org). The donate button is located on the left side of our home page. By clicking on that button, they can go to a secure server to make their donation. However, only PAYPAL transactions will be accepted online. Please be sure they note that this is a Memory Walk Donation. They will receive a thank you from our organization as their tax receipt.

3. If you are attending the conference, you can bring the donated money and your donation sheet with you.

### **Q: Are donations tax deductible?**

A. Yes. All donations are tax deductible in the United States. Twinless Twins Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization making your contribution tax deductible within the limits of the law.

If you have any other questions, you can contact Margaret about the walk at [medaffin@aol.com](mailto:medaffin@aol.com).

# MEMORY WALK 2019 DONATION FORM



Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Donations in Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

	NAME OF DONOR	ADDRESS & EMAIL	DONATION
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Please make checks payable to: Twinless Twins Support Group International (TTSGI)

Conference Information:  I will be attending the Huntsville Conference  
 I will not be attending the Huntsville Conference



# GATHERINGS & UPDATES



## TTSGI SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith

The last weekend of March our region of twins met in Dallas, Texas for story sharing, Q & A on coping strategies and a birthday celebration. It was inspiring to have so many individuals with recent and long-term loss come together in the same space with the common goal of loving one another and building on what we've created, a twin family.

Attending a regional twin gathering is difficult because of cost to travel, time availability and fear. I know the importance of interacting with other twins so I've started virtual twin gatherings. It is in the beginning stages within our region of twins but it is so powerful and I'll be able to reach so many more twins. Twin connection is limitless!



## TTSGI SOUTHWEST REGION

By Eileen Jensen, twin to Elaine

Southwest Region held a Twinless Twin gathering early this spring at Gale and Lucille Erlewine's place of residence on March 30, 2019. They had moved into Morning Star at Ridgeway in Lonetree, Colorado. All were amazed at this beautiful place and thank Gale for making it possible for us to meet there.

We met in a room off from the dining area with doors to give more privacy. Once we were all present, the meeting began with a table prayer and a wonderful lunch prepared by the staff. Membership, donations, July Conference were discussed and followed with sharing our stories. We then proceeded to a question and discussion time which Elizabeth Hoyt had prepared. This was really helpful to spend time in more discussion, telling more feelings and how we live on. Jerry Walker led our group in the Candlelight Ceremony as he read "What a Candle Represents" in grief, courage, memory, light of love and light of hope. He then had the song "Who You'd Be Today" by Kenny Chesney.

Following the gathering, we were all invited to visit Gale and Lucille's apartment. A very comfortable home but realizing that it is always an adjustment to move. So glad we were able to meet here.

Standing (R-L): Jerry Walker (Jim), Scott Nassco (Steve), Dave (support), Gale Erlewine (Dale), Sally Foust (Sonia and Susan), Joe Basehart (Gerard), Jake Yurich (Zach), Phyllis Ashliman (Phil) and Larry Lindsay (Patrick)  
Seated (R-L): Caj Hunter (Levi), Elizabeth Hoyt (Elaine), Eileen Jensen (Elaine) and Becky Howarth (Syndi)



# GATHERINGS & UPDATES

## HARROGATE REGION (LONE TWIN NETWORK)

United Kingdom affiliate Janet Baird, twin to Margaret

I was feeling anxious before the February Harrogate LTN Meeting. It was going to be a difficult meeting as it was our first one since we lost Jill Deeley the LTN chairman last December. She always came to our Harrogate meetings and last October she was there as always. She sat at the far end on the left of the long table in the room at St Michael's Hospice. Jill was a fantastic support so I felt alone before the meeting began. Thankfully, two twins arrived at the same time as me and I felt a burst of twin power surge through me. We set up the meeting and waited for the other twins to arrive; eleven twins in total. I started the meeting with a tribute to Jill. Only a few knew she had cancer because Jill didn't want to upset twins who may have just lost their twin. Her death was a shock since none of us realized last October would be her last LTN meeting. One of our twins then spoke about Sarah and Caz. Two of us have been supporting Sarah in the U.K. as she lost her twin in Tasmania. Sadly, Caz passed away the weekend before we lost Jill so it was a sad time.

Twin introductions came next where twins share their story or say what's happened in their lives since the last meeting. We welcomed a new twin with recent loss and heard her story. Dates and events followed by a buffet lunch outside on the terrace. It was a beautiful day and we had stunning views over Crimple Valley. Our Harrogate meetings always seem to be blessed with lovely weather! We remembered Jill and

where she'd sat for lunch last October and how funny she was and I know she'd celebrate how we were all altogether enjoying the February sunshine. We also thought about our American twin Joan Angelis and how she was with us last October. She sent us an email which arrived in time to share at the meeting. The wonders of technology!



After lunch we split into two groups for a discussion. We discussed twin memories which included memories we had and memories we created. Afterwards we reported to the whole group and it was fascinating to hear all the different memories we had. Some twins brought photos or bracelets or lockets with their twin's photo. Others told us of items of clothing they kept or bags their twins had. Books on twin loss can also preserve our memories. Birth loss twins can create memories too, so no one was left out of the discussion. By now it was time to tidy up and leave the room as we found it.

Some twins went over to Park Inn at Hornbeam Park for tea and drinks. I think that's when we all missed Jill Deeley the most. Usually her husband Dave is there waiting for us along with other family and friends. We raised a glass to Jill, thanks to the generosity of the partner of one twin. It had been a different, unusual but very valuable meeting. Thank you to all who came and supported me.

Some twins went over to Park Inn at Hornbeam Park for tea and drinks. I think that's when we all missed Jill Deeley the most. Usually her husband Dave is there waiting for us along with other family and friends. We raised a glass to Jill, thanks to the generosity of the partner of one twin. It had been a different, unusual but very valuable meeting. Thank you to all who came and supported me.

# GATHERINGS & UPDATES



## TTSGI NORTHEAST REGION

By Carolyn Shane, twin to Cary

The Northeast (New York and New Jersey) Region has separated into two sub-groups. One for the New York area including Long Island and the second sub group for the state of New Jersey. We try and meet the same weekend, one group on a Saturday and the other group on a Sunday or we meet two consecutive weekends. Though NY and NJ are neighboring states, the traffic is so horrendous that it literally takes hours (6 to 8 hours round trip) for one to travel to the other state for a meeting. We are trying this new format to see if we can reach more twins and be more hands on. Our meetings run from 12 noon to about 5 pm, which is why adding the hours we meet plus traveling time isn't always conducive to meet in the neighboring state. Our topic of discussion is the same for each group as is the meeting format. Sandy Masnick is responsible for the New York group and Carolyn Shane, the Northeast Regional Coordinator, is responsible for the New Jersey group.

In June, we are planning a joint social pool party for both groups to come together with their families for a day of fun and socializing. We have learned that it may take a community to help raise a child but it also takes an entire family to support those of us who have lost our twin. This is our way of getting our twins together and recognizing and thanking our families for their love and support and for them to meet other supporters as well.



## NEW YORK SUBGROUP

By Sandy Masnick, twin to Judy

On Sunday April 7, 2019 we held our New York area sub-group meeting at the home of Laurie Everitt. We met at 12:00 pm for munchies, snacks, beverages and conversation. Attending were four twinless twins and two supporters. All members had been to prior meetings.

The formal meeting started with a recitation of the ground rules. Our group lit a candle to memorialize our twins. Sandy started with an opening poem/prayer called "The Gift of Memory" by Evelyn Mehlman. Sandy discussed the upcoming national Twinless Twins conference in July in Huntsville, Alabama. We then went around the group, with each member talking about their lives with their twin, how their twin died, —their uniformly profound sense of loss and the lasting impact the loss of each twin had on their lives.

After each twinless twin had spoken, we then took a short break. After this break we resumed the formal meeting. Each person who spoke held a stone which was then passed to the next person who wished to speak. The topic was, "Dealing with the upcoming holidays". The questions posed were, "How did you celebrate the holidays with your twin? Are you able to continue to celebrate the holidays now? If yes what do you do now? How is it different?" Each twinless twin had their own unique answer to these questions and expressed their unique approach to their loss and current life.

The formal meeting ended after each twin spoke at length. At the end of the meeting a group photo was taken.

# GATHERINGS & UPDATES

## NEW JERSEY SUBGROUP

By Eleanor Maddy, twin to George

The New Jersey Subgroup of Twinless Twins met in the home of Carolyn Shane, Regional Coordinator, in Maplewood, New Jersey on Saturday, April 6, 2019. Thanks to Carolyn, twin to Cary for once more hosting our group and for facilitating the meeting

Nine twins and one spouse attended. Two twins joined us for the first time. The meeting opened with Carolyn, Diane, Domenick and Sheri sharing about the 2018 National Conference in Ohio and urging anyone who can attend to go to the 2019 Conference in Alabama. Domenick, twin to Frank said that while our local gatherings are wonderful, being together with 100 other twins for a weekend is overwhelmingly powerful.

When we shared our twin stories, Joanne, Domenick's wife encouraged us to bring our partner or other support person to the gatherings since it helped her to better understand Domenick's feelings and how to help him. Advia, one of the newcomers, described the feeling of being on automatic pilot just going to work, taking care of her son and home without really living since her sister's death. Our other new attendee, Salimah, twin to Salim who lost her twin at one year old talked of always keeping busy so she didn't have to think or acknowledge the hole within us that can never be filled. However, by the end of the day, Salimah had a sense of validation knowing that we all feel the same way.

After the break, we discussed the topic: what do we do when people around us keep bringing up our twin or conversely, when they don't want to talk about our twin at all. The five identical twins in the group (Advia, twin to Adriene, Diane, twin to Denise, Domenick, twin to Frank, Sheri, twin to Shelley and Susan, twin to Judy) also brought up a related issue that arises when they are mistaken for their twin. Much of our discussion provided specific and positive suggestions on how to deal with these situations as well as getting through milestones such as birthdays and holidays. Ann, twin to John also told us the heart-breaking story of the death of one of her twin dogs and how the surviving



dog's grief has mimicked her own loss. In spite of our sadness, we also had several good laughs before the meeting closed.

As a relative newcomer - it being 20 months since my twin, George, passed - I am still amazed at the outpouring of genuine love and caring that is evident throughout the meeting. Regardless of the circumstances of our losses, we understand one another as no one else who is not a twin can. In sharing our stories and experiences in the language of the heart, we are teaching one another how to live again one day at a time.

Front row (L to R) Eleanor, Domenick, Susan and Ann  
Back row (L to R) Diane, Sheri, Advia, Carolyn and Salimah

## UPCOMING EVENTS

UPCOMING REGIONAL GATHERINGS ARE LISTED ON OUR WEBSITE AT  
[HTTP://WWW.TWINLESSTWINS.ORG/EVENTS/](http://www.twinlesstwins.org/events/)

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE REGULARLY AS EVENTS ARE HELD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.



# GATHERINGS & UPDATES



## TTSGI NEW ENGLAND REGION

By Garry Rayno, twin to Terry

The temperature felt a little more like late winter, than early spring, as the wind howled and surfers rode the 10 to 12 foot waves along Short Sands when the TTSGI New England region gathered for its spring meeting April 27, 2019.

Eleven twins attended the gathering along with seven support people. Four twins attended their first meeting, two with very recent losses and two who lost their twins several years ago.

After short introductions everyone was invited, especially the new members, to express their concerns and what they felt they need at this point in their journeys through grief.

Those who lost their twins some time ago shared how they dealt with the loss and some of their pitfalls and successes which offered comfort for those just beginning the journey.

The discussion touched on many things such as twin guilt, how we believe our twins feel about us today and where we imagine our twins are and how they continue to communicate with us. Stories were shared both sad and humorous, and there were some good laughs as well as many tears.

As always, the new twins found being with other twinless twins reassuring and comforting. Knowing others have experienced the unique loss of losing a twin and survived the pain and grief gave them hope.

The meeting was facilitated by Larry Wilson with help from regional coordinator Garry Rayno.

Some twins and their supporters stayed overnight and met in the evening for dinner and continued conversation.

This year's meeting was a little earlier than usual so many of the stories and restaurants in York Beach had yet to open which meant more opportunities for conversation and sharing what it means to be a twin without a twin.

Back row (L to R) Craig Vivian, Barbara Lawson, Michelle Thomas-Monteiro, Kate Gilbert, Caryl Edwards and Garry Rayno  
Front row (L to R) Beverly Williams, Brooke Pebbles, Ellen Thompson, Gerri Eastment and Lawrence Wilson.



## TTSGI NORTH CENTRAL REGION

By Dee Martin, twin to JoAnn

We begin as strangers and we end as friends. Twinless twins, have you ever attended a regional twinless twins support group gathering? If you haven't done so yet – perhaps you are nervous to attend, not sure of what to expect, perhaps you feel you won't be welcomed – please put your fear aside and know that you are welcome and you are not alone in your journey. After our gathering, I am more convinced than ever of the value of this organization and our local support group gatherings. I strongly encourage you to attend. I hosted an event today in Wisconsin and everyone was so grateful they had attended, even though they were nervous to come. These meetings are so warm and friendly and people leave with validation of their experiences and hope. If you know anyone who has lost his or her twin, please help them get connected to a regional support group.

For our North Central regional gathering, seven twinless twins or parents of twinless twins met in Fitchburg, Wisconsin to support each other. It was an afternoon of stories, tears, laughter, camaraderie, friendship and fellowship. Thank you to Jonathan Bock, Patrick Knoch, Kelli Otteson, Karen Anderson, Adele Dee Martin, Bryce Hogan and Peggy Weber for sharing a part of yourself with each of us.

L to R: Jonathan Bock, Patrick Knoch, Kelli Otteson, Karen Anderson, Adele Dee Martin, Bryce Hogan and Peggy Weber



# GATHERINGS & UPDATES

## MID-ATLANTIC REGION

By Michael Karbeling, twin to Howard

The Mid-Atlantic Region of Twinless Twins held our Spring Regional Meeting on Saturday, April 6, 2019 in Frederick, MD at the Hampton Inn.

This was our 34th Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting since 2002. I have attended 25 regional meetings since 2006 and even though it was thirteen years ago, it seems like just yesterday. My journey started in 2006, when I joined TTSGI. It has been one of the hardest journeys I have ever undertaken. Now I can say that it probably was one of the best decisions I have made in my life.

We gathered together to share our unique journey through loss and grief with other twins. We spent Saturday together and renewed friendships, formed new friendships, and shared our stories of grief, love and HOPE.

Attending the meeting were 17 twins including two new twins. We also had five people who were there to support some of the 17 twins. We came from West Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Four of the twins in attendance were at the first Regional meeting held back in 2002 in Frederick, MD!

Some twins arrived early on Friday night and shared dinner together. Saturday morning, we met at the Hampton Inn for our group meeting. During our time together, we laughed, we cried, we hugged. Most importantly we shared. After our group sharing time and photo, we held a special candle-lighting. Each twin was given a slip of paper and asked to write one

blessing their twin had given them. Then each twin lit a candle in honor and in memory of their beloved twin. Their blessings were read one by one and then they listened to Alan Pederson's song "A Little Farther Down the Road". Each twin was given their candle to take home with them along with a "special stone" that each had received in our circle to remind them that they never walk alone.



As a new twin said, "Seeing and hearing the pain that others are going through helps me because I did not feel so alone"; another new twin said, "Yesterday was

a milestone for me. I cannot stop thinking about all of the wonderful and courageous people I met. I found the courage to face my fears, to reach out to people for help and to make peace with losing my twin. I must move forward; my twin would want it that way. I look forward to meeting everyone again."



Lunch was at the Macaroni Grill in Frederick. It was a time of eating great food, sharing memories and saying our goodbyes.

There are two twins I want to recognize for supporting me with this meeting. Thank you to Sandy Goad for her invaluable assistance planning and organizing this meeting. Thank you also to Ruth Selig for doing a great job facilitating our group sharing.

Truly we are following the words of our founder, Dr. Brandt, who said we are "healing by helping others".

# GATHERINGS & UPDATES

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING LONE TWIN NETWORK

Vice Chairman Jill Ingham, twin to Julie Clare

As soon as I arrived at the Priory Rooms aka Quaker Meeting House in central Birmingham along with Pete Naude and Joyce Wilkinson from Manchester, I was struck by how familiar and homely it felt. This was helped by having the run of the building, its light and airy atmosphere, and beautiful weather.



It was lovely to welcome familiar faces from the Midlands, the north, the south, and from as far as Dublin and the USA. The lady from Dublin had got up at 4am to get her flight, and it was great to see the wonderful Marg Pangbourne from New Hampshire again. We also had three new members for us to welcome. We were sorry not to see our founder Joan Woodward at the meeting, no doubt she too was sorry to miss it. I'm very much looking forward to reading her new book on attachment theory when it comes out.

We began with a minute's silence for Jill Deeley. Given the extraneous circumstances of the loss of our lovely Chair Jill, David Elvy and I had rehearsed our opening welcome beforehand, as we didn't want any awkwardness to be felt by existing or new members. The Acting Committee stood at the front of the room in a bid to present the strong and unified committee that Jill would have wished for, to continue her good work. David opened with a warm welcome and explained that we were the Acting Committee following the sad death of our previous Chair Jill. He described the long service Jill gave to the Network and provided a recap of her valuable contribution. There followed a one minute's silence in her memory. David continued by explaining some of the history of the Network and how it was founded by Joan.

I then introduced the members of the acting committee and their various roles. I also said that we welcome any interested member keen to join the committee. I explained that Nancy Power and I will be leading an effort to find some younger members via

Facebook and the Newsletter who might be interested in shadowing people on the committee, as we are a maturing leadership team! I outlined the various regional groups and mentioned that we are looking for someone to spearhead a Southwest group. We also highlighted the tablecloth currently in the care of Lynne Hunt and the blue badges available from

Tony Patterson. We then broke into the customary birth, childhood and adult loss groups for the rest of the morning. These were declared to be very helpful and full of insights. A lovely lunch followed with people enjoying further conversations. In the afternoon Mike presented the accounts and he also gave out our special 30th Anniversary blue pens to all members. These were very well received. We also thanked Mike for his sterling work in ensuring a smooth transition of LTN records, information and literature, and Joyce kindly proposed a vote of thanks to the whole committee.



We held a rather short AGM as the whole acting committee was voted in as the new committee. Further group discussions took place in a less formal style, with members making sure they visited the tables showing news articles, books and displays. Members were also able to sign the commemorative book for Jill.

We then cut into the 30th Anniversary cake and enjoyed a cup of tea. David made sure all members are aware of the Annual Picnic at the National Memorial Arboretum on the 15th of June, which is the next meeting. There will be meetings in the Northwest, the Northeast and London in the autumn.

We returned with smiles on our faces and very satisfied at how the meeting had gone. I hope everyone else felt the same. We are grateful to Maria, Mike and David for organizing the meeting and we're formulating some good ideas to take forward, to ensure that the Network continues to go from strength to strength.

# AMONG THE ANGELS

By Carolyn Shane, twin to Cary

Steve Bergman, long-time Member of TTSGI is now among the Angels

This has to be one of the hardest articles I have ever written. How does one describe a good dear friend in a few paragraphs? How does one find the words to describe such heartfelt feelings of caring and friendship and then describe those feelings when a sad loss occurs?

Steve was one tall solid figure of a man. I barely reached his elbow since I am only 5 ft. tall. His heart was as huge as he was. His mind was always deep in thought, caring for those around him, and always saying what needed to be said in a soft-spoken voice that everyone heard and took to heart.

Steve and his twin, until his twin's death, co-owned an HVAC supply company called TWINCO; a very lucrative business in New York. Though he traveled quite a bit between business obligations and vacations; he never missed a meeting when he was home.

When the Northeast (NY/NJ) Region re-booted after our Regional Coordinator Anne Bald passed away, Steve was at that first meeting over 12 years ago. He helped plan the future of our group, which is the same basic format we still use today. When at meetings, he never was the first to speak about himself or the first to share when we discussed a topic of common interest for the group. He sat and listened to everyone quite intently and then when he knew it was his time to be heard, he did so in a quiet voice barely audible; but everyone heard him since he always seemed to say the right thing at the right time for the members to hear and take to heart his 'pearls of wisdom.'

He was always there for me and every member who needed special attention. He made calls to male members who needed to bond with a fellow male twin. When we broke into 2 groups, Steve agreed to chair the New York sub group, even though he was not feeling well at that time. He never said, "No" when he could say, "Yes".



Steve's daughter, Liza called me when Steve was not doing well to inform me as well as the region about his health issues. I sent a follow-up email to the region informing them of Steve's unfortunate news. So many members called me and sent me emails and text messages concerning Steve and for me to forward their words of support and love to him. Members traveled to Long Island to visit him and made long distance calls to reach out to him directly. Sadly, Steve lost his battle to cancer just a short while ago. He will be missed by his region, by the members of our organization who knew him from the conferences and by those of us who had the opportunity to call him our dear beloved friend.

I asked Liza if she would like to say anything about her Dad in reference to TT's. Here are her words, "My dad rarely talked about Twinless Twins because he rarely talked about anything. However, just as my dad is with everything - his actions always spoke louder than his words. My dad's commitment to Twinless twins was visible in his dedication to never missing a meeting, how he spoke about the people he met, the get togethers he would go on, the books written by people in the organization... he followed through always. This is why I had donations go there. TT's helped him so much get through his overwhelming loss of his beloved brother. I will always be grateful that you all were there for him in ways none of us ever could be."

May Steve's memory be for a blessing.



# A GIFT FOR MY TWIN

By Jo Ann Miller, twin to Jessica Rehn

Growing up our hero was Cal Ripken Jr. Jess and I taught ourselves how to play baseball by watching Cal and his brother Billy play on TV. We admired their skills, but more importantly their sibling bond. We played shortstop and second base just like them. We watched baseball games, listened on the radio, read every newspaper article Granny gave us and checked out every single Cal Ripken book at the library. Jess and I had the reputation for being Cal's biggest fans. Baseball became our escape as kids and helped us overcome so many obstacles. Jess and I shared the same birthday as Cal which made August 24th extra special. When Cal Ripken Jr retired after our senior year of high school, we both cried. 25 years ago Granny gave us amazing tickets to see the Orioles for our birthday. After the game Jess and I rushed to the top of the Orioles dugout and asked Cal to sign our ball. Cal did a double take when he saw us and noticed we were identical twins. He went into the dugout and we thought we missed our chance. A moment later Cal came back out with his game bat and put it directly in our hands. We lost our minds with excitement. While Jess was in the hospital, she kept saying how badly she wanted to get the bat signed by Cal. Yesterday in Jess' honor we got to make that dream come true.



I had rehearsed what I was going to say to Cal when I got to see him. I brought a letter to Cal thanking him for all the ways he was a hero to us and for calling Jess in the hospital the day before she went to be with the Lord. Included with the letter was a picture of Jess and me at an Orioles game. When I got to Cal, I looked him in the eyes and thanked him for calling Jess while she was in the hospital and then my voice cracked, and I began to weep. I tried desperately to fight back the tears, but it was like a volcanic reaction. Matt had to finish what I was going to say. I kept apologizing to Cal and even said "I know there is no crying in baseball." He reached out his hand to me and held my hand like a father comforting a daughter. He told me that he cried on the field a few times himself. He also said he recognized the bat. He wrote a beautiful message on it and handed me the bat. A little later Cal got up for pictures. When it was my turn, he walked right up to me and asked if he could give me a hug. He gave me such a warm and loving hug my heart nearly burst. In the letter I gave Cal I told him that I missed Jess terribly and could not wait to see her again in heaven one day. I also said that I hope Jess and I will get to play catch with Cal on the real "Field of Dreams" in heaven.

# NEW YORK TWIN BIRTHDAY DINNER

By Margaret Daffin, Twin to Josie

On a recent short vacation trip to NYC, I met up with a few of the Northeast Region (NY and NJ) Twinless Twins. Carolyn Shane had gathered three additional twins to join me on Friday evening at a seafood restaurant in Manhattan, to celebrate my birthday the following day.

Susan Riddle, Laurie Everitt, Domenick Abbate and Carolyn Shane, and myself, enjoyed a delicious meal and great company together, talking about our twins and why I love to visit NYC.

Thank you Susan, Laurie, Carolyn and Domenick for making the trip into the city. It was great seeing you all again. Hope to see you in Huntsville in July.





# THE GIFT I TOOK FOR GRANTED

By Betsy Miller, twin to Meg

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Psalm 23: 4*

I am an identical twin. We are not just identical twins; we are mirror twins. Mirror twins are the most identical type of twins. Everything is identical, just opposite, even down to our retinas. Having just watched the movie on Ben Carver, the famous pediatric brain surgeon, I was reminded of how many things can go wrong with identical twins. It had to be God who saw to it we divided completely. Twins learn about each other from the moment they are conceived. We are born into this world with a best friend and because I did not know life any other way, I took this friendship for granted.

We came into the world less than a year after our parents were married. What a wedding present we were! Young married life is hard enough without the constant attention that a set of twins need, especially born a month early. The stories of our first year were full of sleepless nights but somehow my parents made it through. They named us Mary Elizabeth and Mary Margaret, but called us Betsy and Meg from the moment they brought us home. We were born in Virginia, but quickly moved to Houston.

In the third grade, Meg and I were blessed to attend a private school in Houston. It was great to attend a new place with my best friend and not be alone like everyone else. Not only did we get a good education, but we went to chapel first period every day. What a great gift to start our day with prayer. We were in the same class allowing us to do our homework together. In the fifth grade, our parents divorced. This is when God really did take care of us making sure we had what was needed. Despite little money, dinner was always on the table and clothes always available. We didn't worry; God was with us!

It was kind of strange how Meg and I would wear the same clothes despite being in separate rooms. We even did this when we lived apart as adults. As we grew up, we were able to share our beliefs together. We talked of science and how the world around reflected God's most wondrous hand. We mused on the meaning of the Trinity as we studied together, planned



our futures, and prayed together. Oh, I do not want to lead you astray, we could have hum dingers of fights, too. After high school we joined the same college sorority and soon finished college together. Meg was always there with an encouraging word; a Bible verse to handle any problem. We could finish each other's sentences, literally. She helped me through my divorce, was

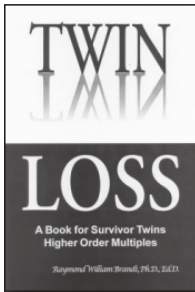
my maid of honor at both my weddings and the second person I told I was expecting my daughter. She was even my daughter's godmother.

A twin is an amazing safety net. I had one person who knew everything about me, and loved and accepted me the way I was, as I did her. We didn't care what the world did to us when we had each other. Just think, having someone to share the embarrassment of having "Happy Birthday" sung to you at a restaurant. There was never an "I" it was always we.

To my horror, on May 8, 2002, the unthinkable happened. God called Meg home. I never seemed to question where she had gone. There were no goodbyes. Only I felt as if my soul had been ripped in half. The night we told Natalia, our daughter who was only 7 at the time, her Aunt Meg was gone; she looked at me and asked, "Mommy, are you going to heaven, too?" Is this not the common thought of all who deal with twins; is it not our own thought as twins? We come into this world together, are we not supposed to leave this world together? We may have entered the world together, but that does not mean that God takes us together. But the question comes how to live without your twin.

I was definitely in "the valley of the shadow of death." There wasn't any help, no meals brought by friends, and no phone calls. There was only God, Scott, Natalia, and Natalia's schedule. (First graders really do need a lot.) God was my rod and my staff. He helped me keep a routine which saved me. The hope that we will meet again keeps me going on days that are hard. Step by step he has helped me move on with life learning to live with and accept the gaping hole in my heart. Some days I still struggle without my safety net. There is not a day that goes by in which I do not think of Meg, and I do not think there ever will be. But I have made it to the other side of the valley of the shadow of death with God's help.

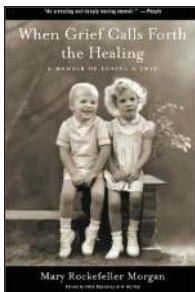
# RECOMMENDED TWIN BOOKS



## “TWIN LOSS”

By Raymond W. Brandt, PhD

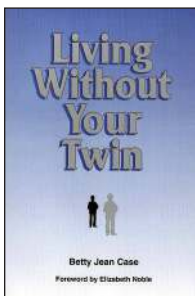
Dr. Brandt was the founder of Twinless Twins Support Group International and was considered by many an authority on twin loss. The 400-page book discusses all aspects of the loss and also speaks to the family members on how to help the survivor twin.



## “WHEN GRIEF CALLS FORTH THE HEALING”

By Mary Rockefeller Morgan

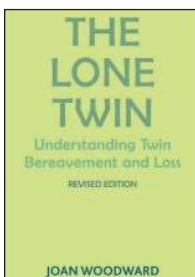
In this startlingly frank and moving memoir, Mary R. Morgan struggles to claim an individual identity, enabling her to face her twin brother Michael's death and the huge loss it engendered. With remarkable candor, she shares her spiritually evocative healing journey, which moves her forward into a life of new beginnings and meaning, especially in her work with others who have lost a twin.



## “LIVING WITHOUT YOUR TWIN”

By Betty Jean Case

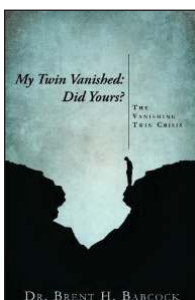
TTSGI receives a donation each time one of author Betty Jean Case's books is purchased through us. Betty was a twin, who grew up with twin siblings and had a set of twin grandsons. This 150-page book discusses how to keep living without your twin and best friend by your side. It also explores the uniqueness of twin loss.



## “THE LONE TWIN: A STUDY IN BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS”

By Joan Woodward

The reader is taken through the closeness of being a twin, including its negative aspects and twins' need to be different to one another. But what happens when twins are separated, especially by death? The text examines death and bereavement of twins, including the parental attitudes to the surviving twin, the surviving twin's guilt, coping, bereavement in childhood and adulthood. The book also covers the psychological effects in later life for children who lost their twin at birth. Throughout, the book is illustrated by the words of lone twins themselves. This book is available through the TTSGI website or through the distributor, International Specialized Book Services. <http://www.isbs.com/partnumber.asp?pnid=307963>



## “MY TWIN VANISHED DID YOURS?”

by Dr. Brent Babcock

A survivor himself of a vanished twin, Dr. Brent H. Babcock is sharing with the public for the first time his knowledge concerning the vanishing twin.



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## WRITE FOR THE TWINLESS TIMES NEWSLETTER

All members are invited to submit articles for publication in the Twinless Times. The email subject should be “Twinless Times Submission.”

Submit to: [twinlesstimes@yahoo.com](mailto:twinlesstimes@yahoo.com)

Stories about you and your twin are always welcome and rewarding to see in print. Our founder, Dr. Brandt, encouraged the act of writing as a means to healing.

We value articles about twin meetings, conferences, your healing journey, twin book reviews, poems, or words of wisdom. Photos can be emailed with your article in JPEG format. Please be sure to identify each person in your photos.

All articles should be sent as a Word document and we ask that you keep any article to 500 words or one page.

## TWINLESS TIMES BY MAIL

We hope you are enjoying the full color electronic copy of the Twinless Times. However, if you are still interested in receiving the Twinless Times as a mailed hard copy, please send your name and address to Michelle Getchell at [contact@twinlesstwins.org](mailto:contact@twinlesstwins.org) and she will mail it to you. Please note that the holiday issue will still be mailed to everyone.

## NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

**Spring Issue: February 10th**

**Summer Issue: May 12th**

**Fall Issue: August 11th**

**Winter Issue: October 20th**

Submissions should be emailed to:  
[twinlesstimes@yahoo.com](mailto:twinlesstimes@yahoo.com)

Twinless Times Co-Editors:  
Margaret Gron & Emily Heekin

# LIST OF REGIONAL COORDINATORS – 2019

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