

# TWINLESS TIMES

FALL 2020

HELPING TWINS WHO  
HAVE LOST THEIR TWIN



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Twins,

As I write this, I am reflecting on our first ever virtual conference held in place of our Denver conference this year. I know I was not alone in wishing that we could actually be in Denver seeing each other in person and getting twin hugs. This year, we need each other more than ever, because we are living in a time of great uncertainty and anxiety and many of us are isolated from our loved ones outside of our households. Since we couldn't be in Denver in person due to COVID-19, I was so glad that we were able to use technology to be together safely.

I really enjoyed the Virtual Memory Walk in the morning and seeing so many familiar and new faces, some walking outside, one walking inside on a treadmill (clever!), one riding their bike and some just standing or sitting, but all of us bonding due to our shared twin bond. I want to thank the co-chairs of the Memory Walk fundraiser, Margaret Daffin and Judith Olson. Through their fundraising efforts and yours, we raised a total of \$14,000. These funds support our organization so that we can continue to exist to help twinless twins, as well as provide scholarships for twins in need for membership dues and conference registration fees. Next, Dr. Joan Friedman provided a thought-provoking keynote address on twin loss. As a reminder, the keynote was taped and is included in the member's corner of the TTSGI website. Lastly, we had breakout groups to provide a safe space for twins to share and listen to one another as part of our journey to healing. TTSGI Board members and Regional Coordinators facilitated these breakout groups, and I would like to thank them for this. For many of us, this was the first time hosting a virtual breakout session!

All in all, the day went smoothly and was a great way to connect safely. I really appreciate the work of the conference

committee for putting together this event! Conference committee members included Margaret Gron, Venice Lacy, Alyssa Pratt, Judith Olson, Terry Lewis-Foor, Wilmette Combs, and Michelle Getchell. Also, I want to thank our Executive Director, Michelle Getchell and her husband Rick, who facilitated the Zoom logistics for the virtual conference. I look forward to our next in person conference in Denver 2021, but in the mean time we do plan to create more opportunities to gather virtually. I want to thank our Regional Coordinators, who are hosting virtual regional gatherings. Also, we are experimenting with virtual events beyond regions including ones geared to early loss twins.

As I discussed in our last newsletter, the cancellation of the conference impacted the board's ability to have our in-person summer board meetings, which normally occur before and during the conference. This impacted our ability to effectively bring on and orientate new board members. Given this situation, the board voted to approve a one-time amendment to our bylaws to extend all current board terms by one year. This is truly an unprecedented situation, but this action was in the best interest of organizational stability.

Lastly, I will close with some personal news. I recently got engaged, and I am so very happy to find the love of my life. I know my twin Eve would have adored Martin because of how loving and committed to me he is. Many of you saw the news on Facebook and wished me and my fiancé well. I wanted to thank you for your enthusiasm and support, and I especially loved the post which asked me if Martin realized that I needed to invite my entire twin family to the wedding! I don't know what will happen with the wedding just yet due to COVID, but if we live stream it, I will make sure anyone who is interested is invited! You are my twin family, and I am so grateful for you.

Lea Eriksen, President



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# THE EMPTY CHAIR

by Sandy Goad, twin to Jim

## SHARING TWINKIES

At the Twinless Twins National Conference in 2017, I shared this story below with your Regional Coordinators at their yearly meeting. The author is unknown.

"A little boy wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and a six-pack of root beer and he started his journey. When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old man. He was sitting in the park just staring at some pigeons. The boy sat down next to him and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old man looked hungry, so he offered him a Twinkie. He gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. His smile was so pleasant that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered him a root beer. Again, he smiled at him.

The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word. As it grew dark, the boy realized how tired he was and he got up to leave, but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old man, and gave him a hug. The old man gave him his biggest smile ever.

When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I had lunch with

God." But before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? He's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old man, also radiant with joy, returned to his home. His son was stunned by the look of peace on his face and he asked, "Dad, what did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I ate Twinkies in the park with God." However, before his son responded, he added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected."

So why did I share this story with your Regional Coordinators at our meeting? Because I wanted them to know how valuable they are to our TT organization. Too often we underestimate the power of a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, or the smallest act of caring. That describes your Regional Coordinators. They reach out to twins in their regions and help them feel supported and cared for through regional meetings, emails, texts, and phone calls. They make themselves available.

Our regional support group meetings didn't stop meeting during this pandemic. Zoom meetings are taking the place of most in-person gatherings. Check with your RC to see when your next meeting is scheduled. You can find their contact information listed on the back page of this newsletter... and don't forget to thank your Regional Coordinator for being there to let you know you are not alone. Maybe down the road when we can all meet back in person, you can share a Twinkie together!

## 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.**

# TTSGI GUIDING PRINCIPLES: JOURNEY TO HEALING

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

**Once A Twin, Always A Twin** – The Twin or multiple birth experience, whether it is experience, whether it is experienced exclusively in utero or continued for any period of time followed birth, is a profoundly important human experience, differing in major respects from all other forms of human interaction. Twin loss can be experienced in deep and unique ways. This special “twinship” experience of loss is recognized, valued, and honored by TTSGI.

The Fall Edition will focus on the first one, which is described in the article below by Sonia Garcia, twin to Sophia

## ONCE A TWIN, ALWAYS A TWIN

By Sonia Garcia, twin to Sophia

August 3rd is National Twins Day. Funny how when my twin Sophia was here, I never knew it. I thought about her a lot yesterday as I drove pass the San Jacinto River here in my hometown of Houston, Texas. There were two bridges together, separate but side by side and it made me think of how our lives were in sync and meant for one road, or so we thought. It didn't turn out that way and the destinations were not the same, much less in the same time frame. Two bridges – identical – one road – yet a different destiny for each. I try to keep that thought close, as much as I can, while I walk the rest of this road without her...

I make a promise to her every year that I will not dwell on the what if's and the why's but that I will keep on living the way I know she would want me to. I miss you my funny, silly sidekick. My one and only twin. You are forever with me!



## REGIONAL ZOOM GATHERINGS:

For upcoming Regional Zoom Gatherings please check our website <http://www.twinlesstwins.org/events/> and your Regional Coordinator.

# ONCE A TWIN, ALWAYS A TWIN

By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith



This month, I am usually packing up my kids and making this epic trip to Twinsburg, Ohio to attend Twins Days Festival. Of course, like most, the only thing I did do was stay home. On August 8, 2020 Twins Days Festival found their own unique way to let us twins be apart yet 2gether as we virtually all played Twingo. I don't play bingo, but I did find the concept of

"Twingo" catchy and decided to give it a try. Virtually, I got to hang out with a whole lot of twins and play bingo. Although I didn't win, I did laugh and have fun with my twin community which was a wonderful experience and a moment well lived. Twin connections and experiences reinforce the principle that once a twin, always a twin. I hope next year the health of our country will allow me to make that epic trip back to Twinsburg but I must admit this year's virtual event was absolutely wonderful.



## KEVIN'S CORNER

By Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian - Twinless Times Correspondent

### 2020 THE COVID YEAR, A TIME TO STOP, REMEMBER AND REFLECT

This year will pass with no new great memories but a good time to stop and reflect on the past ones. Do you remember your first conference and where it was held? Do you remember how you found out about Twinless Twins? Do you know how many conferences you have attended? Do you remember the first person you met at the first conference? I can answer all of these

It is also a time when I will think of all the different new memories I will not be making:

No trip to Richmond, VA for SAR

No trip to Twinsburg for Twins Day

Not hearing about the Denver conference

No September trip to Louisville and popping up to see Jon, twin to Justin and his wife Brittani

But like after every storm there is a rainbow, learning Zoom and now being able to see and chat with old and new friends, is a blessing.

We need to keep all of these in our hearts so when this is over, we can look back with just the briefest of sad reflection, but a smile for the future.

# 2021 TTSGI CONFERENCE



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DR. JOAN FRIEDMAN



**Dr. Joan A. Friedman** is a psychoanalytically trained psychotherapist who has devoted many years of her professional career to educating twins and their families about twins' emotional needs. Having worked through her own twinship challenges and parented her fraternal twin sons, she is a definitive expert on twin development.

She is the author of *Emotionally Healthy Twins: A New Philosophy for Parenting Two Unique Children and The Same but Different: How Twins Can Live, Love, and Learn to Be Individuals*. Her latest book, *Twins in Session: Case Histories in Treating Twinship Issues*, was published in June 2018. It is a book written for psychotherapists and educators who are seeking specialized insight into twin psychology. She has spoken to and consulted with culturally diverse groups of twins around the world. Dr. Friedman's work focuses on issues that adult twins confront as they adjust to life as singletons after having been raised as twins.

## DIARY OF A LONE TWIN: A MEMOIR

By David Loftus, Lone Twin Network  
Submitted by Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie

This was published in September 2019 and is about the loss of a twin brother. In 1987, after recovering from a brain tumor, David's twin, John, contracted meningitis and he found himself back in the hospital for treatment. They were opening their 24th birthday presents when a fatally-miscalculated routine injection forced John into a coma. He died within two weeks. David spent an hour every day for a year remembering John and recording his story by hand. The book includes childhood vignettes and the loneliness and sadness he felt following John's death.

David is a professional photographer, and he used his skills to include many pictures of John in the book. He explores the bond between identical twins. He also talks about the bereavement experienced by a lone twin. Early on in the book he describes a train journey to Bodmin Parkway station. This station is deep in the heart of Cornwall, reached by express train from London via Dawlish, where the train meets the sea in a beautiful and spectacular setting. Waves often crash over the trains. John loved trains, David recalls, adding that John had a beautiful Hornby train set in his youth. David remembers that the engine was very much like the Flying Scotsman.

The book is laid out in diary format with many photographs. It is available also as an e-book and audio book. Published by Bluebird Books for Life ([www.panmacmillan.com](http://www.panmacmillan.com)) Hardback £16.99 ISBN 978-1-5290-1128-9

# 2020 TTSGI VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



# 2020 TTSGI VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



# IN RECOGNITION OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS SINCE SPRING 2020

**Phyllis Ashliman** – monthly pledge in memory of her twin, Phil

**Dawn Barnett** – in honor of John Rohrer

**Sarah Beebe** – in honor of Heidi Doyle, twin to Sarah Beebe

**Mary L. Blassingame**

**Lynn Boston** – in memory of Lisa. I still miss you every day, 19 years tomorrow

**Janine Caleo** – in memory of her twin, Leanne

**Margaret Daffin** – quarterly pledge and donations in memory of her twin, Josie and in memory of John Rohrer, twin to David

**Gerri Eastment** – my beloved twin sister, Terri Karol

**Sherri Eisenstein** – in memory of Jessica Ackerman, and in honor of her twin sister Jen, and the rest of the family

**ExxonMobil Foundation** – for volunteer hours by Margaret Daffin in memory of her twin, Josie Wilson

**First Giving** – GoFund Me

**Goodsearch** – website search engine

**IGive.com** – money earned from online searches

**Karyn Jacobs** – donation for General Fund

**Joshua Kline (JKP LLC)**

**Michele Klotz**

**Marilyn Krause**

**Kathleen Liest** – for Alyssa Pratt's fundraiser

**Nam Luu** – in loving memory of Jessica Mae Ackerman

**Carol Mansen** – in memory of Jessica Mae Ackerman

**Kate McCullough**

**Network for Good** – anonymous donors through Facebook

**Alexandra & Ananda Robie** – monthly pledge for Scholarship fund

**Beverley Smyk** – for a twin's membership renewal

**Richard Vann** – on behalf of Jennifer (and Jessica) Ackerman

**Websters Gladstone Foundation** – in memory of John Behrendt who is survived by his twin brother, Joe Behrendt

**Susan Williams** – in memory of Josie Wilson (Margaret Daffin's twin)

We apologize if we have missed your name in this listing. Please let us know and we will recognize you in our Spring 2021 newsletter.  
Contact Margaret Daffin at [medaffin@aol.com](mailto:medaffin@aol.com)



# TWINLESS TWINS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2020

By Janet Baird, twin to Margaret

Right now, I should be in Denver, USA for the annual Twinless Twins conference. We'd have arrived a day early on the Wednesday for an evening meal out before a full day Regional Coordinators' meeting on Thursday. The new twins would have their welcome meeting on Thursday and we'd be at our conference events. We'd do our memory walk near the hotel and we'd have our banquet and awards ceremony on the last night!



Thanks to COVID, none of that happened! I'm stuck in Yorkshire England in my tiny flat and I've no plans to travel anywhere this summer.

But I did take part in the Twinless Twins Virtual conference. It took place on Saturday July 11th. And we did our Memory Walk. On our own! There was a mass twin Zoom from 2pm to 5pm UK time. I logged on to see my twin pal in Lisbon walking the city streets. There were twins from all over the USA and Canada and from Mexico and Europe. I did my 51-minute bike ride during the Zoom, visiting all the places which had been special to me and my twin: Our primary school, the house where we lived as children, where we went to Brownies, our church, our grandparents and the grammar school. I took my phone with me with the sound on but my video camera off and my microphone on mute. Then I turned off my video camera at each stop!

Once I was back, I logged back in to Zoom. It was so good to hear all the twins talking. Some of us recognized each other and we could message on the chat.

At 5pm the walk Zoom finished and we had an hour's break. I had a very early dinner as there was still a webinar and the breakouts to come.

At 6pm UK time I logged on to the webinar. Michelle Getchell the Twinless Twins Executive Director greeted us and told us we wouldn't be able to see each other during the keynote speech. She then introduced the keynote speaker Dr Joan Friedman, a twin psychologist. She was very interesting as she talked about 'real' Twinless Twin loss experienced by her clients.

(With their permission of course.) She discussed ambivalence as an aspect of our twin grief, as we need to include both the positive and negative sides of our twin loss as we make our journeys.

The webinar ended just before 7pm and we had a quick half hour break before the breakout sessions. We had a separate Zoom link for all three parts of the virtual conference.

I logged back in just before 7:30pm and saw loads of twins I knew on the zoom page! It was like twin Christmas as we all waved and messaged each other. Lea Eriksen our TTSGI President, welcomed us and told us we would be randomly directed to separate breakout sessions. It was like being teleported as we all disappeared off to our zoom rooms! I was with Venice and three other twins. We were a mix of stage of loss and we had one twin new to the conference. We very quickly bonded and my breakout leader Venice Lacy was amazing as she directed our breakout. As we were directed back to the main Zoom room, I felt as if I wanted to stay with my breakout group forever.

Lea and Michelle rounded up the day and said goodbye and we all waved madly at each other with Zoom waves and promised to see each other next year in July, when the conference really will happen in Denver.

# 2020 VIRTUAL MEMORY WALK

This year, because of COVID-19, we held a TTSGI Virtual Memory Walk on Saturday morning, July 11th. Twins from all over the United States, Canada and the UK, walked or rode their bikes, at their own pace, in memory of their twins.

Each year, the Memory Walk is held as a fundraiser for TTSGI and this year we successfully raised approximately \$14,000. My special thanks to Judith Olson who co-chaired this fundraiser, and many thanks to the Regional Coordinators who participated in this endeavor. Our goal of \$15,000 was to help cover the loss of revenue normally raised during the annual conference – the memory walk; the sales table; the silent and live auctions, and the raffles. We were almost there!

A number of individual twins helped raise donations from family and friends:

Jessica Wickey – 5 donors helped her raise \$220

Carolyn Shane – Northeast regional donors helped her raise \$345

Janet Baird, UK – through Janet's bike ride, donors helped her raise \$350

Lea Eriksen – 6 donors helped her raise \$1,155

Judith Olson – 11 donors helped her raise \$1,213

Margaret Gron – 10 donors helped her raise \$3,435

Margaret Daffin – 31 donors helped her raise \$3,500

Debe Bloom raised \$580 through a Facebook fundraiser

Additional donors made contributions of \$3,300

Thank you to all twins and family/friends who walked and/or supported this wonderful event. We hope to see you all next year in Denver, Colorado.

A special thank you to Linda Burke who, every year, sends out the TTSGI tax receipt letters to our donors.

Margaret Daffin, Host of the 2020 Virtual Memory Walk.

## THOUGHTS ON GRIEF

By Dr. Camille Wissmann, Twin to Carmen and Joan Angelis, twin to Jean

Texting conversation between Joan and Camille:



Camille and Carmen (R)

Camille Wissmann, twin to Carmen: Our 75th birthday is on [June] 26th. Forty-two years ago, at age 33, Carmen went to heaven. The “one-ness” of twins became two, after 33 years. Very difficult – When Carmen died, that part of my energy left. It leaves a hole in my soul.



Joan and Jean (R)

Joan Angelis, twin to Jean and North Central Regional Coordinator: I agree about the hole in your soul description. I've felt that. You're not alone, Camille. You have us. And I do believe there's some truth to this saying: “Grief is the price you pay for love, and love is worth the price.”

Camille Wissmann, twin to Carmen: Exactly. When we have loved deeply, we also grieve deeply.

Grief changes us as we live our lives. It isn't a static thing. It does not start with the death of someone. It starts as we go through the trauma of living apart from someone. One of the first times I experienced this very difficult separation was in first grade, when Carmen and I were put into two different classrooms. Much later, when Carmen went to Yale and I went to pharmacy school, we were separated again. I survived then because Carmen and I figured out together how to memorize things while I had Dyslexia.

This past July, during the TTSGI Virtual Conference, I heard the keynote speaker, Dr. Joan A. Friedman, an identical twin herself, with a living twin. Dr. Friedman talked so much about her experience counseling twins. She said she worked through a lot of her grief already, even though she is not yet a Twinless Twin. This reminded me of Carmen, and how much we would do together.

# 2020 VIRTUAL MEMORY WALK DONATIONS

Phyllis Ashliman, in memory of her twin, Phil  
Elizabeth Brinker  
Matt Vierling, in honor of his twin, Mark Vierling  
Debe Portman Bloom, in honor of her twin, Carol and others (Facebook fundraiser)  
David Tomasko – in memory of his twin, Daniel Tomasko  
Jacquie Goldman, in remembrance of my wonderful twin sister, Fredda Gabbe Gottwals  
Jane Malcolm, in memory of her twin sister, Joan  
Laurie Meier, in memory of her twin, Linda  
Kevin & Susan Mullen, in memory of his twin, Brian Mullen  
Bob & Jane Osterholt, in memory of his twin, Bill Osterholt  
John Roberts Motor Works Company – in honor of Eileen Jensen  
Ruth Selig, in memory of her twin, Rollyn Osterweis Krichbaum  
Alice Ward, in memory of her twin, Anita  
Joan Angelis, in memory of her twin, Jean Angelis Majeski  
Paul Angelis, in honor of Joan Angelis, twin to Jean Angelis Majeski  
Marilyn Krause, in memory of her twin, Carolyn  
Eileen Jensen, in memory of her twin, Elaine  
Bette Dunbar, in honor of Eileen Jensen  
Dena Stitt, in memory of her twin, Dean  
Jessica Santos, in memory of her twin, Jenny Santos  
Shane Hayes, in honor of his twin, Shana  
Camille Wissmann, in memory of her twin, Carmen

## **The following donors gave in honor of Margaret Daffin, in memory of her twin, Josie Wilson**

Paul & Margaret Daffin  
Jane Borst  
Maureen Rogers  
Adriana Boretti & Pedro Jaldin  
Elizabeth Woelfel  
Phuong Vuong  
Meggy & Brandon Biss  
Elizabeth & Joe Ivers  
Susan & Martin Nusynowitz  
Robert Ducharme  
Dr. Robert Porter & Joy Shiller  
Joanne & Steve Downes  
Marion & Gary Geer  
Elida & Fouad El-Gawly  
Jane Kendrigan  
Michelle Berg  
Howard Molofsky  
Swim Babies Swim (Tracey Smith)  
James Walsh  
Allison Zuber  
Wynette & Ken Stuntz  
Christine & Kevin Brown  
Carol & Albert Knowlton  
Phyllis Phillips  
Ella Forel  
Susan & Michael Klaveness  
Margaret Schafer  
Maria & Kenny Jamail  
Dr. Susan Williams  
Marion & Richard Dare  
Sue Smith

## **The following donors gave in honor of Judith Olson, in memory of her twin Julie Janaszak**

Sarah Browning  
Shawn Beightol  
Michelle Parks  
Valerie Jones  
Troy Higgins (Morgan Stanley)  
Tim Kelley  
Arnold Joyner  
Angel Koenig  
Peter Lawson  
Brian Olson  
Betty Cook-Williams

## **The following donors gave in honor of Margaret Gron, in memory of her twin Edith Gron**

Tax Advisors, LLC (Nolan Venable)  
Amy Arthur  
Niels Gron  
Jacqueline Brauser  
Deidre O'Brien  
Azar Rejaie  
Lorena Barbadoro  
Jenny Zimmer  
Kay Womack  
Carlos Preciado

# 2020 VIRTUAL MEMORY WALK DONATIONS CONTINUED

## **The following donors gave in honor of Lea Eriksen, in memory of her twin Eve Richards**

Erika Harris  
Susan Eriksen  
Lea Eriksen  
Martin Talamantes  
Lillian Calkins  
Jenni Dropsey

## **The following donors gave in honor of Jessica Wickey, in memory of her twin Jennifer Wickey**

Jessica Wickey  
Anne McCracken  
Allen Wickey  
Christie Hesse  
Blanche Greaux

## **The following donors gave in honor of Janet Baird, in memory of her twin Margaret Baird**

Shanthi Bhadrach and many other generous donors in the United Kingdom

## **The following donors from the Northeast (NY/NJ) Region gave in memory of their twins**

Eleanor Maddy  
Carolyn Shane, in memory of her twin brother, Cary Schuman; her great niece, Michaela Dobrowski, and one of her twins from the NE region's twin brother, Zach Markowitz  
And  
Donations by members of the Northeast Region, in memory of everyone's "lost" twin

I apologize if your name is not shown and you gave a donation for the Memory Walk – contact Margaret Daffin, [medaffin@aol.com](mailto:medaffin@aol.com)

## WHEN THE OTHER SHOE DROPPED

By Alice Ward, twin to Anita

When you are an identical twin you get used to seeing things happening in twos. Open your closet and there hangs two of each outfit. Birthdays include two cakes, or at least two names on the cake. The first time I realized that this "happening in twos" could extend past human control, was when my twin sister, Anita, lost both of her front baby teeth while we were in third grade. Our mom thought a professional picture of us, with both of our front teeth missing would be precious. However, on the day of the photo appointment, both my front teeth were loose, but still hanging on for dear life. The picture was taken and served as a reminder to me that Anita experienced this natural event first. From then on, I was keenly aware of Anita's growing up "firsts," that would be followed by my "seconds."

There is an idiom about "waiting for the other shoe to drop." It means that something inevitable is going to happen, typically something highly undesirable. For example, when Anita and I were in seventh grade she developed a terrible stomachache that turned into a ruptured appendix. She spent two weeks in the hospital. Two months later, when my stomach began to ache, I kept quiet, wishing for it to go away. However, our mom was already on the lookout for any signs that "the other one" would fall stricken with the same symptoms. Sure enough, I was admitted into the hospital with an appendicitis.



Anita always seemed to be a step ahead of me. I began watching her to know what would be happening to me next. So, when Anita was diagnosed with Stage 4 breast cancer in 2010, I immediately went for a mammogram. I was fine. However, Anita passed away after a brave two-year fight with the disease. As you all know, losing your twin is a grief that cuts so deeply it is difficult to deal with. I questioned, "Why her? Why not me?" Then in 2017, I was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer. The shoe had dropped. It wasn't breast cancer we had in common, it was cancer, itself.

I am one of the moderators for our Twinless Twin Facebook page. I see twins asking each other, "Are you afraid your twin's illness will become yours?" The responses are interesting. I am always impressed with the depth of feelings that come with twinship.

So, "the other shoe dropped." I have survived longer than expected. I was told by my doctors that I had perhaps two to three years left to live. I am well into my fourth year, fighting the good fight. However, Anita has been with me on this journey as I was with her through her cancer. My cancer has made me understand better what Anita went through as she struggled with this disease. It makes me appreciate every effort she made to stay in this world. To honor her, I will do the same.

# GATHERINGS & UPDATES

## TTSGI NORTHEAST REGION

By Eleanor Maddy, twin to George

On July 26 and August 1, 2020, twin gatherings were hosted on Zoom by the Northeast Region for early loss twins (from birth to age 3) open to all TTSGI members. There was a total of 10 participants. Both calls were ably led by Alyssa Pratt, twin to Karyn who is an early loss twin herself and also a TTSGI board member. Alyssa posed three questions to promote discussion, being:

If someone asks you “Do you have any siblings?”, how do you respond?  
Did you always know something was missing?  
How do you stay connected with your twin?

The participants on the first call talked about who they share their twin story with; whether or not they were told by their parents about their twin and how they sense their twin’s presence. The second call twins also brought up other areas such as attachment/abandonment issues and difficulty with intimate relationships. One person pointed out that being in constant contact before birth in the womb creates memories on a cellular level of one’s twin which helps explain the deep connection with our twin.

After both calls, Alyssa provided reading suggestions to all by email. She’s a wonderful resource within TTSGI especially for early loss twins.

## TTSGI SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith

Manzoom. Get it? It is just my way of naming my first ever exclusive TTSGI twin gathering for men only. Sunday, August 16th, nine men joined me for a Zoom gathering of only men and for two hours everyone did what we always do, share our twin story. Since men represent a very small percentage within our organization, I decided to address it head on. Men grieve differently and sharing emotional experiences may not be as desirable, therefore an exclusive all men’s Zoom provided a more comfortable environment. If you would like to join this Manzoom group in the future, please inquire at [twinlesstwins@yahoo.com](mailto:twinlesstwins@yahoo.com).



## REGIONAL COORDINATORS

By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith

Once a month, TTSGI Regional Coordinators meet to collaborate on the best ideas of how to connect twins to other twins within the organization. Meeting monthly has allowed us to team build by sharing, listening and supporting each other. As we strive to heal by helping, we gain a beautiful experience of interacting with so many beautiful twinless twins. If you are interested in knowing more about how to become a Regional Coordinator, please inquire at [twinlesstimes@yahoo.com](mailto:twinlesstimes@yahoo.com).



## TTSGI CANADA REGION

By Lea Eriksen, twin to Eve



TTSGI would like to thank Ami Hoyt, twin sister to Angela, who stepped down from her Canada Regional Coordination duties in May after serving for three years. Ami found TTSGI in 2011 and attended her first conference in 2012. She helped in numerous ways over the years including holding a Yoga and Healing session at past annual conferences. She then became the Regional

Coordinator for Canada in 2017. Ami says that TTSGI saved her life and being the RC in Canada was a labor of love for her. TTSGI has benefitted from her passion and enthusiasm and we will certainly miss her loving, thoughtful and warm approach that allowed twins to feel safe and welcome. Ami is stepping down to focus on full-time University studies and family. Thank you Ami and best wishes.

# TWIN STUDIES

By Ruth O. Selig

Twins provide a natural laboratory in which scientists can compare the effects of genetic and environmental factors (nature-nurture). Twin studies have been undertaken for many decades and can help twins understand more about their own personal experiences as well as learn more about twins in general.

Twin specialist Dr. Nancy L. Segal, Professor of Psychology at California State University, Fullerton, a 2009 TTSGI Conference Keynote speaker and a fraternal twin, has spent her professional life conducting research about twins. Her website lists several current twin studies in which twins and twinless twins can participate, as well as information about publications that Dr. Segal has written about twins through the years (<http://drnancysegaltwins.org>).

Twin studies depend on the biological differences between identical and fraternal twins. As every twin knows, identical twins are *monozygotic* (MZ): they develop from a single fertilized egg or zygote that splits into two identical halves, usually within the first two weeks after fertilization. By the time this splitting occurs, there are many cells in the zygote, but each cell carries within it virtually the same chromosomes with the same genetic code. Fraternal twins are *dizygotic* (DZ): they develop from two different eggs fertilized by two different sperm. Fraternal twins, like all siblings, share an average of 50% of their genes by descent, while identical twins share 100% of their genes.

It is twin studies that give us statistics on the genetic risks of diseases such as diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke or cancer. These studies compare disease incidence in identical and fraternal twins, using huge data sets of twin pairs. Comparing the relative incidence of disease in identical compared to fraternal twins yields the statistical incidence of a specific disease due to genetic factors.

One study, for example, [estimated individual risk for 23 different cancers](#) using data on 200,000 twins in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Researchers estimated that when one fraternal twin was diagnosed with any cancer, the co-twin's risk of getting cancer was 37 percent; among identical twins, the risk jumped to 46 percent. This statistic underscores the high risk of anyone whose identical twin has cancer.

Twin studies have been critical to my life's journey, since my identical twin sister (who died in 1982 from metastatic breast cancer) and I shared the BRCA2 mutation. This indicated that my risk for breast and ovarian cancer over my lifetime was much higher than if I were an identical twin without this mutation. It was these risks that led me to elect prophylactic surgeries to mitigate my risk for cancer, a story that I told in a 2018 Washington Post article ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/years-ago-when-my-twin-got-breast-cancer-i-took-drastic-action-and-am-grateful-i-did/2018/05/25/5910c354-5238-11e8-9c91-7dab596e8252\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/years-ago-when-my-twin-got-breast-cancer-i-took-drastic-action-and-am-grateful-i-did/2018/05/25/5910c354-5238-11e8-9c91-7dab596e8252_story.html)). This article was reprinted in *Twinless Times* (Fall 2018), which can be found on the TTSGI Website: [https://www.twinlesstwins.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/tt\\_2018\\_03\\_fall\\_proof2.pdf](https://www.twinlesstwins.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/tt_2018_03_fall_proof2.pdf)

Recently I became interested in twin studies that focus on the relationship between twins and their nieces and nephews. Like many twinless twins, when my twin died, I felt I had lost an arm or a leg, or even half of myself. This feeling diminished over time, but a permanent hole in my heart remained. Being with my twin sister Rollie's son Steven helped fill that hole.

As Dr. Segal explains in her 2017 book, *Twin Mythconceptions*, Steven is my nephew legally, but he is also my genetic son. Steven's mother and I were genetic clones, sharing 100% of our genes. Fifty per cent of Steven's genes are the same as my genes.

Given these twin facts, it is not surprising that I feel so close to Steven, although it took many years to create a close relationship with him.

During Steven's elementary school years, his father sent him to visit each of his aunts at least once a year. When Steven entered high school, however, after his father remarried and Steven became increasingly busy with his own friends, he stopped visiting me in Washington, DC. I missed him desperately during these years and eagerly flew to Detroit for his high school graduation.

In 2000, when Steven interned near Washington, DC, I knew my chance finally had come to build a closer relationship with him. I visited him regularly and made a conscious effort to treat him as the adult he had become. I tried to be authentic and unguarded with him, hoping that he might experience with me something of his mother's nature. In turn, Steven became more open with me, even calling to talk through important decisions.

Today Steven is almost 43 years old. He and I have a close and trusting relationship similar to the relationships I have with my 46 year-old son Bill and my 41 year-old daughter Deborah.

Over the years, Steven developed a close relationship with Bill and Deborah who share 50% of their genes with one another but an average of 25% of their genes with Steven. This is unlike most first cousins who share only approximately 12.5% of their genes in common. According to Dr. Segal, because their mothers are identical twins, Steven is my children's legal first cousin, but he is also their genetic half-sibling.

In a conversation with my son last year, I asked Bill to describe his relationship with Steven:

*"I recognize myself in Steven. When I look at him, he looks like me... He feels like a brother or half brother... In our 30s, when we took a canoe trip together, neither of us needed to chatter; we could enjoy each other in silence and sink into nature together... It felt like being with myself. I could go anywhere with Steven and feel completely at home... there is a sameness between us on a very deep level.*

Bill's words comprise the best description I have ever read of what I experienced as an identical twin: the sense of

## TWIN STUDIES CONTINUED

sameness, the awareness that no conversation is needed, a feeling of unity with another person, a complete comfort between two people who understand each other because they share so much in common.

When I asked Steven about the canoe trip, he focused on his sameness to Bill, but in very specific ways. Steven found it almost eerie that he and Bill did physical things in an identical way:

*We both cracked our knuckles. At night Bill would rub his feet just before he went to sleep just like I did, and when he was going to sleep he made noises just like me. I couldn't get over that we were doing the exact same things...*

My daughter Deborah had an equally deep understanding of her relationship with Steven: *Steven looks so much like me, he could be my brother.*

It is striking that both my children and Steven explain their feelings of closeness to one another partly by their physical resemblances. This would be no surprise to Dr. Segal, who studied twins separated at birth who were later reunited, as described in her 2012 Harvard University Press publication, *Born Together – Reared Apart: The Landmark Minnesota Twin Study*. In that classic Minnesota twin study, scientists concluded that identical and fraternal twins' perceptions of physical similarity correlate significantly with their feelings of closeness.

Dr. Segal more recently conducted a twin study examining feelings of closeness of identical and fraternal twin parents toward their nieces and nephews. Based on questionnaires of over 400 individual twins, the study yielded information comparing closeness based on 3 factors: 1) closeness to one's own children compared to closeness to the children of one's co-twin (nieces and nephews); 2) liking the children of one's co-twin; and 3) assessing the similarity between oneself and the children of the co-twin.

This research, described in three articles published in 2007, 2011, and 2020, showed that the "highest degrees of closeness are among female identical twins with their nieces and nephews" compared to either fraternal twins or male identical twins." In addition, the perceived similarity between one's own children and one's nieces and nephews (both physical and behavioral similarity) appears to be the most significant factor predicting a high degree of closeness between aunts and uncles with their nieces and nephews.

This research, of course, does not diminish the extremely close relationship that any individual

twinless twin may have with his or her nieces or nephews, regardless of twin type, gender, or physical resemblance.

In my own family, the close relationships between Steven and me, and between Steven and my children entered a new phase with the COVID-19 Pandemic. Every Saturday Bill, Deborah, Steven, and I visit over zoom. We never visited regularly all together before COVID-19, but we intend to continue these weekly calls long into the future. For the three young adults, these zoom calls serve as a genetic sibling reunion.

Occasionally the third generation of six children, all between the ages of 3 and 10, join our zoom gatherings from their homes in Berkeley, California; Sharon, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, DC. These

conversations gave rise to yet another Pandemic silver lining: my book group for children, which meets daily for 45 minutes during which I read books such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Hans Christian Anderson's *Fairy Tales*. Until the Pandemic, I never would have been able to create this book group given the children's busy lives. When schools begin, whether in-person or online, I hope to continue reading to the children on weekends.

These loving connections, so important during these days of social distancing and separation, have created a pandemic silver lining for us all!

#### References:

Nancy L. Segal, *Born Together – Reared Apart: The Landmark Minnesota Twin Study*. Harvard University Press, 2012.

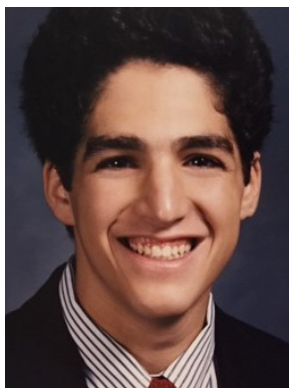
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*Ruth O. Selig currently serves on the board of the Twinless Twins Support Group International and recently retired from a 35-year career at the Smithsonian Institution.*



\* Three genetic siblings

# A WONDERFUL BIRTHDAY GIFT

By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith – Twinless Times Editor

Joan Woodward, psychotherapist, is a name I've come to know very well. I read her book *The Lone Twin: Understanding Twin Bereavement and Loss* several years ago and ever since have been in awe of what she has done for us, the twinless twin. She dedicated much of her life to serving the surviving twin through therapy, writing books and is the Founder of the Lone Twin Network based in England; an organization similar to our Twinless Twin Support Group International. Read more about her here [Joan Woodward Biography](#) and here [past interview](#) and listen to her in her own voice here [Joan's recorded words](#).



Recently, Joan Woodward published her newest book *Discover Attachment Theory* where she goes on to describe her coined phrase “neurotic solutions” as a response to our attachment experiences from birth onward. Not only was her book an easy read, it was intriguing and I was left wondering what was my neurotic solution. I just know, of course, I have one!

Having so much wisdom, I decided to reach out to Joan Woodward and see if she was willing to answer some of my burning twinless twin questions. It was a long shot but to my delight she said “yes”! I used questions from other twinless twins in our TTSGI organization and some of my own. I greatly appreciate Joan Woodward's answers and I can only hope you will too. See my interview below.

I want to express my gratitude to Janet Baird, twin to Margaret, for all her support in making this interview happen and to Tony Pattinson, with the Lone Twin Network, for providing me this beautiful photo of Joan Woodward. Finally, a huge thank you to you Joan. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for gifting me this interview and for your dedication to helping me with my twinless twin journey.

## Here is my interview:

**Margaret Gron:** What insight would you bestow on the younger generation of twins to enlighten us on how we can improve the quality of our twin journey?

**Joan Woodward:** Don't be surprised if sometimes you feel “ok” and other times very sad and lonely. The main thing is to have a friend or a twinless twin friend to turn to. Turning to a twinless twin who understands these feelings will help you over that moment when you feel extra sad and lonely, and vice versa, this twinless twin can turn to you at their worst moment.

**Margaret Gron:** The branch of psychology has used twins for research to benefit society, yet very little research has been done to benefit the individual twin. How can twins get the branch of psychology to shift focus and serve us with the psychological struggles we encounter with this twin journey?

**Joan Woodward:** I don't think psychology will shift the focus. I don't expect it to, as psychology tends to be an academic science. What

lone twins need, in my view, is the theory of psychotherapy; focusing on attachment which concerns itself with relationships.

**Margaret Gron:** How do twins who have lost their twin in utero-through early childhood explain the feelings of emotional sadness and loss they have when they didn't know consciously their twin existed?

**Joan Woodward:** There are two reasons why. First and probably the strongest reason is their parent's reaction to them. Second, how they have felt about themselves in response to this loss. Memory goes way back to the third trimester in utero.

**Margaret Gron:** How does a lone twin “move forward” when they, themselves, can-not break from their own emotional investment in their twinship?

**Joan Woodward:** Ask a psychotherapist. This is the most basic problem, because a number of people actually at one level of their mind don't want to “let go” of their sense of suffering. They may seem to cry out for help, but have an unconscious perception of themselves of being damaged, hurt or in pain and of needing to suffer to express these feelings.

**Margaret Gron:** When your twin dies and was the closest person within the family unit, making connections with the other family members is a struggle because they don't understand the grief. The family believes the mother is suffering worse and that the surviving twin is not supporting the mother enough. Do you have advice for this situation?

**Joan Woodward:** It's a competitive field, with the mother and sometimes the father trying to monopolize the feelings of loss, grieving and suffering. The surviving twin needs to stand up

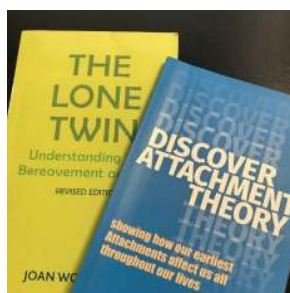
to whichever parent is proclaiming this monopoly of grief and say to her or him that you have the loss of your child and I have the loss of my twin. They are different.

**Margaret Gron:** When we lose our twins, at any stage in our lives, is the new version of us a twin blend?

**Joan Woodward:** No. I don't believe so. We remain a lone twin.

**Margaret Gron:** After losing a twin, it is very painful to be around other twins. It's a trigger so avoidance is often the solution. Ironically the family many times has a difficult time being around the twinless twin because we are a trigger for their pain so avoidance is often the solution. How do we embrace our pain so that we can embrace each other?

**Joan Woodward:** When you meet other twins, it can be helpful to go up to them and not avoid them. Talk to them and tell them you are a twin. If they show interest say quickly, before they can ask you where your twin is, that your twin died at whatever age it was. I believe once you understand why you find it painful to be around twins, you can then understand how the family has the same difficulty. Try, if you can, to talk openly about the different senses of loss.





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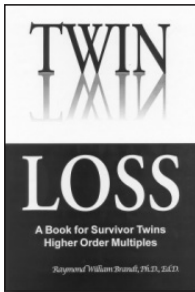
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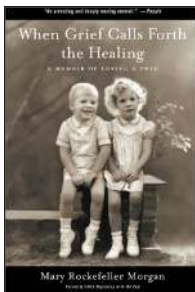
# RECOMMENDED TWIN BOOKS



## “TWIN LOSS”

By Raymond W. Brandt, PhD

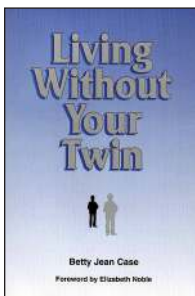
Dr. Brandt was the founder of Twinless Twins Support Group International and was considered by many an authority on twin loss. The 400-page book discusses all aspects of the loss and also speaks to the family members on how to help the survivor twin.



## “WHEN GRIEF CALLS FORTH THE HEALING”

By Mary Rockefeller Morgan

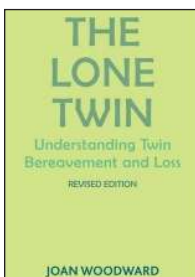
In this startlingly frank and moving memoir, Mary R. Morgan struggles to claim an individual identity, enabling her to face her twin brother Michael's death and the huge loss it engendered. With remarkable candor, she shares her spiritually evocative healing journey, which moves her forward into a life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



## “LIVING WITHOUT YOUR TWIN”

By Betty Jean Case

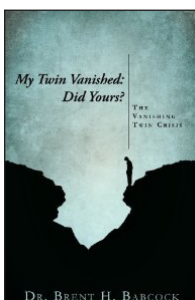
TTSGI receives a donation each time one of author Betty Jean Case's books is purchased through us. Betty was a twin, who grew up with twin siblings and had a set of twin grandsons. This 150-page book discusses how to keep living without your twin and best friend by your side. It also explores the uniqueness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

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**Fall Issue: August 11th**

**Winter Issue: October 20th**

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