

TWINLESS TIMES

FALL 2023

HELPING TWINS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR TWIN



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Twins,

I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who played a role in making our recent Annual Conference a resounding success. I want to especially thank our Executive Director, Michelle Getchell, and the Conference Programming Committee (Venice Lacy, Alyssa Pratt, Dena Stitt, and Patricia Wilbee-Matesic), our session hosts, panel participants, small group facilitators, breakout session leaders, our Board of Directors, Regional Coordinators, Facebook Moderators, Committee members, and our Keynote Speaker Allie Franklin.

As you can see, putting together and orchestrating an event like our Annual Conference requires the coordinated efforts of so many twinless twins (and the people who support them at home) who work tirelessly behind the scenes to create an environment for healing, helping, and hope. One of the things I love most about our Annual Conference is it provides a living picture of our five guiding principles in action. Just by showing up and being together, we honor our twinship (once a twin, always a twin) and we are reminded in a powerful way that we are not alone along this journey to healing. Likewise, the principle of healing by helping is on full display throughout the Conference as we join together, uniting our diverse community.

I also want to thank everyone who attended the Conference. As I mentioned during the opening reception, I know how difficult it can be to attend a Conference like ours but speaking from my own experience — attending my first Conference in 2011 was the greatest gift I could have possibly given myself after Mark's death.

To our first-time attendees, I really hope you felt welcomed, included, and uplifted. More importantly, I hope you were able to connect with other twinless twins who can help support you on your healing journey. To those who were unable to attend the Conference this year, I would love to see you next year in Chattanooga, Tennessee (July 11-14, 2024). Registration will open on January 2, 2024, at twinlesstwins.org. I realize attending a Conference does come at a considerable cost, but please know we want to make every effort we can to make it possible for you to attend. If you have any questions about possible assistance, please reach out to Michelle Getchell at contact@twinlesstwins.org.

Lastly, if you attended the Conference, we want to hear from you. Please be sure to fill out the Conference survey we sent out via email on July 25th (check your spam and promotions folders if you haven't received it in your primary inbox). We will be reviewing your feedback at our upcoming Board meeting and work hard to make next year's Conference even better.

In Twinship,
Matt Vierling, President



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THE EMPTY CHAIR

by Sandy Goad, twin to Jim

FINDING HOPE

Like a firestorm blazing through a forest, the grief of losing a twin seems to leave nothing but ashes in its path. The hope and meaning in life appear to vanish. Hope can feel as if

it's been swept away with the storm. But our very existence depends on hope, so we must look for it intensely. Come with me in search of hope as I share with you an inspirational reading on "Finding Hope" read at our National Conference in Cincinnati this summer.

When hurricane Andrew swept onto South Florida in 1992, it left Miami-Dade County looking like a war zone. One of the things that hurt to look at was the trees... those that had not been uprooted, torn apart, or blown away were completely defoliated. There were naked skeletons of trees upon the barren landscape. An area that is, despite its metropolitan design and large population, usually tropical green and lush with foliage now seemed to be nothing but broken concrete and shattered glass. Even the tree trunks wore that dead gray look that offered no color, nor comfort.

Then as the trees began to "come back" we realized it would literally take years for the damaged areas to return to the lush green we had grown accustomed to, and we knew it would never again be the same in Miami-Dade County. But, as the sun broke through in places that had always been in the shade before, something new took place.

That winter, there was an abundance of wildflowers... beautiful bright flowers covered the ground in places that even grass would not grow before. Experts were amazed, as flowers that had not grown here for generations suddenly bloomed in abundance... and flowers that had always bloomed here suddenly were everywhere. Apparently, the stripped trees had allowed sunlight into places that it had not touched for so long, even touching on dormant seeds that had lain in the dirt for years.

It struck me that grief is like that. As we look at the devastation left behind by our loss, we realize it will never be the same again. As we feel emptied out and stripped of the hopes and dreams we had held on to, we find ourselves laid bare to the elements... exposed in a way we have not been before.

But just like the aftermath of a hurricane, as we struggle to pick up the pieces and resume some sort of life... a different life... we find glimpses of hope - tenderness for suffering we may never have been sensitive to, appreciation for life, for love and for the blessings we used to take for granted. And we find flowers - twin friends who we may never otherwise have known.

As twinless twins, we needed help - someone who could speak our language of grief and we found Twinless Twins. "Grief is too heavy of a burden to carry alone, but together we can do so much more than survive - together, we THRIVE." Allie Franklin

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

TTSGI has five guiding principles:

1. Once A Twin, Always A Twin
2. You Are Not Alone
3. Healing by Helping
4. Journey to Healing,
5. Uniting Our Diverse Community

The Fall Edition will focus on the third one:

Healing by Helping is one of the founding principles of TTSGI. This principle recognizes that helping other people in similar circumstances helps not just the recipient, but also the giver. Assistance can come in several forms: attending meetings in which those twins with new, older, delayed, or un-mourned losses meet other twins who become a support system; serving as volunteers for committee and board assignments; serving as a Regional Coordinator; or volunteering time, talent, and resources to help TTSGI realize its mission.



KEVIN'S CORNER

By Kevin Mullen, twin to Brian and Twinless Times' Correspondent

Twins Day in Twinsburg is for all Twins and Multiples. The First full weekend in August brings together Twins and Multiples from around the world; Australia, Jamaica, Japan and the UK were just some of the countries and 48 of the 50 US States represented this year.

Although I cannot make the Twinless Twins Conference, I saw two TTSGI Members, Regional Coordinator, Margaret Gron and Russell Scott. Also present was Ed Wasko, a Twinless twin from Michigan, He's also my Twins Bowling partner. Ed (Twin B) and I (Twin A) placed 3rd in the men's division this year. During Twins Day, I usually text or call Jon Hilber, twin to Justin and wish him a Happy Birthday.

The unofficial count was 2,113 registered sets of twins and multiples .



BOOK REVIEW

SPECIAL TWIN BONDS HIGHLIGHTED IN A NEW BOOK

By Ruth O. Selig, former TTSGI Board Member

TWIN CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST: STOLEN CHILDHOOD AND THE WILL TO SURVIVE
(Academic Studies Press, 2023)

By Dr. Nancy L. Segal

Members of Twinless Twins Support Group International (TTSGI) have long been exposed to the research of nationally recognized twin specialist Dr. Nancy L. Segal, Psychology Professor and Director, Twin Studies Center, at California State University, Fullerton. Keynote speaker at the 2009 TTSGI National Conference, Dr. Segal is the author of several books reviewed in these pages, including *Accidental Brothers: The Story of Twins Exchanged at Birth and the Power of Nature and Nurture* 2018, with co-author Y.S. Montoya, and *Deliberately Divided: Inside the Controversial Study of Twins and Triplets Adopted Apart* 2021.

Dr. Segal's new book is an annotated collection of original, informative, and moving photographs she took almost 40 years ago while attending a twin gathering, conference, and reunion of surviving twins of the Holocaust. The eight-day event included several days at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, followed by a three-day public hearing at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Center in Jerusalem. At Yad Vashem, the twins were joined by former Nazi prosecutors, attorneys, government officials, a Nazi hunter, a medical geneticist, and the concerned public to learn and to gather evidence on the nature and outcome of the experiments.

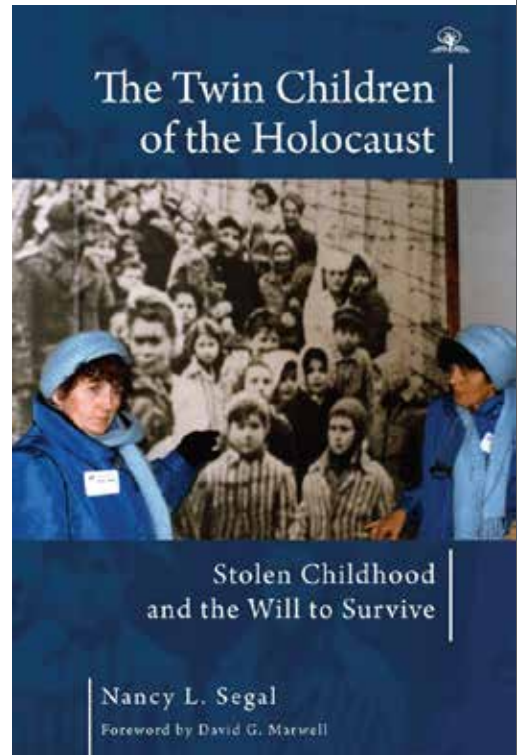
As Dr. Segal explains: "Virtually all [the surviving twins] believe in the importance of educating the public about what had happened to them at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and have done so through lectures, exhibitions, and films. I wanted to do my part by publishing the photographs I took thirty-eight years ago." (p. 11).

In a recent interview, I asked Dr. Segal to compare her emotions attending the 1985 conference with emotions she felt reviewing these photographs for her 2023 publication. "The emotions I felt were equally strong - seeing the material again simply revived the anger, horror, and sadness I felt years ago," she told me.

The new book is published by Academic Studies Press under the title, *The Twin Children of the Holocaust: Stolen Childhood and the Will to Survive. Photographs from the Twins' 40th Anniversary Reunion at Auschwitz-Birkenau*. The book is available on Amazon.

The book takes us back 38 years. At the time, Dr. Segal was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Minnesota, conducting research for the landmark study detailed in her 2012 book, *Born Together-Reared Apart: The Minnesota Twin Study*. Listening to late-night radio, she learned about an organization called C.A.N.D.L.E.S. (Children of Auschwitz's Deadly Laboratory Experiments Survivors) and its members' plans to gather in Poland and Jerusalem to "reclaim the fragments of their young lives, honor deceased relatives," and try to bring Josef Mengele, the notorious Nazi doctor in charge of the twin experiments, to justice. (p. 13)

As both a fraternal twin and Jewish, Dr. Segal was determined to attend this combination twin gathering, conference, and reunion of surviving twins. She purchased a camera, knowing she would have the opportunity to record, interact with, and learn from the twins and others during this amazing event.



BOOK REVIEW, CONT.

Particularly moving are several photographs in the book that were taken of twins still alive in 1985, standing in front of photographs of themselves as young camp inmates. For example, we see identical twins Eva Kor and Miriam Czaigher (Mozes) positioned before their childhood images at the age of 12 shown “in film footage of the liberation by the Soviet army.” (p. 39) This photograph can also be seen on the book’s cover as seen in the illustration provided to *Twinless Times*.

Upon her return from the conference, Dr. Segal published several of her photographs in an article in *Psychology Today* (August 1985: pp. 52-58) that offers additional context for the new book. It begins,

“On January 27, 1945, Soviet armies liberated an excruciatingly emaciated group of twins from the infamous Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz/Birkenau, in Poland. Among the survivors... were 157 twin children, all that remained of the more than 3,000 estimated twins that entered the camp since 1943... On January 27, 1985, the 40th anniversary of the death-camp liberation, more than half of the twins and their families, from six countries, joined together for eight days of hearings, discussions, and dedications. Eight twins came to Auschwitz and later joined 70 to 80 at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and research institute in Jerusalem, Israel, the country where many of the surviving twins were then living.” (p. 52)

The 1985 article continued:

That the reunion took place at all, four decades after the events, attests to the strength of the social bonds between and among these twins. “Every time we meet another twin, it is like finding another piece of ourselves,” one said. Their reactions to the reunion reflect their unique experience of being twins and concentration camp survivors. But they also speak to issues of human resilience and social ties we all share.” (p. 52)

The 10 chapters of *The Twin Children of the Holocaust* unfold chronologically, each section accompanied by a brief essay that offers context. Every photograph is accompanied by an informative caption. The simple snapshots provide “an eloquent photographic memory that connects us across time to a truly remarkable slice of history,” historian David G. Marwell writes in the Foreword. (p.9). The infamous twin medical experiments have been described in many other publications; this unusual book of photographs testifies to the remarkable resilience of those twins who survived.

The pictures also tell stories, some of them unforgettable. We learn about Zvi Spiegel, who was 29 years old when he arrived at the camp. He was “put in charge of forty or fifty twin boys whom he had to make available for experimentation when commanded to do so.” That horrific task did not prevent him from becoming a caring teacher. After the liberation in 1945, “he escorted thirty-six of the boys out of the camp and led them to their hometowns in Poland and Czechoslovakia.” In a moving testament to his importance, one of the panelists at the public hearing on Josef Mengele’s war crimes asked if there were any of Zvi Spiegel’s “twin boys” in the audience. When eight twins stood up, Dr Segal reported that “the applause lasted a long time – a very long time.” (p. 68)

Spiegel and the other twins and several non-twin survivors testified before a distinguished panel that included among others Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal and Nuremberg prosecutor Telford Taylor, shown in photographs on pp. 73-89. The goal of bringing Mengele to justice was never achieved. The same year as the conference, it was discovered that he had already been deceased for six years. Mengele had fled to Latin America after the war and remained at large for decades before drowning off a Brazilian beach in 1979.

At the end of this fascinating and moving book, Dr. Segal states that of all the conferences she has attended, the 1985 reunion of twin survivors was the most “professionally significant and personally meaningful.” (p. 106) Her book makes clear why.

STANBROOK PLAQUE CEREMONY

By Janet Baird, twin to Margaret

Eleven twins gathered at Stanbrook on Saturday May 20th to commemorate Joan Woodward's peony and the Twin Apple Trees with their permanent plaques. The weather was absolutely perfect with wall to wall blue skies and brilliant sunshine.

After tea and coffee and introductions, we moved on to the workshop where Sister Julian had set out a selection of her amazing calligraphy and illuminated letters for us to see. She'd also arranged a come and try table where we could make our own illuminated letters, using a template.

Those who wanted attended a short service in the chapel at 12.30pm. Afterwards Sr Julian showed us the beautiful Pascal candle she'd designed for Easter, with Saint Aelred on and also Saint Cuthbert.

We had our picnic lunches outside and David Elvy, our LTN chairman, took a group photo. At 2pm we assembled around Joan Woodward's memorial peony and David planted her plaque. He read out a poem he'd written about Birthdays and how they are experienced by twins and I read a poem I'd written about the plaques and who they were for.

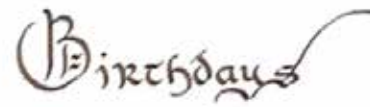
We walked down the drive to the orchard and made our way down to the Twin Apple Trees. The first was planted in 2018 and is for all Lone Twins everywhere. The second smaller one was planted in 2019 for Jill Deeley, our ex chairman of the LTN. Jill Ingham planted the plaque and gave a short address about Jill Deeley and her work with the LTN and then Sr Julian read out a beautiful poem about trees before she planted the plaque for the Lone Twin Apple tree.

We hiked (literally) back to the Abbey for tea and a slice of Jill's excellent Victoria Sandwich cake! We departed around 3.30pm after a totally glorious day. Thank you to Sister Julian and the Community at Stanbrook Abbey for hosting us!

The inscriptions on the plaques

1. In Memory of Jill Deeley 13/11/43 to 3/12/2018
Chairman of the Lone Twin Network
2. In Memory of Joan Woodward 1926 - 2021 Founder
of the Lone Twin Network
3. Bearing Fruit for all Lone Twins

The poem David Elvy read out for Joan's peony.



Birthdays, such a bitter sweet day;
Cheer up ~ those around me say;
Party time ~ with love prepared,
celebrations to be shared.

The wine, the food, the guests, their joy,
Cheer up ~ laugh, you birthday boy;
Friends all come to wish me well,
On this day only good things dwell.

Bitter sweet, how to explain
the conflict rushing through my brain;
candles flicker on my cake
Make a wish "For Heaven's" sake.

Bitter sweet, the day is long,
bitter sweet, my birthday song;
my birthday cake, it burns so bright
but all I see is a Jertzeit light

Memorial
Light 44.98.

By David Elvy

The poem Sister Julian read out for the Lone Twin Apple tree.

When a tree is cut down
and reveals its naked death wound
to the sun,
one can read its whole history
in the luminous,
inscribed disk of its trunk:
in the rings of its years, its scar,
all the struggle,
all the suffering,
all the sickness,
all the happiness and prosperity
stand truly written,
the narrow years
and the luxurious years,
the attacks withstood,
the storms endured.

Herman Hesse

STANBROOK PLAQUE CEREMONY, CONT.

The poem I read out for Joan Woodward's peony, Jill Deeley's Apple Tree and the Lone Twin Apple Tree.

Planting Plaques at Stanbrook

We plant plaques,
Permanent reminders,
By the peony and the Twin Apple trees.
Remember Joan our LTN founder, without
whom we would not be here,
Jill our Chairman who kept us grounded in our
grief,
And all lone twins everywhere.

The seeds planted in our grief grow and
flourish,
Despite our disbelief.
They blossom and survive, like our bereaved
and delicate souls.
We bless the peony, the twin apple trees
And we are glad they are here, in this special
peaceful place.

Janet Baird



TTSGI ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023–CINCINNATI, OH

By Janet Baird, twin to Margaret

My trip to the USA Twinless Twins conference this year actually started in Cincinnati, where the conference was held. I flew in from Manchester via Atlanta on Wednesday, July 12th and arrived at Cincinnati airport around 7pm East Coast Time. But that was midnight UK time for me, so it felt late. A Regional Coordinator very kindly picked me up at the airport and drove me to the Summit Hotel where the conference was held. It was a beautiful modern hotel with glass lifts and I had a lovely room at the front.

The conference started on Thursday evening but the Regional Coordinators (RCs) had a meeting in the morning and then lunch with the Board. After that, the RCs went by car to the city of Cincinnati and we looked round the Freedom Museum. We also saw the famous Reds baseball stadium and the river and the iconic bridges.

By the time we got back to the hotel, twins were arriving and we greeted old friends and met new twins. The new twins had their own meeting at 7pm while the returning twins registered. After a welcome speech, we had a dessert reception for the new twins. 132 twins registered this year which was very encouraging! We lit candles for our twins and those who were unable to be at the conference this year. Very sadly, I lost a very dear Twinless Twin friend this year so I thought about her.

The conference started on Friday with breakfast in the hotel dining room. The food was really good and healthy with lots of fresh fruit, yogurt and omelets you could order.

I went to the Inspiration service at 8am and Sandy Goad was back doing it this year after a break.

Afterwards, we had a welcome announcement, when Michelle Getchell told us about the conference format.

We then had a brilliant introduction by the speaker Allie Franklin, daughter of Darcie Sims, who used to speak at the TTSGI conferences.

Allie's keynote was on the topic of twin buddies. How we need a buddy on our lone twin journey and how later, we can be a buddy to other twins starting on their journey. One of the things I liked

about the conference was that we all sat around small tables for the presentations and meetings. And we had colouring to do on each table, as cards with the logos of TTSGI were left out on the tables, with colouring pens. It was therapeutic and took away the stress in the room.

After a break, we split up around the small tables for discussion groups. Each table had an envelope with four questions in and a Regional Coordinator or a Board member facilitating. It was a very successful format and I felt it was less daunting for new twins as we used to stand up and 'tell' our stories in front of all the twins!

After lunch, over in the food court, we listened to Allie's keynote speech which was funny, sad, memorable and valuable! All of those!

We then had free time to have dinner with our twin pals and one of the Regional Coordinators organized a 'Chew and Chat' meet-up for any twins who were on their own. Carolyn held up a turquoise umbrella and led us over the road to the food court, like a twin tour guide. Over 20 of us met for dinner and it was a very successful event.

Saturday started off with Inspirations at 8am, then we had a business meeting with various reports and the reveal about where next year's conference was going to be! After a slow reveal with five clues, Matt Vierling, TTSGI President, told us the venue for 2024 was Chattanooga, near Memphis, Tennessee.

After a break, we had the choice of several break-out sessions. The topics ranged from recent bereavement to longer term bereavement, the role of creativity in bereavement, how to heal by helping TTSGI and also sessions for supporters and parents of Twinless Twins.

Lunch followed and then we gathered together for our annual Twin Memory Walk where we carried a large banner signed by all the twins at the conference in memory of their twins. Unfortunately, there was a violent thunderstorm so we had to hold our walk inside the hotel. We walked down to the lower atrium and had a group photo taken of all the twins.

After some free time, we met at 6:30pm for the

TTSGI ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023, CONT.

Banquet in the beautiful gallery at the hotel. We sat around large, formally set tables with white tablecloths and enjoyed a fabulous hot buffet and then desserts. The TTSGI Awards were announced and Margaret Gron, the RC for Texas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi, won the Angel Award! I was so delighted as I know the tremendous amount of work and care she puts into her Twinless Twins region! Carolyn Shane, the RC for New Jersey and New York, won the Dr. Raymond Brandt award for her service to TTSGI. Carolyn works tirelessly for her region, plus she coordinates the vast array of Affinity Groups available for twins on Zoom. They cover all kinds of Twin Loss and run twice a year.



The Live Auction followed, run by the brilliant Venice Lacy, who is so funny and so very talented! So much money was generously donated for items, including Twinless Twin handmade quilts, artworks and holiday gifts.

The evening ended and we said our goodbyes as some of the twins were leaving very early on Sunday morning.

I left for Seattle late Sunday afternoon to stay with a twin from the conference and had an amazing time in the Pacific Northwest. Needless to say, we talked about twins ALL the time! It's so valuable and special staying with another Twin!



I moved on to Phoenix and stayed with a non twin, but I did meet twins for coffee or lunch while I was there which was so special.

My last stop was New Jersey, where I stayed with a Regional Coordinator and her lovely family. She arranged a Twin Dinner for me to meet her twins in NJ and then in NYC. So we met up at a Mexican restaurant and an Italian restaurant. It worked so well and it was so valuable to meet other twins in a small social environment.

Twin Dinners are a Thing!!

I finally left the USA and flew out of JFK airport for my night flight to Manchester.



2023 TTSGI CONFERENCE, CINCINNATI, OH

It was so good to be with all of our twinless twin friends in Cincinnati this year and to gather indoors on Saturday afternoon, July 15, (because of the heavy rain) to honor our twins, holding the Memory Walk banner, and remembering them with bubbles and journaling.

Each year, the Memory Walk is held as a fundraiser for TTSGI and this year we successfully raised approximately \$6,500.

A number of individual twins helped raise donations from family and friends, and one twin held a Facebook Memory Walk Fundraiser.



Thank you to all twins and family/friends who supported this wonderful event. We hope to see you all in Chattanooga in 2024!

NOTE: 50% of all Memory Walk donations go to the Scholarship Fund.

Margaret Daffin, Host 2023 Memory Walk
Patricia Wilbee-Matesic, Co-Host

RAFFLE & AUCTION DONORS

Domenick Abbate
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Matt Vierling
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Jessica Wickey
Patricia Wilbee-Matesic
Lia Woodall

Thank you to all who participated in the raffle and silent/live auctions at the 2023 Cincinnati Twinless Twins Conference. Your generosity and willingness to give is so appreciated.

To everyone who bought 50/50 raffle tickets, thank you.

If your name is not listed above, we apologize and thank you.

2023 MEMORY WALK DONORS

Individual Donors:

Jen Carter – in memory of Megan
Leslie Cutler – in memory of Matthew Howard Pennypacker
Ami Hoyt – in memory of Angela
Eileen Jensen – in memory of Elaine Moench
Laurie Meier – in memory of Linda Marie Meier
Lee Ann Pomis – in memory of Jamie Pomis
John Roberts Motor Works Company – in honor of Eileen Jensen
Karen Yingling – in memory of Kathy

Lea Eriksen Talamantes held a Facebook Fundraiser – in memory of Eve Richards:

Lea Eriksen Talamantes
Jason Richards
Martin Talamantes
Rachel Capito
Amy McMullen Hoops
Susan Benza Eriksen
Jenni Borgmeier Dropsey
Jennifer Marten

The following donors gave in honor of Patricia Wilbee-Matesic, in memory of her twin,

Pauline Kincaid:

Doreen Sweet
Pete Blaauboer
Paul Matesic
Karen Shields
Donna Matesic
Patricia Wilbee-Matesic

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



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

Kathleen & Ellis Armstrong
Julie & Ron Berry
Meggy & Brandon Biss
Adriana Boretti & Pedro Jaldin
Jane Borst
Nancy & Jerry Blurton
Kindel Burton
Diana & Derek Crossley
Paul & Margaret Daffin
Marion & Richard Dare
Joanne & Stephen Downes
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Marion & Gary Geer
Alice Gruber
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James Walsh
Jude Wiggins
Elizabeth Woelfel
Beverly & George Yeiter



Cincinnati, Ohio

2023 TTSGI CONFERENCE





DR. BRANDT MEMORIAL AWARD 2023

By Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie

Established in 2001, the Dr. Brandt Memorial Award is presented by the TTSGI Board of Directors to an individual whose contribution and dedication to helping twinless twins parallels that of the late Dr. Raymond W. Brandt.

This award was established to honor the memory of Dr. Brandt but also point to the future. We all strive to carry on this great man's work and life-long passion, so it is only fitting that recognition for exceptional efforts carry his name.

This year we were thrilled to recognize a twin who has served the organization in various capacities for the last 15+ years: Ms. Carolyn Shane.

Carolyn willingly volunteers her time to help other twinless twins, and has given many financial donations over the years. She served on the Board of Directors from 2008-2012 and has been a long-time Regional Coordinator. Prior to becoming an RC, she held regional meetings in the Northeast Region from 2006. Some years later, she created a succession plan for the RCs.

For many years, she has served on the Conference Committee, always bringing creative ideas to the Committee – she worked on graphic design, hosted breakout sessions, created a buddy system, as well as organizing the auctions and raffles.

Most recently, during the Pandemic, she initiated the Zoom meetings and what we now know, as Affinity Groups, and has organized these, at various times during the year, by involving other twinless twins in these groups. At the same time, she recategorized the cause of twin loss. I am sure I have missed many other worthy contributions over the years.

Our gratitude and thanks go out to Carolyn. Her contributions to TTSGI are greatly valued and will have lasting impact for decades. She has truly exemplified Dr. Brandt's passion and this award in his name is so well deserved.



SOMETIMES THE WORDS, "THANK YOU" ARE NOT ENOUGH!

Carolyn Shane, twin to Cary

The 2023 Conference will be one that I will never forget. The Closing Banquet, as always, was well-planned and the evening was a wonderful way to end the few days that we were able to be together to learn, to share, to make new friends, and to be with old friends.

This particular evening was a little different for me than the many banquets I enjoyed in the past. I was awarded the Dr. Raymond Brandt Memorial Award. I was surprised, shocked and I did my best to keep it together... I was shaking on the outside, as well as on the inside.

I am honored to have been chosen to receive the Dr. Raymond Brandt Memorial Award. I want to take this opportunity to gratefully thank the Board of Directors, Matt, Jan, Beverley, Larry, Margaret, Phillip, Alyssa, Ed, Lea, and Dena, for acknowledging my volunteer efforts. It has always been a labor of love and my way to give back to TTSGI for giving me the emotional strength to move forward with my life, knowing I am not alone and have the support of my fellow twins. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. This award means the world to me.

I also want to wholeheartedly thank Margaret Daffin for presenting me with the Dr. Raymond Brandt Award and for always supporting me all of these years. We may not speak often or see one another during the

year, but we always have and will continue to support each other's efforts in strengthening our organization.

No one can succeed working on their own. We all need the support, friendship, partnership, and collaboration of others. I want to take this moment in time to thank the following twins for being available to me, at all hours of the day, as I have thought through and worked on many projects, including being a Regional Coordinator, and the Affinity Groups, to name just two. Without the advice, suggestions, and the time given to me, I would not have been successful in any of my endeavors.

Many heartfelt thank you's and much appreciation go to Ed E., Janet B., Patricia W-M., Sheri P., Sandy M., Susan R., Sister Mary, and Domenick A. Special thanks to the Affinity Group Leadership team, past and present, Jessica W., Ed E., John W., Beverley S., Kim C., Margaret D., Ruth S., Gerry R., Jan K-G., Patricia W-M, Alyssa P., Margaret G., Larry A., Will D., and Joan A.

Last but not least by a long shot, I would not have been able to do anything positive or worthwhile without the guidance, encouragement and support of our hardworking, dedicated, and talented Executive Director, Michelle Getchell. Michelle, thank you for being you and for being there for me all of these many years.

ANGEL AWARD RECIPIENT 2023

By Margaret Gron, twin to Edith

Knowing a twin story, other than your own, is a gift I cherish and it has been an honor for me to get to know each individual twin along with the story they represent. My vision has always been to create a diverse twin community that gives twins a path to gather, connect, and continue to feel this beautiful phenomenon we call "twinship" and I've made this a reality with understanding, inclusion, and love.

My goal has been to curve out a smoother and easier path for those twins that follow and leave an honest mark on those twins encountered by supporting in the ways needed at the time it is needed. I never forget a twin and quietly always walk alongside them which is how I will take this Angel Award. Not from my list of accomplishments but from my unconditional and unwavering love twin to twin. ♥

-Margaret



DR. ROLAND MOUTON, JR., TWIN TO REVEREND DR. RONALD K. MOUTON, SR.

By Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie Wilson

"Reverend Dr. Ronald K. Mouton was a senior pastor at the East Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, Houston, Texas for more than 30 years, according to family members.

At about 5 p.m. on June 24, 2022, the Pastor was shot and killed at 6400 Gulf Freeway on the feeder road at Gould Street, just minutes from the church.

According to witnesses, it is believed Mouton was involved in a road rage dispute with a suspect driving a black sedan.

Mouton leaves behind a wife, four children, and 10 grandchildren. The family set up a memorial at the crash site. Current and former church members showed up throughout the day to pay their respects in disbelief over the senseless violence."

Dr. Ronald Mouton also leaves behind his twin brother and I would like to introduce to our membership, Dr. Roland Mouton, twin to Dr. Ronald Mouton.

On July 3, 2022, one of Houston's local news stations, KHOU, ran this sad story on their evening news, of the death of Dr. Ronald Mouton, and when they mentioned that Dr. Ronald was a twin, I knew I had to reach out to his twin, Dr. Roland.

After a little research to find Dr. Roland's church, I sent an email to the church's email address, knowing that I could not get any closer to Dr. Roland. I asked that they pass our (TTSGI) information to Dr. Roland, so that when he felt ready for our support, he could reach out to us.

I really wasn't sure if my message would get passed to Dr. Roland, but as he later told me "I planted the seed."

For a year, I heard nothing from Dr. Roland, but I hoped that he was doing OK. Unbeknownst to me, his church staff passed my email to him, and they decided that he needed to join TTSGI and travel to Cincinnati for our annual conference. They made it happen!

As a Pastor, Dr. Roland has been there to help his parishioners on a daily basis, but who was there to help him, in his hour of need?

So, on Friday morning, July 14, 2023, at the Cincinnati Conference, as I walked into the hotel's restaurant for breakfast, Margaret Gron came up to me and said "there is someone here that I know you will want and need to meet!" I turned around and could hardly believe my eyes, but there sat Dr. Roland Mouton. He jumped up and we gave each other a huge twin hug and we both shed a few tears.

I was so overwhelmed that Dr. Roland had found his way to our organization and he was actually in attendance at our 2023 conference. I hoped he gathered a huge amount from the conference, and met many wonderful twins during the few days he was there.



Also, during the conference, Carolyn Shane and Dr. Roland spoke about the possibility of him facilitating an Affinity Group in the future. I believe and hope that Dr. Roland has now found his twin family!

Since the conference, we have stayed in touch, and on Sunday, July 23rd, Margaret Gron, arranged a Zoom call for the twins who were at the conference from the South Central Region. It was an early morning call in order that Dr. Roland could join us before his 9:30 am church service.

Dr. Roland Mouton, welcome to Twinless Twins Support Group International.

Note: The individual who took the life of Dr. Ronald Mouton is DeShawn Longmire, 23 years old, an Uber driver. He is out on bond awaiting trial!



AFFINITY GROUP ZOOM GATHERINGS CREATED WITH YOU IN MIND

Carolyn Shane, twin to Cary

Since June of 2021, through Zoom, TTSGI has made it possible to connect Twinless Twins around the country and even around the world, going beyond our traditional regional meetings to create specialized affinity groups. With support from our TTSGI national organization, we now have a flourishing program of specialized meetings determined by how twins lost their twin or how recently that loss occurred. These meetings are announced in Twinless Times, on Facebook, on our Website, and through individual email invitations. This is one of the best benefits of your membership in TTSGI as only members can attend these meetings.

These gatherings would not take place without the caring dedication and time of our fellow members. When you are on Zoom with them, please take a moment to acknowledge and thank them. At this time, I want to thank Ed Echeverria who will serve as the Facilitator of the Unexpected and Sudden Loss due to Health Issues or Accidents Group.

I am happy to introduce a new Affinity Group, Spirituality Group which will have its first session during the Winter and will therefore be on a Winter/Summer schedule. More details to follow...

If you, as a TT member, see a need for a group that is NOT listed below or any other topic that is related to the Affinity Group, by all means reach out and share your thoughts with me at carolyneshane@gmail.com or by phone 908-463-4770.

In this article below, you will find a listing of each of these “affinity groups,” along with the date of their next meeting. We also report in Twinless Times on meetings that have already taken place.

I encourage each of our members to take advantage of these offerings and put at least one of these dates on your calendars now. Every “affinity group” has a host and a facilitator. When you receive the email invitation from the host, all hosts are listed below with their “affinity group”, be sure to open the email and respond positively. Once you “sign up for the meeting,” you will be contacted through email and given the Zoom link the day before the meeting. There are a few “affinity groups” that are sending the Zoom link in the initial announcement email without requesting an RSVP. We understand that members who do receive the link in advance are well aware that the link they receive is unique to them and know the importance of not sharing it.

We kindly request Zoom Gathering etiquette: If you want to sign-up for a meeting but you are not sure you can make it, then when you RSVP let the host know at that time you are a MAYBE. If your plans change for whatever reason and you no longer can attend the Zoom Gathering, then PLEASE let the host know so those on the call will not wait in vain for you to get onto Zoom. If you plan to be five or more minutes late, then PLEASE let the host know so those on the call will not wait for you to begin the gathering. Thank you!

We hope you will take advantage of this program. No one understands us more than another twin whose twin has passed away.

Affinity Group	Host	Facilitator	Meeting Date
Suicide Loss	Will Deutschendorf	Joan Angelis	October 22, 2023
Early Loss from the womb through age 3	Carolyn Shane	Alyssa Pratt	February 25, 2024
Alcohol and Drug Overdose	Carolyn Shane	Jessica Wickey	October 28, 2023
Recent Loss: 3 years or less	Ed Echeverria	Ed Echeverria	Sept 9, Nov 4, 2023
Unexpected and Sudden Loss due to health issues or accidents	John Watson	Ed Echeverria	September 23, 2023
Traumatic and Violent Loss includes murder, wrong place/wrong time	Carolyn Shane	Kim Crews	November 12, 2023
Mature Loss: 15 years and beyond	Carolyn Shane	Ruth Selig	October 15, 2023
Long-Term Illness	Garry Rayno	Jan Konya-Grabill	September 23, 2023
First Contact/New Members	Patricia Wilbee-Matesic	Alyssa Pratt	December 9, 2023
LGBTQIA+	Ed Echeverria	Larry Adams	Sept 9, Dec 9, 2023

AFFINITY GROUP GATHERINGS



Twin Loss by Suicide Affinity Group Gathering
 The group met on Saturday, July 22, 2023
 Host/Facilitator: Will Deutschendorf



Men's Only Affinity Group Gathering
 The group met on August 26, 2023
 Host/Facilitator: Margaret Gron



Traumatic & Violent Loss Affinity Group Gathering
 The group met on Sunday, April 30, 2023
 Host: Carolyn Shane / Facilitator: Margaret Daffin



Early Loss from the womb through age 3 Affinity Group
 The group met on Sunday, August 27, 2023
 Facilitator: Alyssa Pratt / Host: Carolyn Shane

REGIONAL GATHERINGS



West Coast Regional In-Person Gathering
 Seattle, May 20, 2023
 Regional Coordinator: Ed Echeverria



South Central In-Person Gathering
 Houston, Texas
 Regional Coordinator: Margaret Gron

INCOMING REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Welcome to Patty Kuhns, the new Regional Coordinator for the Southeast Region



Patty lost her twin brother, Paul, to a series of strokes in January 2019. The first year after his death she was “trying to find her way.” Recognizing that her twin grief was more profound than the loss of her parents and sister, she searched for counselors specializing in twin grief and found TTSGI.

Her husband retired in 2019 and had a family reunion scheduled in Seattle, WA the same time as the TTSGI conference, so she was unable to attend that year. To celebrate his retirement and to help her heal they took a road trip from Central Florida to Victoria B.C. and an Alaskan cruise. Due to the pandemic, her first and second conferences along with regional meetings were virtual and helpful, even though we could not be together. Her first in person conference was last year in her childhood hometown of Denver, where she laughed, cried, hugged, and learned that she was not alone.



When asked to consider being the Southeast Regional Coordinator she remembered the promise she made to her twin on his deathbed. She promised him that she would live her life after he was gone. Patty has always had a natural compassion for others and demonstrates this in her lifetime of volunteering and charity work. Giving back to others, twins especially, is the mission and purpose for which she was looking. This new purpose is a way to pay it forward by helping others along their twin grief journey, while honoring her promise to Paul.

She is embracing this new role as regional coordinator because she truly believes that as a group, we help each other by being present, telling our stories, healing together, and knowing we are not alone in our grief. She is hoping to hold multiple meetings both in person and virtually throughout the region, so we can be together.

REGIONAL ZOOM GATHERINGS:

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

INCOMING BOARD MEMBER



"Welcome to our new Board Member, Domenick Abbate, Jr."

By Margaret Daffin, twin to Josie

Domenick has been a member of TTSGI for the past nine years and lives in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. His twin brother, Frank J. Abbate, died in October, 2010 from Esophagus cancer after the 9/11 attacks. Both Domenick, and his twin brother, serve(d) with the fire department.

Domenick wrote the following when being nominated for a board position:

"My various skills, past and present experiences, and member affiliations will serve to enhance the TTSGI Board of Directors. I've dealt with challenging tasks, shared ideas, and raised funds for charity.

As a first responder, along with a former law enforcement background, public safety, and mental health awareness is my expertise. Additional strengths include, working well with current and past members, as well as the general public.

As a trained instructor in OSHA, CPR, self-defense, and self-awareness, I had the privilege to teach at multiple state agencies, such as social services, interventions.

I am FEMA-IOS certified in dealing with Local, State and Federal catastrophes. I have reiterated the importance of problem-solving, working with others, and acceptance for all walks of life, no matter what race, ethnicity, religion, et al.

In closing, in accepting me as a board member, I promise to dutifully serve TTSGI, not only for today's members, but also for tomorrow's twinless twins."

VOLUNTEER!

If you are interested in volunteering for TTSGI, there are many opportunities available to you!

We are looking for volunteers who can assist their Regional Coordinators.

Please contact your Regional Coordinator using the "Contact Us" form on the website or from the RC Listing on the back page of this newsletter.

Go to: www.twinlesstwins.org

IN RECOGNITION OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS SINCE SPRING 2023

American Online Giving Foundation (Sony Interactive Entertainment, LLC)

Tracie Lea Barrett – in memory of her twin, Darcie Rae Hudgens

Julie Belgue – Scholarship Fund, in memory of her twin, Martha

Bonfire.com

Raymond W. Clopton

Lynda Colville – in memory of her twin, Glendon Dudley

Grace Converse

Tasha Cram – in memory of her twin, Tonya Elizabeth King

Margaret Daffin – quarterly pledge and donations in memory of her twin, Josie

ExxonMobil Foundation – for volunteer hours by

Margaret Daffin in memory of her twin, Josie Wilson

Eduardo Echeverria

First Giving - GoFund Me

Goodsearch – website search engine

Donna Hague – in memory of her twin brother, Morris Hands

James (Renie) Hallford – in memory of his twin, Ernie Hallford

Lorraine Horstman – to assist with the needs of the organization, in memory of Elaine Flemming

IGive.com – money earned from online searches

Michael Jackson -in memory of his twin, Christine

Network for Good – anonymous donors through Facebook

Carolyn Shane – monthly pledge in memory of her twin, Cary

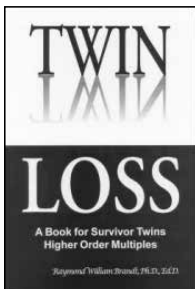
Luanne Southern – in memory of her twin, Lana Yoder Dale

Peter M. Spanitz – in memory of his twin, Paul

Karen Yingling – in memory of her twin, Kathy

We apologize if we have missed your name in this listing. Please let us know and we will recognize you in our Spring 2024 newsletter. Contact Margaret Daffin at medaffin@aol.com

RECOMMENDED TWIN BOOKS



“TWIN LOSS”

By Raymond W. Brandt, PhD

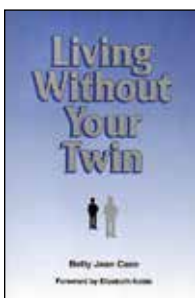
Dr. Brandt was the founder of Twinless Twins Support Group International and was considered by many an authority on twin loss. The 400-page book discusses all aspects of the loss and also speaks to the family members on how to help the survivor twin.



“WHEN GRIEF CALLS FORTH THE HEALING”

By Mary Rockefeller Morgan

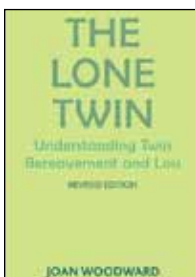
In this startlingly frank and moving memoir, Mary R. Morgan struggles to claim an individual identity, enabling her to face her twin brother Michael's death and the huge loss it engendered. With remarkable candor, she shares her spiritually evocative healing journey, which moves her forward into a life 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.

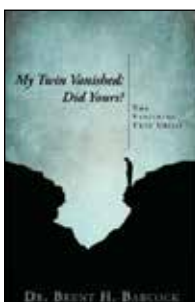


“THE LONE TWIN: A STUDY IN BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS”

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.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Matt Vierling – President (2026)
Jan Konya-Grabill – Vice President (2025)
Beverley Smyk – Secretary (2024)
Larry Adams – Treasurer (2024)
Margaret Daffin – Director (2025)
Phillip Drange – Director (2025)
Alyssa Pratt – Director (2026)
Eduardo Echeverria – Director (2024)
Domenick Abbate, Jr. – Director (2026)

Dena Stitt – Board Emeritus

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michelle Getchell

P.O. Box 190
Saline, MI 48176
contact@twinlesstwins.org

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 and she will mail it to you. Please note that the holiday issue will still be mailed to everyone.

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

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.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

SPRING ISSUE: Submission deadline: February 10th
Approximate publication date: March 21st

SUMMER ISSUE: Submission deadline: May 12th
Approximate publication date: June 21st

FALL ISSUE: Submission deadline: August 11th
Approximate publication date: September 21st

WINTER ISSUE: Submission deadline: October 20th
Approximate publication date: December 1st
(shorter cycle for the holidays)

Submissions should be emailed to:
twinlesstimes@yahoo.com

Twinless Times Co-Editors:
Brecky Peabody & Emily Heekin

LIST OF REGIONAL COORDINATORS – 2023

PLEASE USE CONTACT@TWINLESSTWINS.ORG TO CONNECT WITH YOUR REGIONAL COORDINATOR.

UNITED KINGDOM
JANET BAIRD
AFFILIATE MEMBER

AUSTRALIA
• OPEN •
AFFILIATE MEMBER

CANADA
PATRICIA WILBEE-MATESIC

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland
- Nova Scotia
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan

NORTHEAST
CAROLYN SHANE

- New Jersey
- New York

NEW ENGLAND
GARRY RAYNO

- Connecticut
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island
- Vermont

MID-ATLANTIC
GLORIA CHIANTELLA

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- District of Columbia
- Maryland
- Pennsylvania
- Virginia
- West Virginia

SOUTHEAST
PATTY KUHNS

- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina

NORTH CENTRAL
KIM LIFTON

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- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Montana
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Wisconsin

MIDWEST
JOYCE BLADE

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- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Missouri
- Ohio

SOUTH CENTRAL
MARGARET GRON

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- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Oklahoma
- Tennessee
- Texas

SOUTHWEST
LIA WOODALL

- Arizona
- Colorado
- Kansas
- New Mexico
- Nevada
- Utah
- Wyoming

WEST COAST
EDUARDO ECHEVERRIA

- Alaska
- California
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Oregon
- Washington

