

Marlene Lindback



When Marlene Lindback was just 11 ½ years old, she had a job as a soda jerk in a drugstore in the Chicago neighborhood where her family lived. One day twin brothers who had just moved to Chicago came into the drugstore and she waited on them. This would be the first time she laid eyes on her future husband, Carl. Those twins, Roy and Carl, were identical and Marlene remembers what a hoot they were, soon nicknamed the “Drugstore Cowboys” for being regular entertainment at the drugstore. They were seven years older than Marlene and so they usually hung out with Marlene’s older sisters’ crowd.

The twins soon joined the Army and served the country in the Korean War.

Years later the twins returned to Chicago, back from the War. After church one cold Christmas Eve, Marlene, now 17, ran into the twins at a local coffee shop after church and Carl, extremely shy, gave her a ride home and suggested they could meet the next week. And they did. That meeting is what Marlene considers her first date with Carl Lindback.

Carl and Marlene got married on September 24, 1955. Carl and his twin brother were inseparable, working together in the construction business. It was twin brother Roy who changed life’s direction for the newlyweds.

Roy had been injured in Korea and was struggling with his health, having more and more difficulty walking. He was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). His condition continued to get worse and the doctor suggested a warm climate might help. The senior Lindbacks decided to take a trip with Roy to South Florida. Swimming in the warm ocean waters seemed to be extremely helpful.

The senior Lindbacks decided to move with Roy to the Florida Keys as his diagnosis suggested he had about five years to live. Carl convinced Marlene to move to the Keys with them, just for one year, to help get them situated. So in 1956, the five Lindbacks drove three vehicles, caravan style, to Islamorada, bought an oceanfront property on Upper Matecumbe and began building the La Siesta Resort.

The men worked long hours on the resort. And Marlene learned to do the dry wall. They were able to get the first units along the ocean opened by February 1957, just a matter of months after their arrival. Soon that “just for one year” promise turned into four years. Marlene hated every one of those four years. She was a big city girl trying to acclimate to small town life away from her beloved family. The locals did not seem ready to welcome the newcomers from Chicago with opened arms. Those were a tough four years... she had three baby boys to take care of along with running their new resort and helping with construction.

In 1960 the devastating path of Hurricane Donna hit the Florida Keys and destroyed the Lindbacks' resort, all of their equipment and their vehicles. They had to start over from scratch. As Marlene looked around at the destruction all over town, she was heartbroken. She realized for the first time how much she had grown to love Islamorada and the people here.

Recovery from the storm was not easy. Carl worked tirelessly building, chartering his boat, the Tiki, and installing terrazzo floors all up and down the Keys, just to make ends meet.

Carl's parents and wheelchair bound twin brother, Roy, lived at the resort for many years, right near Carl and Marlene and their four sons.



Marlene and Carl sold La Siesta in 2005. In 2009, they bought the famous Lorelei, determined to keep it a local spot where people could congregate, enjoy great entertainment and a beautiful sunset. And so the promise of "just for one year" turned into decades of love and dedication to Islamorada by an altruistic couple and their four sons, who all now have businesses of their own in the Keys.

Carl died at age 89 on March 12, 2018, a most tragic time for the family and the community. But what memories Marlene has of her 62 years with an amazing husband, father, and community visionary.

And so, what about twin brother Roy – the one who was the cause of the Lindbacks' move to Islamorada in the first place. Eventually, completely paralyzed, he had only the use of one hand. They hired an aide to help...Evelyn. Roy and Evelyn fell in love and got married, moved to her home in Titusville to live happily ever after. Roy, though expected to live but 5 more years back in 1955, died in 2015, at age 86.

The absolute pride of Marlene's life: her four sons, their families, and the pride she feels in the reputation the Lindback family developed over the last six decades.



Just before Carl died, Marlene said to him "We've had great times, a great ride and no regrets."

How everyone at Matecumbe United Methodist Church loves that lady in the back row and the joy she brings to so many.