

Book Party 8/4/21 draft

After Nick's brilliant foray into family history yesterday, think of this evening as an outlaw strand of that saga.

As many of you may have noticed, I pay attention to sartorial matters most of the time. So, I gave thought to what to wear for this occasion. Here is what I decided.

(Suze tee-shirt) If you knew Suze-ee as I know Suze-ee....

We would not all be together now, if not for our Suze.

And thanks to all for coming, with all the risks that has entailed.

This book, as anyone who has read it will tell you, covers more than 80 years of experience, triumphs, disappointments and as will become apparent, a great many names, including a number of those present here today.

For the purpose of this occasion, I'll focus on what I call in the book, Lakeside, which is much more than the name of a place.

I was invited here for the first time in the fall of 1972, during as I recall, the World Series which we watched in the brand new "penthouse" of the playhouse. I had met Albert (I never did call him Bud) and Carroll in their baronial Prague residence. Big brother Peter was polite there. But Tony was photographed wearing a Viking helmet and swinging a sword over my head while I looked agape from my bed.

Later, I also met "cousin" Kate by chance at National Airport as she was heading back to Duke. And Uncle H. checked me out over drinks at the Madison Hotel, across from The Washington Post building, one evening with Suze looking on.

We were married on August 18, 1973, in a space behind the downstairs garage on sod planted by Ambassador Sherer. The ceremony was

written by Suze and me. But the presider was Bon, the only logical choice for leadership. This was before you could buy legitimacy on the internet, so the civil ceremony had taken place that morning in a cozy living room of a St. Joseph based Justice of the Peace. Our accompaniment, aside from Peter, Tony and my brother Robert, was a gurgling fish tank.

Pictures of the wedding ceremony show a great many of you here, adorable cousins, now approaching or enjoying middle age. Uncle Paul and Kate were in attendance. To understand how long ago this was, Paul was 48 – two years older than Katherine is now. Suze and I were wearing white and looked like members of a chorus at a young Republican convention.

As we departed, someone snapped a picture from behind of Albert and Tony hands entwined behind their backs for mutual sustenance.

Katherine joined us at St. Joseph Hospital on July 22, 1975, and Evan arrived in London on December 24, 1976. They were the first of a new generation of Russells, which then included Bon, her five offspring and spouses and 16 in the cousins crowd. I was the first member of the family who was not, to put it simply, a Protestant.

Aside from our greatly increased numbers now, a measure of what has happened in the years since is what is known as “diversity.” When Ali and Taylor announced last week that they were adopting Julian, Ben and Peter Sanford has exactly the same reaction, according to Suze:

That means that four of our families have adopted children and what a wonderfully diverse group they are bringing with them joys and challenges and enhance our collection of people, personalities and interests.

We are gathered in 2021, not exactly in the spirit we had intended because of Covid but with, to be absolutely clear, a very great deal to be celebrating, being together, recognizing the past and with every reason to believe in the future.

One of my favorite descriptions of the Russell clan came from Lewis Manilow, a Chicago based mogul, whose widow Susan now rents the Big House every summer with her family. Evan was dining with Lew in Cairo in about 2004 and said that he was a member of the Russells.

“The Russells,” Lew exclaimed, “a classy bunch.”

For more about the Russells as we await Nick’s next film, there is a website called [An Especially Good View.com-Virtual Attic](http://AnEspeciallyGoodView.com-VirtualAttic) which has lots of pictures and even films of interest to this classy bunch. And if you want to get a glimpse of Bon, Peter and Suze in white, Albert, Carroll and some very cute kids, they are there on film.

Lets party.