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Falcon author fueled by faith



The story of her life, of a childhood filled with fear and abuse, was not one Patsy Wurster cared to share with anyone - not even her children.

"Basically, all I would tell them was I had a rough childhood," said the longtime Falcon resident.

People who knew bits and pieces of her story encouraged her to write a book, but she was reluctant to relive those early days, to dredge up those painful memories.

But eventually, fueled by her faith, "I had this desire, or urging, I guess, to tell the story," she said. "It is a story of being protected and guided. A lot of it is about forgiveness. It was all about the journey."

That journey is in the title of her book, "My Million-Mile Journey," self-published through Xulon Press, a Christian publisher. The title is meant to be taken both literally and figuratively, she said.

"I literally traveled a million miles on United Airlines through my work, Wurster said. "And from where I started to where I ended up was, like, a million miles apart."

She started in Texas; born in Amarillo, where she lived with her mom, dad, sister Carol and Tommy, her half-brother. Her father, a mechanic and a deacon of an Assembly of God Church, had a dangerous temper that he often unleashed on her mother.

"I really believe he had a demon," Wurster said. "He was very violent."

When Wurster was 6 years old, her parents split up – and the true nightmare began: eviction from their home, followed by a bewildering series of homes. Both parents began to drink – her mother an "everyday drinker" and her father a binge drinker, Wurster said. He became more violent, using his fists on the women in his life instead of a belt.

At age 9, she was seized by her dad and taken to California, plucked away from her mother and Carol, her "protector." Move after move followed. "We were basically on the run," Wurster said. Four years went by before she was reunited with her mother; by then, sister Carol was out on her own.

Wurster got married at age 15; her husband, Tommy, was 19. Dropping out of high school, she saw her new life as a "full of promise," she writes in her book. "No more alcohol. No more abuse. No more desertion. Tommy loved me and I loved him."



Patsy Wurster, posing inside her Falcon home, is the author of "My Million-Mile Journey: Finding Fulfillment Through Faith and Forgiveness." Photo by Bill Radford

At age 18, she gave birth to her daughter Shannon.

"When I had Shannon, it gave me purpose — purpose to rise above what my circumstances had been," Wurster said. She earned her GED, trained to become a nurse's aide and then went through nursing school and became a surgical nurse.

Then came baby No. 2, daughter Mandy. After finding success holding Mary Kay parties, and wanting to spend more time with the two girls, Wurster quit her nursing job. She rose through the Mary Kay ranks, honing sales skills that would prove essential later, but her marriage was crumbling.

The couple sought a fresh start in Colorado Springs, where Carol lived, but the marriage couldn't be saved. At age 30, Wurster became a single mom.

"I had prayed so hard for my marriage," she said. With those prayers unanswered, she felt betrayed by God.

But her faith would return, stronger than ever. (Her book is subtitled "Finding Fulfillment Through Faith and Forgiveness.") She also would find a new love, Gary Wurster; they were married in June 1987 at Black Forest Community Church. Wurster said they became the first family to move into Woodmen Hills. An amazing corporate career took off, one that took Patsy on trip after trip to New York and London and elsewhere, and included 21 years with McGraw-Hill. She retired in 2014.

"My purpose now is to use my story to help other people," she said, hoping her tale will inspire.

"Despite my rocky beginnings, it's been an amazing ride, full of ups and downs and hairpin turns," she writes near the end of her book. "I wouldn't trade it for anything. If I did, I wouldn't be who I am today."

("My Million-Mile Journey" can be ordered online at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. You can follow Patsy Wurster's blog at millionmilejourney.com.)

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