

**Weedman Family
Hall of Fame**

**Third Induction: August 21, 2004
Weedman National Family Gathering
San Diego, California**

Purpose and Objective

The purpose of the Who's Who in the Weedman Family is to recognize some of those family members who have made a distinctive positive contribution that brings honor to the family.

Those eligible are direct descendents or those married to direct descendents of **Christian, Sr. and Elizabeth Weedman, Olaf and Brita (Andersdotter) Weedman** (the Swedish line), or **Philip (Felipe) William and Mary Barbara Antonia (Hainsman) Weedman**. This program will initially be for Weedman family members in the United States. As we learn more about those with roots in Australia, Canada, and England it may be expanded to include those family members.

Selection is taken from a list of nominations and then screened by a committee of family members.

I recall my first trip to Farmer City to meet **Mrs. Frances Weedman Miles**. She had a wealth of knowledge about the family particularly those descended from **George and Charlotte (Huhn) Weedman**. She also had very strong (and sometimes erroneous) feelings about the family beginnings!

One statement made by Mrs. Miles was "...the family is basically made up of yeoman farmers..." which is essentially true. Clearly, there is nothing wrong with being a farmer and some in the Weedman family have been quite successful in agriculture. However, there are those who have excelled in their chosen life endeavor or made some notable claim to fame. The Hall of Fame is intended to highlight those who have made names for themselves and the family by making a particular success in life or through an event that is historically noteworthy.

So, we continue our on-going project to recognize achievements in the Weedman Family.

Nick Weedman

August, 2004

2004 Inductees

Charles Vern Weedman	Attorney
Lauren H. Weedman	Writer and Performer
Olive Anne (Polly) Weedman	Pioneer Radio and Television Broadcaster

2002 Inductees

Christian Weedman, Sr.	Original Immigrant
Nick Weedman	Businessman

2000 Inductees

Posthumous Awards

Mary Weedman Myers	First Native Born Woman to Cross the Ohio River to settle in the Ohio Territory
John Jesse Weedman, Jr.	Farmer and businessman
Freeman Weedman Burford	Oilman
Catherine Bishop Weedman	Maternal Head of Family of Medical Professionals
Dr. James C. Munch	Pharmacologist
George Perry Weedman	Educator

Living Person Awards

Dee Brown	Author and Historian
Gena Theiss	Author
Marianne J. Montgomery	Editor, Weedman Newsletter
Dr . Daniel W. Weedman	Astronomer

Charles Vern Weedman, Attorney

Charles Vern Weedman achieved success as a notable attorney who practiced law in Los Angeles. In the 1970s, he represented a number of Hollywood celebrities including Dean Martin and Claudine Longet, the wife of Andy Williams.

It was perhaps the defense of Claudine Longet that brought Mr. Weedman fame as an attorney. Claudine Longet was estranged from her husband, Andy Williams, and was in a ski resort in Colorado when her then boy friend met his death through a stabbing. Ms. Longet was charged with the crime and one of her defense attorneys was Charles Weedman. Ms. Longet was acquitted of the crime.

Charles Vern Weedman was born 26 November 1927 in California to Charles Shelby and Patricia Ann (Larsen) Weedman. Charles Shelby Weedman was a locomotive engineer.

Charles married Carolyn J. Knight (2 July 1933 – 8 February 1970), a daughter of Governor Goodwin J. Knight, on 20 August 1955. The couple had two sons, Jonathan Curtis Weedman (30 August 1959) and Robert Jess Weedman (20 June 1965).

Mr. Weedman later married Sherry Bond and they had one son, Jeffrey Max Weedman.

Mr. Weedman resides in Malibu, California and is retired from the practice of law.

His lineage: Charles Vern Weedman⁶, Charles Shelby⁵, William Simpson⁴, Willis³, Christian, Jr.² and Christian Weedman, Sr.¹.

Lauren Huntington Weedman

Writer & Performer

Lauren Huntington Weedman has achieved success as a writer, performer and comedienne.

She made her television debut on Comedy Central's Emmy Award-winning, **The Daily Show with Jon Stewart** in 2001 as a featured correspondent. It was at that same time that Lauren was a regular on National Public Radio's national political satire show, *Rewind*, and appeared in her solo show, **Homecoming**, off Broadway at the Westside Theater. The New York Times said of Lauren and *Homecoming*, "...like Bob Newhart in his early stand-up routines, she's particularly good at making her points – and making us feel clever. Most important, she's just plain funny, physically and verbally..". For two years, Lauren was also a cast member for the long running local-turned-national comedy show, *Almost Live* for Comedy Central. In 2001, *Homecoming* was also featured in HBO's U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado.



After studying, writing and performing in Amsterdam for five years, Lauren returned to the States with a bang. Her first play, **Homecoming**, began as a 15-minute performance art piece that grew into a full-length show that ultimately toured with the Seattle Repertory Theater. **Homecoming** earned Lauren the honor of being published in *Women Playwrights: The Best Plays of 2002*.

In the Fall of 2002, The Empty Space Theater in Seattle premiered her latest solo work, **Rash**. Later that year, **Rash** was recognized by *The Seattle Times* Footlight Awards, with nods for both The Best New Play and Best Solo Performance. Both **Rash** and Lauren received tremendous reviews including, "...Weedman comes so very close to celebrating indulgence rather than just contemplating it that when

she manages to do both things at once, it's dizzyingly brilliant: She ends up hitting all her targets – including herself..." (*Seattle Weekly*).

Lauren currently lives and performs in Los Angeles. **Rash** will be opening Off-Broadway in 2004.

Lauren is the daughter of Sidney Hatfield and Sharon Huntington Weedman of Indianapolis. Her Weedman lineage: Sidney Hatfield Weedman⁷, Ralph⁶, George Perry⁵, Green Berry⁴, William³, Christian, Jr.² and Christian Weedman, Sr.¹.

Olive Annie (Polly) Westaby Weedman,

A True Survivor

By George Anne Weedman Planck

It wasn't long after her birth of English parentage to Robert Spencer Westaby, M.D. and Annie Otter Westaby on April 23, 1914, in Madison, South Dakota, that her grandfather ignored her birth name of "Olive Annie" and called her "Polly Anna," a nickname she has retained all her life. He perceived that even as a toddler she saw the world through rose-colored glasses.

Her childhood was spent in Madison, with her parents, two sisters, and brother. They were all competitive individuals with highly developed talents. Their father was a busy physician/surgeon and their mother, a graduate of Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois, had her own successful career as a dramatic reader. She presented programs at colleges, churches, and various schools, booked by the Eastern Lyceum Bureau.



She demanded excellence from her children and established their life's philosophy consciously and subconsciously. "Nothing is impossible; do better than your very best; be prepared to make sacrifices to meet your goal, and you will succeed." Her brother, Robert Spencer Westaby Jr. (1923-2001) followed in his father's footsteps and became a doctor; one of her sisters, Geraldine Westaby Kickbush (1912-1984) specialized in education for the mentally gifted and handicapped, working in cooperation with Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Her younger sister, Dorothy McCray (1915) is nationally known for her work as a painter and printmaker and has received many awards for her work. At the age of 76, she opened her own art studio in Silver City, New Mexico, where she is emeritus professor of art at New Mexico Western University.

Each decade of her life has held its unique challenges, heartbreaks, and victories for Polly. She was graduated from the University of Iowa with a triple major: theater, speech therapy, and psychology. After a brief but exciting career working for Harry Reasoner, Sr., as a talent agent for Northwest Assemblies in Minneapolis, she married her college sweetheart George David Weedman (Jan 27, 1914-1996), the son of Claude and Mary Weedman from Faith, South Dakota.

Since there was no speech therapist in the school system at their new place of residence in Mitchell, South Dakota, she began a private practice in their home, teaching students from kindergarten through college age. This allowed her to continue as a wife and mother to their three toddlers, a daughter, George Anne Weedman Planck (1939), and twin boys, Robert Spencer Weedman (1940-1949) and Richard David Weedman, 1940. However, this was during the early days of World War II, and teachers were very scarce. Soon the superintendent of schools offered her a full-time position as a junior high school teacher. The class he had in mind had 42 students who had forced two teachers to quit in tears. For some reason he felt Polly possessed the rare combination of snake charmer and lion tamer it would take to handle this class. When she told him she could not leave their three babies to teach school away from home, he arranged for the

school system to pay a full salary, even though Polly did not possess a teaching credential; hired a full-time housekeeper and full-time babysitter; and paid their salaries in addition to hers.

She finished the year successfully and was offered an identical contract for the next year, but her husband, George, had accepted a position in Rapid City, located in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota.

In Rapid City she again accepted private students for speech therapy and for declamatory contests. Then the local American Association of University Women asked her to volunteer as head of the AAUW drama group. This gave her the opportunity to use her theater skills from college, and soon it developed into a successful community theater, which continues production to this day—more than fifty years later.

A few years later, the local radio station approached Polly about taking over a women's radio show. Again she was reluctant because she did not want to leave their now school-age children home without their mother. The radio station accommodated her by installing equipment allowing her to broadcast the show from home. The children were threatened, upon pain of death, never to interrupt during the 15-minute time period she was on the air. Years later, she learned their enterprising eight-year-old son, Richard, now an art dealer in Naples, Florida, had been selling tickets to the neighborhood children to peek through the window to watch me broadcast on the radio.

The Weedman family's lives were almost shattered when one of the twins, Robert Spencer, was killed in a car-pedestrian accident. However, Polly's deep faith, the support of her husband and family, and her demanding work as a radio and later television program personality with daily programs were the therapy that sustained her emotionally and intellectually. She continued to broadcast five days a week for the next 25 years. Her radio show broadcast from home grew into a more than full-time enterprise, especially when television finally came to Rapid City. She began writing, producing, and appearing in everything from local talent shows to children's programs.. She did the research, the scenario and scripting for "Four Seasons West," a story of South Dakota's cattle industry. The production was given the National Western Heritage Award for the best western documentary

At one time she had as many as four shows simultaneously – The Polly Weedman Show; Aunt Polly's Children's Hour; Talent Review, and a once-a-week half-hour radio show. Christmas Shopping Bag, which was later developed into a road show in the West River area. Glen Yarbrough, Paul Williams, and Tom Brokaw are just a few of the now nationally known personalities who were all with her and with KOTA Radio and TV during those years. Paul Williams frequently appeared on the Iseman Talent Review, a talent show where she was writer, producer and director. The winner was awarded an all-expense paid trip to Europe and to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. Tom Brokaw was one of her television cameramen during his college years. Polly had the longest fully sponsored women's radio show in the nation

In 1950 Polly was named "Woman of the Year," by the Rapid City Business and Professional Women's Club. Later she awarded the *McCalls Magazine* 10th Annual Gold Mike Award for Service to the Family: "Her radio interview series titled "Marriage is What You Make It," focused attention on the community's need for a marriage counseling service," according to the McCalls judges. The show aired marital problems and followed up with workshops attended by teenagers, couples going steady, young marrieds as well as parents with teenage children. She was runner-up the next year in another division. However, she felt one of her

greatest achievements was her involvement with retarded children which led to formation of the Rapid City Association for Retarded Children.

Other awards and honors followed during her years as a radio and television personality, but that all ended when she contracted Parkinson's disease in 1968. It attacked her throat, and she lost her voice. After years of readjustment, new medication, and prayer finally restored her health, she learned to adapt to life as wife and grandmother, perfecting her bridge game and catching up with the social commitments she had been forced to ignore during her working years. She and her husband, George, enjoyed retirement years together with cruises, winters in South Carolina or California, ballroom dancing, and competitive duplicate bridge.

Then at age 75, the lights went out. The diagnosis was macular degeneration. Within days, in spite of laser surgery, she was completely blind in one eye and had defective sight in the other. She could no longer read or drive a car. Eight months later a deep black velvet curtain closed out all the sunlight in her right eye. There was no pain, just darkness. At first she was angry at God for allowing this to happen, at her grandparents and parents for passing on defective genes, and at the world in general. As she said, "I really had a major pity party."

"However, I could not endure this dark night of the soul for the rest of my life," she said. Within a few weeks a rehabilitation teacher from South Dakota Human Services, Division of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired, came to their home to teach her how to take care of herself and their home.

The South Dakota affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind taught her white cane travel. She also learned Braille, which she found easy and fascinating. At first she wanted to know only enough to play bridge with Braille cards. That didn't take long, and soon she was joining friends at their weekly bridge parties. However, she became so interested in the Braille code that she enrolled in the Hadley Correspondence School for the Blind in Winnetka, Illinois, and eventually became certified to teach Braille. Unable to see, her typewriter was of little value so she learned to use a computer with voice output (computer and lessons provided by the state rehabilitation agency).

Also, about this time she was given a Lowry organ. With the help of a local organ instructor, she learned to play the organ and again express a lifetime love of music. This was a challenge for the teacher for he had never taught a blind person before. He placed a corn pad at middle C on the keyboard, and they both learned together. He later wrote a book on giving music lessons to the blind.

These services were provided by experts or professionals (with the exception of the organ teacher) at no cost to her. They were all part of the many free services of the National Federation of the Blind, South Dakota Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the South Dakota Braille & Talking Book Library. Thanks to them and their continuing encouragement, she said she learned to do everything she did before she lost her sight, except drive a car, and discovered that blindness does not put an end to joyful living.

In 1996, due to their failing health, She and her husband George, moved to Naples, Florida to live with their son Richard. George died a few months later. Polly is now residing in a retirement/assisted living home in Naples.



Polly was married to George David Weedman whose Weedman lineage was: George David Weedman⁷, Claude Henry⁶, William Martin⁵, Jeremiah⁴, Jacob³, George², and Christian Weedman, Sr.¹. His great, great grandmother was Catherine Bishop Weedman who was inducted into the Weedman Hall of Fame in 2000.
