

*The biography of a writer/teacher turned business owner.*

**And So, It All Began**  
By Elizabeth Kearney

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# AND SO IT ALL BEGAN

A woman with blonde hair tied in a bun, wearing a blue patterned top, is shown in profile from the chest up. She is looking out over a cityscape at sunset. The background is a soft, golden glow from the setting sun, with some greenery in the foreground.

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faculty member. Since she was on a Cal Tech Board, here were a number of times that Liz was invited to dine in Cal Tech's faculty dining room, and each time, she met and enjoyed listening to the faculty members who joined the groups for lunch.

Another interesting event took place at that time, too. Liz was invited to be on a panel which was composed of mainly scientists and engineers associated with JPL. One of the individuals on the panel was Dr. Gell Mann (remember, she had met him before), and although all of the presentations were interesting, his was the most fascinating. After the program was over, the panel members listened to the back and forth sharing of ideas and information by their fellow guests – all of whom were involved in the space program in some way.



Dr. Murray Gell-Mann, Nobel Laureate in Physics 1969

On a number of occasions, Liz and her husband, Mike, were guests at various other Cal Tech functions, and each time the so-called social

occasions were both enlightening and educational. What the guests considered “shop talk”, Mike and Liz found fascinating.

During this time, Liz, Mike and the children took a number of trips to Sacramento which is where Mike had gone to high school after leaving Portland where he had been enrolled in a military boarding school. When they were in Sacramento, they usually stayed in the guest house at Dr John Anderson’s, and it was there one summer when Liz penned her first book, How To Write A Composition.

That had come about because she had been unable to find a good textbook on the topic for her class, had gone to see a publisher with whom Mike was working on a project, mentioned her search to the publisher who said he was looking for just such a book and if she would write it, he would publish it. That is exactly what happened. She wrote it, he published it, and she had a text for her students and her first book on the market. Although she had written and had some of her poetry published before, but this was her FIRST book.

Sometime after Liz and Mike had moved into their new house, it became obvious that Michael was interested in topics about which Mike and Liz knew little. One day, Liz became aware of the fact that the fourteen-year-old from across the street was spending a great deal of time with her young ten-year-old son. Concerned, she made a point of eaves-dropping on one of their conversations and found that it was literally a discussion being carried on in technical terms that were foreign to her. It seems that they were discussing topics related to the mechanical “gadgets” that they were trading. What a relief that was, but, oh, did she feel dumb.

Her two children were delightful, and seemed to get along very well except for the fact that her daughter (the younger of the two) seemed to be an excellent trader and loved to work out to her advantage trades of

items that she had but her brother wanted or that he had and she wanted.



**The Kearney Home On Montechico In Monterey Park**



**The View From the House's Balcony**

During this time, her children attended a small private school in South Pasadena. The school was run by a British couple, and it had high academic standards. From there they went to Pilgrim School, a private school near where Liz had grown up. Many of Liz and Mike's friends



## Nearby Church



## Alvarado Terrace Homes

Liz moved her furniture in and settled into what was to be her home for a number of years. The neighbors were delightful, and once Rick had finished remodeling the property that he was working on in the Hollywood area, he sold it, and took another look at what had been done on the house that was now called Malvern.



He made it a point to become acquainted with the people on the street, one of whom, Carolyn McCullough, had lived there for her entire life, and he took great interest in the history of the street and its occupants.

One of the women, Mrs. Lydia Mitchell, who had grown up in her house, had been a friend of some of the nation's most notable people. For example, John Paul Getty had been Lydia Mitchell's friend when they were teenagers. (Getty's picture as a teenager is shown below.)



**John Paul Getty As A Boy**

## **The Getty Home At That Time**

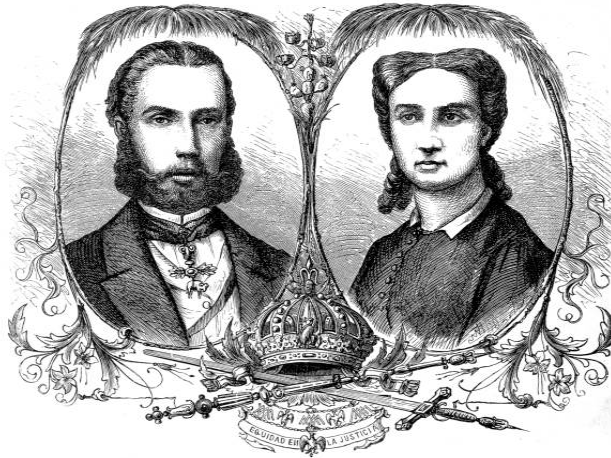


Lydia Riverol Mitchell, the granddaughter of an early Governor of Baja, Mexico, had at one time been married to a well-known movie producer, but she now lived alone in the house that her father had purchased at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.



## **The Mitchell Home and Mrs. Lydia Mitchell**

As time passed and more was learned about her past plus the history of both Los Angeles and the street itself, it was learned that her father, who had owned a fleet of shipping vessels, had been a friend of the Emperor and Empress of Mexico (small ivory pictures of the two of them were on her fireplace mantle). It was really rather like being in the middle of a living history lesson to talk to her.



### **Emperor Maximilian and his wife, Carlota**

Mrs. Mitchell became a very special friend to both Rick and Liz, and it was fascinating to listen to the stories she shared. She was very independent and walked several blocks to the grocery store to do her shopping, but she always wore old clothes because she felt that they would attract less attention and that she was safer if she did so. The one thing that didn't fit the look of her attire was the expensive tennis shoes that she always wore.

One day she came over and gave Liz a gorgeous silk scarf that she said had been given to her by her dear friend Mrs. Robinson (the owner of one of Beverly Hills' most exclusive stores). It was truly beautiful. Lydia Mitchell loved to give gifts to those she liked, and she frequently stopped

by or sent her son over with something that she “just knew you would enjoy.”

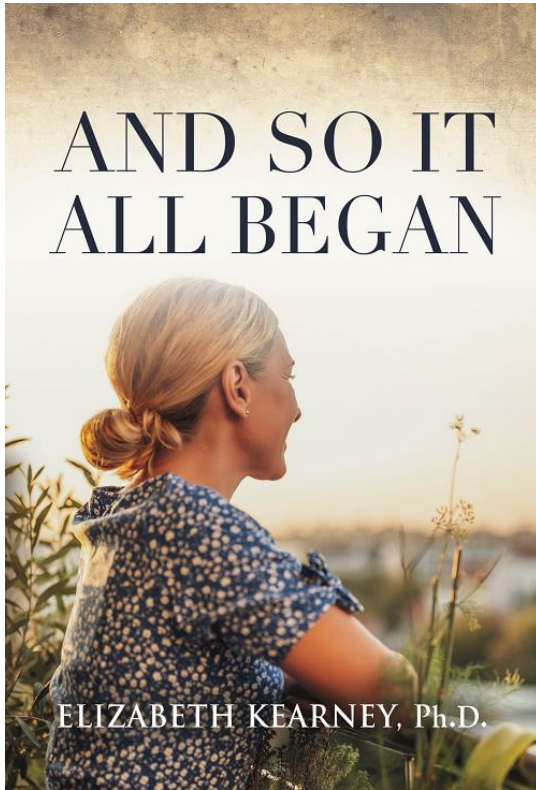
On another day, she stopped by on her way home to deliver a present that she had bought “for Liz and Rick”. When she knocked on the door, Liz’s daughter looked out the window and saw what she considered to be a disreputable looking old woman and said, “Mother, don’t answer the door.” When Liz looked out the window and saw Mrs. Mitchell, she promptly went to the door and welcomed her in. What a shock Liz’s daughter had and how delighted she was to get to know one of the nicest and most interesting women she would ever meet.

In fact, that was true of all of the owners of the houses on the street – the people were all educated, delightful, and interesting. What a wonderful surprise it was to find this little Oasis in the middle of an almost forgotten section of Los Angeles.



### **Historical Designation Plaque and Robert Chattel**

Over a short period of time, Rick knew them all and realized that the street was really a rich “page” of Los Angeles’ history. This is a good time to mention that although Rick’s degree was not in the field of architecture or art, his artistic talent had resulted in the sale of a number of his paintings, before he had shifted his career focus and had chosen to turn “needy” houses into attractive structures and homes.



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