

A newsletter for the members and supporters of the
Parsons Family Association

The President's Welcome

By Deanna Parsons Simons,
President

Hearty virtual hugs to one and all! I know we all welcome the coming of summer and a renewed sense of normalcy following these many difficult months through the COVID-19 pandemic. One very large touchpoint of normalcy is our Parsons Family Association reunion; this year marks the 98th, which is quite an accomplishment! **This year's reunion will be held virtually on July 10th, 2021, starting at 11:30am through Zoom.**

We will provide all members with a link to join in the fun, as well as an agenda for the business meeting. I would ask that anyone who has had a change of email to please send it to me at deanna.simons@cornell.edu so that I may update the membership list accordingly.



I would also like to announce some wonderful updates. Most notably is our redesigned website www.parsonsfamilyassn.org. This was a collaboration of several of our Executive Committee members and I would like to formally thank those who contributed to a stunning outcome. One marked achievement will be the ability to accept online monies for membership dues as well as any reunion fees and merchandise. Next, I am pleased to let all know that the Parsons family files that we have had in dusty cabinets in clutter closets have all been digitized and will be shared with PFA members. This sharing will be contingent on a working email from each member, so please make sure we have your correct email on file. I do not want anyone to miss out on the opportunity to access this vast resource. Please check out the website and leave a comment in the Guestbook. I look forward to seeing everyone in July, and to begin planning our reunion for next year where we can return to in-person events!

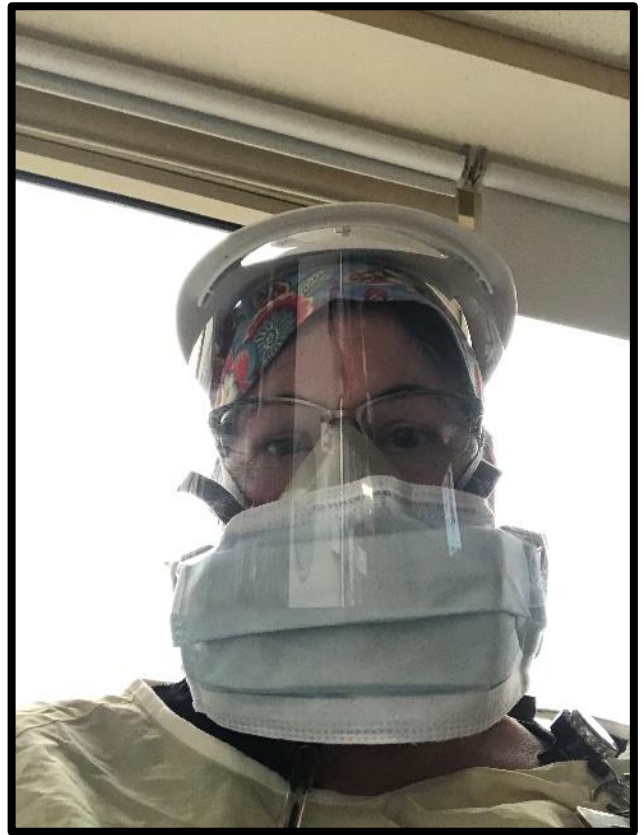
Email us your contact information!

Send an email to parsonsfamilyassociation@gmail.com with your name, street address, phone number, and email address to make sure we have your most recent information. This will ensure you get all the details on upcoming reunions, new member benefits, and the Cornet's Chronicle newsletter!

A Nurse's Perspective on Caring for COVID-19

By Trisa Parsons Palacio, Secretary

As COVID-19 crept into our lives and into the hospitals, it changed us all forever. One of the most startling and impactful changes was the physical barriers that were set up for our safety but resulted in a form of isolation, not only to our patients but to ourselves as nurses. New vocabulary popped up daily such as COVID-19 numbers, don on/off, warm units, rapid testing, modified contact isolation, and yes, lunch-sized paper bags. When supplies were very tight, we would keep our N95 masks in a separate paper bag. We would date the bag, mark, and reuse them as directed by the command center whose guidance changed daily. As time went on masks debuted, such as an N95 respirator, which looked like a mask from the Battlestar Galactica movie, and the elastomeric mask, which looked like scuba gear. Also adorning a N95 respirator was usually part of a dual-mask system where we wore multiple at once. Further PPE included your face shield, bright yellow full-length gown and two sets of gloves. Many staff wore hair bands with buttons on the side to hold the face mask away from your ears.



As I approach a warm unit, double doors greet me with a halting, “Do Not Enter without appropriate PPE.” A sentinel “don on” station stands at attention to my left. Immediately I enter a different world. As staff, we all look alike whether we are doctors, nurses, housekeepers, secretaries, social workers, or dietitians. We look like worker bees scurrying in and out of rooms. What was most alarming is how difficult it was to communicate with your patient. We learned various tactics and resources to help us communicate with our patients and help the patients communicate with their loved ones. It still was tough.



Physically wearing all the gear soon made you extremely warm, to the point of sweating. As a dialysis nurse caring for a COVID-19 patient, I would be in their small rooms for four hours straight. I would care for three patients a day during the peak, which equates to 12 hours per day in isolation. Over time, we could sense which patients would make it and which would not. These patients dealt with severe isolation. There were no longer any visitors or ancillary staff coming in to see them. Their meals delivered on paper trays. That being said, I have to say I'm very proud of the nurses that I worked along with who took extra time to spend with their patients providing comfort to them as best they could. I felt that the camaraderie of the nurses was very respectful to each other and to the patients. It was interesting to note the level of respect that staff

showed to each other because we knew in order to survive this we had to act together as a team, as a community to care for our patients.

After I completed my dialysis treatment, I would leave the unit and “don off”. Returning to APC 9, I would take a break. We always felt a form of dehydration. I could take off my N95 mask to eat, but did so in isolation. We ate alone. Our faces had embedded imprints from our masks. Many experienced transient “COVID dimples”, our faces reacting to the masks.

As strong and resilient as we were, we were scared. Not only for the patients themselves but also our families and loved ones. Many just like you made tough choices to self-isolate so that there would be no cross-contamination to loved ones. We all have endured loss during this pandemic in one form or another. But truly I believe we have gained as well. Many I work with express gratitude by focusing on what’s truly important in life and the continued strength to stand together to combat COVID-19.



A note of appreciation to my Aunt Nancy whose gift of a hamper I used daily for my scrubs and my sister Deanna who expressed daily her pride in me and my profession.

PFA Launches New Website

By the Executive Committee



Over the past year, the PFA has completely overhauled our website to streamline usability, simplify electronic membership signup, and unlock access to historical family files. Just last month we successfully launched a new, improved website that will provide new and existing members with easy navigation to information on our reunions, our newsletters (like this one!), and our guestbook. This website will still be available through the same URL at www.parsonsfamilyassn.org.

Ken Silsby, the former Website Administrator, began this project and led the process for several months before Nick Simons took it over. During that time, several members of the Executive Committee spent hours revising, editing, and finalizing the new layout. A special thank you to those who helped create this superior product. This process allowed us to expand the site and add some new functionality.

Our website has many new features:

Electronic Membership Signup & Payment: Prospective PFA members or returning members paying their dues can now do so through our website, whereas they could only mail in a paper form before. The Membership Application has also been digitized and can be filled out over the computer. Whether you are looking to become a Regular Member, a Sustaining Member, or a Life Member, our website will make it quick and easy to do so.

Cornet's Chronicle Archives: PFA members now have access to over 10 years' worth of our newsletters. Searchable by date, members can see what happened at past family reunions including formal business decided during those meetings.

Newly Uncovered Family Files: Also new to the website will be historical Parsons Family files dating back hundreds of years, available to PFA members through a password-protected link. These files were thoughtfully curated by Bob Heath, a director, and we are proud to share them with all our members as a way to ensure our history endures.

Ways to Donate: If you or someone you know would be interested in supporting the preservation of the Nathaniel Parsons House or our 100th reunion, users may now donate to the PFA directly through our website. All donations will contribute to the perpetuation of family history and the exploration of Parsons historical sites.

Integration with Facebook: On every page you will find a link to our Facebook page, which allows for easy navigation back and forth between sites.

Please visit the website and explore. We welcome any and all feedback on the layout and content of the site, so do not hesitate to reach out. If you have items to add to the website or general comments, please contact Nick Simons at nsimons8165@gmail.com.

Become a Member

Join the PFA

Are you a descendant of the English Parsons Family, either directly or indirectly? Join the PFA to access historical family documents and enjoy our national family reunions.

Before paying, complete our **membership application** with your information!

Regular Member (\$20 annually)

One year of membership in the PFA. This money goes to the preservation of historical family homes, burial sites, genealogical files, and much more. Members receive free admission to our annual reunion, business meetings, family files, and newsletters.



Sustaining Member (\$40 annually)

One year of membership in the PFA (\$20) and an additional \$20 donation to ensure the longevity of our organization and the perpetuation of family traditions in America. Includes all benefits of a Regular Member and more.



Life Member (\$300 one-time)

Continuous membership in the PFA. This one-time payment makes certain that our family history will be maintained for future generations to discover, explore, and expand throughout the world. Includes all benefits of a Regular Member and more.



PFA Unveils Historical Family Files to Members

By the Executive Committee

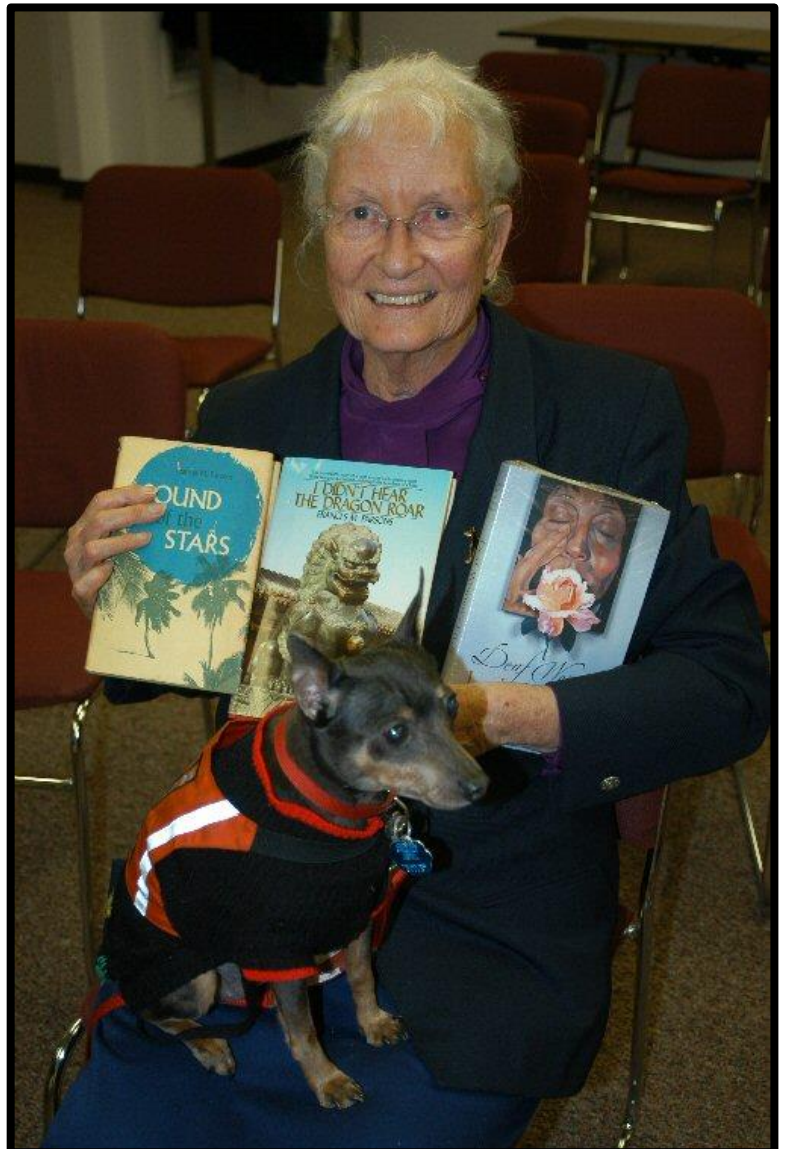
Over 100 years of family ancestral files, biographical sketches, and PFA reunion documents will now be available through our website to all Parsons Family Association members. Upon payment of dues, the Association will provide access to hundreds of documents that were previously unavailable in digital format. Previously kept by the PFA Historians, these files were painstakingly recorded, compiled, and preserved in print format and contain information that researchers might not find elsewhere. If you have any time at all, please take a moment to browse through because you never know what you will find!

What follows is a sample, the biographical sketch of Frances Margaret Parsons, an author and professor at Gallaudet University.

Frances Margaret Parsons, also known as Peggie, was born in El Cajon, California on September 25, 1923 to Harold and Hester Parsons. Her sole sibling is a twin sister, Hester "Polly" Parsons. She was identified as deaf as the age of five from an unknown cause. After attempts at oral and mainstreamed education, her parents enrolled both girls at the California School for the Deaf in Berkeley in 1931. The family was hit by the Great Depression and Hester Parsons moved to Tahiti in the South Pacific. Harold, the father, followed shortly after with the twins. They lived in Tahiti for six years, during which Hester provided an informal education for her children. Frances disliked writing at first but discovered a passion for writing, particularly with adjectives, when her mother introduced her to a local author.

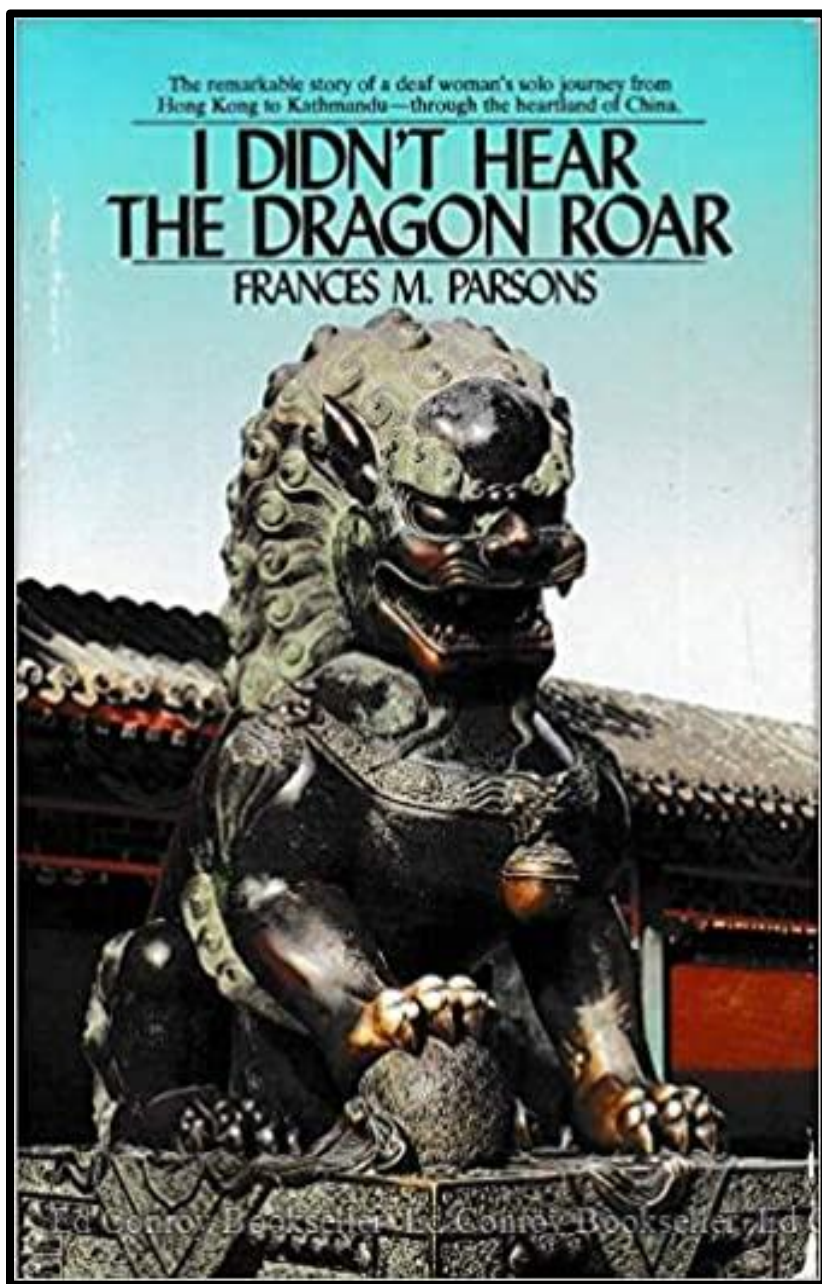
The family returned to the United States in 1941 when the U.S. declared war with Japan and the Japanese began to occupy the Pacific in their campaign for the Sphere of Co-Prosperity. The Parsons family embarked upon a sailing schooner and escaped to San Francisco where both girls returned to the California School for the Deaf. Frances graduated from CSD in 1943 and attended Gallaudet College (now University) for two years. She withdrew in 1945 to marry. She focused the next two decades on raising her two daughters, Vincette Dee and Valerie West in California. After her divorce in 1964 she returned to Gallaudet to complete her studies, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History in 1967. During those years, she began her international travels, traveling to France, Italy, England, Ireland, and Greece to study art history, archaeology, and sculpture.

In the fall of 1967, she taught English at the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick. Within a year, she was offered a tutoring position in the tutorial center at Gallaudet. She returned to tutor in both Spanish and English from 1968 to 1973. After five years of teaching, she moved on to the Art Department as an Associate Professor where she taught History of Art until 1988. She was



then employed as Coordinator of International History Collections at Gallaudet University, where she worked for five years until her retirement in 1993.

She went abroad several times throughout the 1970s and 1980s, touring Iran, China, Turkey, India, Australia, South Africa, western Africa, southeast Asia, Russia, Mongolia, and South America. Frances is an indefatigable traveler, having traveled to each of the seven continents, including Antarctica in 2006 at the age of 83. Her travels abroad were not solely for the study of art history, but rather, to promote the total communication method. Frances believed that total communication, rather than oralism alone, would be more effective in providing a good education as well as solid communication skills to deaf children. She lectured, met with teachers and administrators, taught sign language, and used herself as a model of an effective total communication environment.



During her travels she became involved with the Peace Corps as a consultant, establishing a program for deaf volunteers in the Philippines in 1974. Her first major trip as a Total Communication "Ambassador" was in 1976 where she embarked upon a year-long trip taking her throughout the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Australia. She continued to work with the Peace Corps as a Peace Corps Professional Participant. She received numerous honors, awards, and accolades for her trip. Many respected Frances for braving such far flung travels alone as a deaf woman. In 1977, Gallaudet's Board of Trustees honored her with a commendation for her work abroad. She based her book, "I Didn't Hear the Dragon Roar", upon her travels alone in China in 1986. Her other publications also include "Sound of the Stars," which she authored in 1971 based upon her life in Tahiti. The diaries which these two books are based upon can be found in this collection. Frances has added a few more recent publications to her repertoire: "Deaf Women's Lives," "I Knew Elizabeth Peet," and NAD ABC signs translated into English."

Frances is also a prolific author, having written numerous articles for various magazines such as Deaf Life, The Deaf American, The Buff and Blue, and The Silent News. She also appeared in a People Magazine profile about teachers.

In between her constant travels, teaching Art History, she earned a Master's degree from the University of Maryland in Art History. Her thesis can be found in the Gallaudet Library collection. After her Master's degree, she continued to study art history at Georgetown University, George Washington University, and Howard University. After her retirement in 1993, her attentions and energies were focused upon writing for various publications, managing her Frances M. Parsons international endowment fund which funded individuals to go abroad to teach English to the deaf, and travels.

Parsons Family Association Officers

Executive Committee

- + Deanna Parsons Simons, President
- + Nicholas Simons, Third Vice-president
- + Kim Graham, Treasurer & Clerk
- + Trisa Parsons Palacio, Secretary
- + Gary Parsons, Historian

Directors

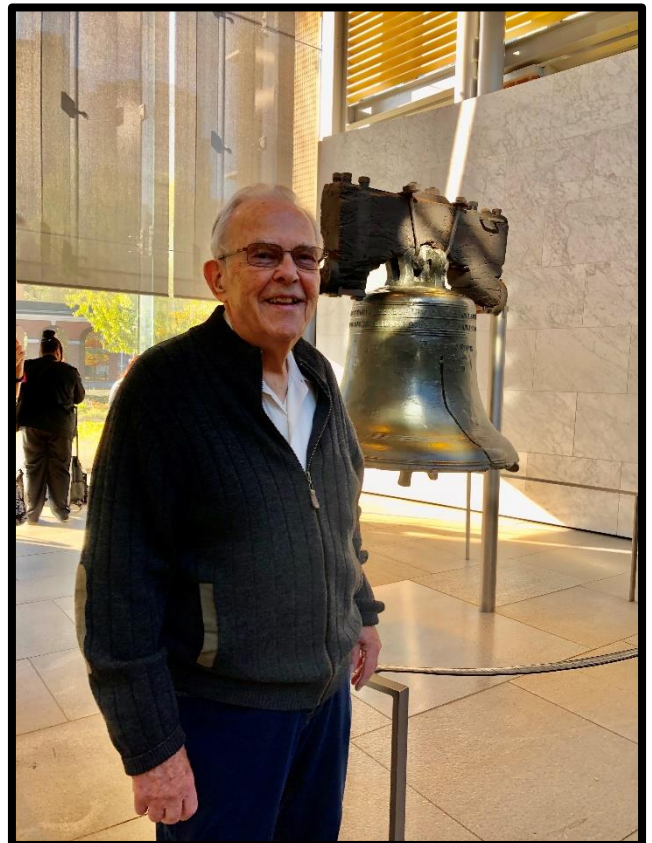
- + Phillip G. Parsons, Esq., Cris Parsons, James E. Parsons, Nancy Armstrong, Martha Parsons Ethier, Araina Brown Heath, Bob Heath, Kenneth T. Doran, & Lydia C. Omasta

To contact any executive committee officers or directors, please send an email to parsonsfamilyassociation@gmail.com and you will promptly receive an answer!

PFA Thanks Director and Auditor James E. Parsons

By the Executive Committee

We would like to pay honor to James E. Parsons, auditor of our financials and former 3rd Vice President. Jim held office for over 15 years and remains a staunch supporter of the Parsons Family Association, serving as a Director. Accordingly, we would like to recognize his outstanding contributions to the Association. Jim has called Vestal, NY his home for over 65 years and is blessed to have outstanding health. He will be celebrating his 90th birthday this December 8th. Thank you, Dad, Grandpa, Uncle, Brother, Great Grandpa, Cousin, Colleague, and Friend.





Parsons Family Association

Parsons Family Association Membership Form

Fill out this form by hand or on your computer.

Name:			
Number of Other Members Registering:			
Names of Other Members: <i>If registering for other members, please include their names here.</i>			
Street Address, City, State, ZIP: <i>If registering for other members, please include their addresses here.</i>			
Phone Number: <i>If registering for other members, please include their phone numbers here.</i>			
Email Address: <i>If registering for other members, please include their email addresses here.</i>			
Descendant of (if known):			
New or renewing member(s)? <i>If registering for other members, please include whether they are new or renewing members here.</i>			
Membership type:	Regular (\$20) <i>Must renew annually</i>	Number of memberships:	Sum Total:
	Sustaining (\$40) <i>Must renew annually</i>	Number of memberships:	Sum Total:
	Lifetime (\$300) <i>No renewal needed</i>	Number of memberships:	Sum Total:
Donations or Special Gifts:	Parsons Homestead Maintenance Fund <i>Write dollar amount in box →</i>		
	100 th Year Reunion (2023) Fund <i>Write dollar amount in box →</i>		
	Parsons House Restoration Project <i>Write dollar amount in box →</i>		
	Website Fund <i>Write dollar amount in box →</i>		
Total \$ amount enclosed:	<i>Write dollar amount in box →</i>		

Next Steps

For Electronic Form Submission

1. **Save** this completed form to your computer.
2. **Email** this completed form to parsonsfamilyassociation@gmail.com.
3. **Pay** on our website's membership page (<https://parsonsfamilyassn.org/parsons-family-association-membership/>) or **mail** check/cash to below address.

For Paper Form Submission

1. **Mail** this completed form and enclosed check/cash to:
Parsons Family Association, Inc.
PO Box 603
Conway, MA 01341

****Make checks payable to Parsons Family Association, Inc.**