

SHARON MEARES COMMINS met her husband, Steve, at UCLA on a blind date and they have been married 44 years. Steve is Associate Director for Global Public Affairs and Lecturer in Urban Planning at the Luskin School of Public Affairs, UCLA. His job involves traveling and they have had fabulous trips abroad (and more than once) to Great Britain, Australia and Belize. They have a daughter, Melanie, who is a writer and activist. Their son, Justin, is a soccer coach who also works with special needs kids. They have three cats and one dog—a pittie—all rescues. Sharon writes: "The dog is a princess. She saved my daughter's life when we had a house fire back in 2010. She gets whatever she wants for the rest of her life. We also lost two cats in that fire so our present trio are spoiled beyond belief. Oh, and the very fat and lazy turtles in our backyard pond."

She graduated from UCLA with a BA in Anthropology in 1972. Additional education was at the Art Center College of Design and UCLA Extension Computer Graphics Program. She has real world experience in planning and received a certificate from the City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Planning Training Course. When asked if she is retired:

"ROFL...Does anyone really retire these days? When I'm not creating art or raising hell over land use issues, I enjoy our huge Carlsbad backyard full of fruit trees, lizards, birds, and butterflies. Hawks in the daytime; owls at night. A seven minute walk gets my bare feet to the lagoon shoreline at Agua Hedionda and into the water. Pure paradise."

She describes herself as an artist, citizen planning advocate, and community activist. Artwise, she does Renaissance Faire with a group of wonderful jewelry artists. She specializes in beaded necklaces and steampunk-themed pieces. As an activist, she just helped a statewide coalition defeat a bill designed to take away Californians' rights to plan their communities. "Just imagine the state Sacramento bureaucracy as your neighborhood zoning authority—seriously bad idea." Her greatest accomplishment is her wonderful family. "They make all of this possible. They are my inspiration."

She holds numerous awards and honors for her art work, particularly her fiber work, and has been published frequently. High points:

- Her first entry into a national art competition was through American Artist Magazine. She was one of the 100 finalists they selected for a show in NYC
- Her art quilt, What Is Essential, hangs at UNICEF, NYC, where every visiting dignitary and head of state sees it
- Her art garment, Sorceress, is on display in the Bernina Museum, Lake Constance, Switzerland.
- Her art quilt, Exuberance, is in Fiberarts Design Book 6 and was also in the 1998 San Diego Visions quilt show.
- Her art quilt, Wind and Wave, was part of the 2001 Quilt National Exhibition Civic service wise, She has held, and presently holds, several volunteer-ish positions:
- She is a Past Chair of the Mar Vista Community Council, a certified neighborhood council in Los Angeles serving 60,000 stakeholders. She was the first woman to serve as Chair
- She is on the steering committee of PlacheckNC, a citywide umbrella neighborhood council planning chairs organization. She helps train NC planning reps—and anyone else who wants to learn how land use/development works.
- She is co-chair of the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils Land Use and Planning Committee serving 14 neighborhood councils on the Westside of Los Angeles from the Mountains to the airport. That would be about 250,000 stakeholders, give or take. They hold monthly meetings to address planning and land use issues.
- And, she is co-chair of the citywide ReCodeLA Citizens Zoning Advisory Committee, assisting LA City Planning in drafting a new, modern, web-based Los Angeles Zoning Code so stakeholders can be effective citizen partners on development proposals.

Her favorite memory of Burbank High: Being selected as one of BHS' 2 American Field Service finalists as a senior. It was quite an honor. They even announced it on the PA. PS, you won't find this factoid listed in the yearbook. Omitted. Unfortunately, I was not able to study abroad under AFS' program but instead participated in a different one, AIFS. I spent that summer studying in Durham, England. That was my first introduction to London [love at first sight], the beautiful game--soccer, and to a wider world.