

The Continuing Story

After we reached age thirty, our life continued on a similar trajectory, with constant change and relocations. I believe it was our work ethic, drive, and dedication to family that propelled us to the finish line—a successful and rewarding career and surrounded by family.

A true measure of one's success is when your children follow suit and have meaningful and rewarding lives. Our son graduated from Penn State with a bachelor of science degree in accounting and is an officer and vice president with PNC Bank in Pittsburgh. He has two handsome boys, Layne and Dylan, who are growing like weeds at seven and four respectively. Sabrina entered the medical profession and followed me into federal service. She is a supervisor at the VA hospital's critical care respiratory therapy unit in Oakland. Her beautiful daughter, Reese, just turned three and keeps everyone on their toes. She was born on the same day as my mother, December 30, only 102 years later!

We moved three more times, for a total of eleven moves in our fifty years of marriage. Certainly not a record but more than most. From my childhood to the present, I personally relocated twenty-two times.

In late 1980, my military career ended after almost eleven years. I was deemed essential for maintaining the nation's airspace system while working for the FAA, and the Air National Guard refused to let me reenlist. I couldn't be activated to fulfill their mission, so I was honorably discharged. I was assigned to three different commands: The Military Airlift Command (MAC) on active duty, the Tactical Air Command with the Kansas and Pennsylvania ANG units, and the Strategic Air Command with the 171st ANG unit, servicing the KC-97 fleet and the KC-135 air-refueling tanker fleet at Pittsburgh. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the military and am proud that I had the opportunity to serve our country.



Military keepsakes (active duty to ANG)

My writing career started while I was in the service. I developed several inventions, product improvements, and a business from one of my hobbies. I wrote and sold numerous self-help articles in the 1980s for everything from home improvements for handyman magazines to investing fundamentals for *The Pittsburgh Press* as a freelance writer.

I attended my first evening college courses at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas, while in the military. As time passed, I accumulated over 140 semester hours of college from five different colleges and universities, including the Community College of the Air Force. Locally, I attended Robert Morris College, Point Park College, and the Community College of Allegheny County, where I completed a degree in micro-computer technology in 1982.

In 1981, I laterally moved to the FAA's system maintenance office (SMO) at the Pittsburgh airport to develop engineering specifications and to write bid packages for local projects. My civil construction training at Forbes Trail Tech prepared me for that

assignment. After a year on staff, I was promoted to a navigational aids system specialist position at the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport's sector field office (SFO).

To utilize my first-class FCC license in the early 1980s and to gain broadcast engineering experience, I hired on as the weekend station engineer at WZUM Radio in Carnegie, Pennsylvania. I worked most Sundays from 4 a.m. until 1 p.m. Their Sunday morning show host abruptly quit, and the station owner promoted me on the spot to take her place. For several months, I was both station engineer and Sunday morning DJ for the station.

My new FAA assignment came with additional schooling, and I spent many months over the next ten years at the FAA Academy at Oklahoma City. In 1983, I transferred to a staff position, managing the SMO's training program, and two years later when I was 35, I was promoted to the RADAR unit supervisor position at the Greater Pittsburgh International Air-port. While in the training office, I directed and produced training videos for national distribution.


In 1988, I was promoted to program support manager. I remained in this position until I transferred to the air-traffic control tower's technical support manager position in 1999. On December 31, 2004, I retired from the FAA at age fifty-five, with thirty-five years and six months of service.

Concurrently, in 1985, I launched Bookhaven Press LLC, a successful publishing house that produced thirty-five books from 1985 to the present. In the 1990s, we developed one of the first online job placement websites and launched twelve web-sites by the early 2000s. I personally authored twenty-eight books, with this memoir being the last in this lifelong series of books.

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* featured Bookhaven Press in January 2000. The article, "No Dampening Damp," stated, "Small publisher strikes it big on the internet." From 1985 until 2005, I worked an average of seventy to eighty hours a week—over forty hours with the FAA and the remaining hours managing my company.

**SMALL PUBLISHER STRIKES IT BIG
ON THE INTERNET**

No dampening Damp



By Jim McKay
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Type "post office" and "jobs" into America Online's search engine and chances are very good that you will quickly locate career guide author Dennis V. Damp and his company, Bookhaven Press.

Damp, 56, is the founder, president and owner of Bookhaven, a small publishing house he operates from his suburban Pittsburgh home. Bookhaven specializes in Damp's job-reference books and self-help titles by others.

But Damp doesn't confine himself to paper. Bookhaven also publishes several Web sites, information-filled career venues that are essentially marketing tools for the company's book titles.

His most popular title, "The Book of U.S. Government Jobs," has sold more than 200,000 copies and is now in its seventh edition.

He also has written "Post Office Jobs" and "Health

Care Job Explosion," both in second editions.

Bookhaven also publishes other authors. The most recent, "How to Raise a Family and a Career Under One Roof," was written by Lisa M. Roberts, a mother of four who met Damp through an Internet publishers' forum.

"Most of my job isn't writing or publishing, it's marketing," Damp said last week. "Marketing is the key to the game. If you have the best product in the world and can't sell it, forget it."

Damp said he realized the possibility of the Internet in 1994 when he was asked to participate in Goany's On-Line Career Center on America Online, of which he is now an associate director.

He also is the owner and director of Government JOBS Central on AOL and publishes three Web sites: www.federaljobs.net, members.aol.com/bookhaven and healthcarejobs.org.

The Web sites generate both direct sales and publicity that help place Damp's titles with book stores and with electronic retailers, including Amazon.com, he said.

Kate Randus, a book publicist who has worked with Damp and hundreds of other independent publishers, said he stood out among his peers for his presence on the Web. "He has done extraordinarily well," she said.

Jan Nathan, executive director of the Publishers Market

My business grew during my retirement, and it is still operating thirty-five years later. There is more to my story at age seventy, and only time will tell what life has in store for us. It isn't over until it is; life goes on.

Throughout all of this, my wife of fifty years was the glue that held the family together during the many trials and tribulations life offered along the way. Without her common sense, resolve, and tenacious dedication to family, we would not be where we are today. She sacrificed much for her family.

Family 2020



Dennis Damp Jr., Dylan, and Layne



Brad and Sabrina Bradley and Reese



Our little angels—the three amigos
Layne, six and a half; Reese, two and a half;
and Dylan, four



Listening to DJ's band in Moon Park, July 2019



2014 family picnic



Myrtle Beach, 2009—our second home



Lower left, first home in Kansas, 1972
Current Pittsburgh Home, 2020



Sabrina, 1982