

Our Stories – Dorothy Devine

Sometimes I amaze myself with my happiness. Then I smile.

I came to UUCSC via Wicca. My mother, Eleanore Devine, was a UU. When she moved from Chicago, she found and loved the group here, at the American Legion. I continued in my Dianic Coven for many years. How many women moved through over the years, and how many years? — my friend, another poet, has written somewhere.

In high school in Illinois my teacher-mentor James Marran started a class called the Summer Seminar in Community Affairs. An equal number of White and Black high schoolers — half from the wealthy suburbs, half from Chicago, worked together. We painted gyms, studied red-lining, conducted a housing survey, and had a street fair that turned into a fistfight with Chicago Black neighborhood kids. The Chicago students visited our elegant public school with its proscenium stage of Rock Hudson and Ann-Margret fame, Olympic-size swimming pool and SO much more, the White students' palatial homes and pools. I attended a sleep-over with the daughter of a Black Chicago PD detective. He took us for a ride at night and had us lie on the floor when there was a police incident. My father, a Navy reservist, helped the detective's son join the Navy (Vietnam, thanks)! I held hands with a tall Black poet who lived with his single mom on assistance in one of the projects. He went on to Oberlin for college. The summer seminar helped me get early-admission to Wellesley College in Hillary Rodman's class.

I most want to be remembered as a poet. Still writing poems now with home hospice care.

There are many more words in this talkative Irish/English woman. This seems a good place to stop and send.

Dorothy Devine
November 19, 2021

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In 1966 I was rabble-rousing in New Bedford, with the Regional Action Group. We maintained the war would take mostly black and working class youth to die, and that Ho Chi Minh would be an excellent leader.

We leafleted on Thursday stroll night when stores were open. We got some tough young boys, not crazy about blacks or women. They began visiting our collective in Fall River, hanging out smoking pot, LSD, stronger drugs. This was uncomfortable for women collective members. Then a collective couple bought motorcycles and approached other slightly older youth who had fought in Vietnam and were questioning their role, read our booklets. Many attended Bristol Community College on the GI bill; more got married.

But Hillary Rodman was in New Bedford, too. I cannot confirm what agency she worked with. Her job involved an early Child Find, visiting handicapped and otherwise homebound children in the city and connecting them with doctors and diagnostics and getting them to care.

Dorothy Devine
December 8, 2021