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I was the second of four children. My parents wanted us all to learn a little bit about music, so they made us take piano lessons. I lasted for about five years, but I don't recall ever practicing the piano. Somehow, perhaps through osmosis, I learned to read music! When I was allowed to quit the piano, my parents asked if I wanted to play anything else. By this time, I had already taken every dance class offered by the local dance school (including trampoline) so another music lesson seemed rather normal. I told them I would like to play the harp. They were quite surprised, but they really shouldn't have been as my teacher and other members of the local symphony played in our church. I saw a harp every week between church and watching "I Love Lucy" (there was a harpist in Ricky Ricardo's band) on TV.



I began lessons on pedal harp (lever harps were not common at that time), but I didn't have a harp. My parents made an agreement with my teacher, Marie Mellman Naugle, that I would go to her house every day since she lived only about a mile away. One day a week I would have a lesson and every other day I would practice on her harp. In the summer, I rode my bike to her house, and in the winter they would drop me off for an hour each day. However, my teacher always sat next to me and gave me a lesson so I never had a chance to develop a bad habit. I advanced very quickly because she was always there molding my hands. After three months, she told my parents to buy me a harp. That was a pretty big investment and they had never even heard me play. So my Dad came to a lesson and listened to me. I was working on "The Lord's Prayer" (Salzedo transcription) as I was going to play it for my grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary in August 1966. After hearing me play, my Dad agreed to order a harp for

me. It would take more than a year to get a new L&H style 17 (I still have it) and we still had to borrow my teacher's gold 23 to play for the anniversary.

As a teenager, I played in our family band (the Four J's) and that required me to make up the harp parts. Improvisation came naturally to me. However, in spite of all the harp lessons, I didn't want to become a harpist because I thought that meant I would have to play in an orchestra and I didn't enjoy that from my very first orchestral experience. Therefore, I never pursued a degree in harp.

Fast forward to adulthood: I started as a teller at a savings and loan and worked my way up to vice president. By 1983, the savings and loan industry was in trouble and I had hit the glass ceiling for women.



I got a call one day from an agent looking for a harpist for a casino in Atlantic City. They were trying to decide what type of entertainment they wanted for their gourmet restaurant, so although it was a temporary job, it could turn into something permanent. I decided to take my vacation time from the bank, drive to Atlantic City, and see if I liked playing every night. The gig was fine, but I couldn't see myself living in Atlantic City and the entertainment director was a former gardener who insisted that I play on a plexiglass stage that was lit from underneath. It was like playing on a slippery trampoline! I was glad when the two-week contract was up and I returned to Orlando.

I barely got home before another agent called me about playing for a local hotel that was also auditioning entertainment for their restaurant. About the same time the hotel decided they wanted the harp and me to stay, another luxury hotel was about to open and the management asked me about coming to work for them. I ended up choosing the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress and I was under contract to them seven nights a week for almost ten years. I left my job at the bank about four months later and I've been playing the harp full time ever since.

I started going to harp conferences in 1982. I learned a lot and realized that others liked my arrangements, so I began writing arrangements. The next logical step was to write *Effortless Glissing* so I could explain how to find major and dominant seventh glisses in any key on the spot. If I had time, I would write a lot more!

My career as a harpist developed beyond what I ever expected, and I get to do the types of gigs I want and rarely play the things I don't want to do (orchestra).

