



## *Our Lives*

### **Larry Seidman**

I studied economics in college because I wanted to work on public policies that required understanding economics. The summer after college I got into a special teacher training program in Trenton, NJ that got me a job as a high school math teacher in a low-income minority high school in Newark, NJ in the fall of 1968.

I really enjoyed teaching high school math in that school and our New Rochelle draft board for some reason considered it worthy of a draft deferment. During that year I found out that our draft board also considered Fred Geldon's teaching assistant job in physics at UC Berkeley (where Fred went directly after college) also worthy of a deferment. So I decided to take my chance and see if I could get into an econ PhD program that would immediately give me a teaching assistant position—and UC Berkeley said it would, so I started grad school there in the fall of 1969. My TA draft deferment continued at Berkeley until I was lucky enough to get a sufficiently high draft lottery number to make the deferment permanent.

At Berkeley I met my wife Ann (originally from Oklahoma, and a graduate of Kansas University), and she finished University of San Francisco Law School at the same time I finished my econ PhD (June 1974) and we moved to Philadelphia where I was fortunate to get an econ assistant professor job at Penn. Penn was great, but its econ department turned down fourteen assistant profs in a row for tenure (including me) in the late 1970s, so I got a visiting position at Swarthmore College for three years and we moved to Swarthmore (Ann practiced law in a small firm in Media, PA). In 1982 I was fortunate to get an Associate Professor job at the University of Delaware (45 minute drive from Swarthmore) with a promise of tenure that was granted two years later. So I've been an economics professor at the University of Delaware and living in Swarthmore, PA ever since.

I'm still enjoying being an economics professor. I've written ten books and many articles on economic policies and tried to directly or indirectly have some impact on policies in DC. I personally know and have input with many of the economic policy makers you've read about or seen on TV during the past two decades.

Our son Jesse was born in 1981 and our daughter Suzanna in 1983. Jesse (a Wharton MBA) works for the Treasurer's office of General Motors in Detroit (he and his fiancée live in a Detroit suburb). My daughter Suzanna, her husband and my grandson Jackson (nearly 2 years old) just moved from Brooklyn to Radnor, PA, 20 minutes away from us. Suzanna was an elementary school teacher in the North Bronx for four years before having Jackson (she got top reviews, and also tenure)—she's taken a leave from teaching since Jackson was born. Ann has been president of Swarthmore's city council, president of Swarthmore Rotary, president of the county literacy council, a guide of historic houses and at the art museum in Philadelphia, and has sung

solos regularly with two local choirs and appeared in many amateur stage productions (Gilbert and Sullivan and others).

In response to pressure from Ann, during the past decade I've been a pirate in *Pirates of Penzance*, a gentleman of Japan in *The Mikado*, a sailor in *Pinafore*, the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*, and sang bass in Mozart's *Requiem*! Our family has traveled abroad to many countries, and even lived in a few countries for a month or longer.

In the summer of 1993, after a routine annual physical exam and routine blood and urine tests, my doctor reported to me that a new test he had included, called a PSA test, gave a result that required a biopsy, and a week later I was told I had prostate cancer (at age 46). I was told that I was fortunate because the cancer was "probably" still contained in the prostate and therefore curable by removing the prostate. With two children in elementary school, I felt pretty shaken, but the urologist at Penn seemed pleased with the result of the operation in November, and he told me that the odds were high that the operation had completely removed the cancer, but of course, there would have to be PSA tests every few months for the next few years to keep checking.

My Dad died in 2007, and my Mom, in 2009. My brother Leon works and lives in Manhattan—he's a self-employed lawyer who handles apartment and condo transactions—he has two daughters, one in middle school, the other in elementary school (Leon's 11 years younger than I am and didn't get married until he was over 40). My brother Robbie, whom I think about nearly every day, was diagnosed with leukemia in January 2003 and, after nearly a year of battling, and suffering, at one of the best cancer institutes (the City of Hope near LA), died in November 2003. I made five trips to LA that year. The year 2003 was the saddest, hardest year of my life.

Life does have its ups and downs. But economics, public policies, family, friends, tennis, children, and now a grandson, all keep me (most of the time) in high spirits.