

First Unified Family of Boulder, 1973

Curated by David Bruner
March 11, 2025

Hi John and all,

The following few emails are my attempt to reclaim the history of the Unified Family of Boulder, CO. Richard Buessing suggested to John Bowles that he contact me to find out more information about his wife Claire's visit to the first Sunburst and where it was.

Richard has called me the historian of Boulder, so I better get going!

My apologies, but we'll start with the first Family, their quarters and move on to the Sunbursts. Sooner or later we'll tackle Sunburst, the musical group.

All the photos now have captions embedded. Once you add the photos to your computer, just right click on them to Get Info or Properties, Details and see the captions. I'm sorry, but since a couple of these emails were previously inadvertently sent and have no captions embedded, please delete them and use the new versions of the photos.

If we do this right, this will be the first volume with others to follow. It will be a group effort so please feel free to correct or contribute to anything you'd like to!



Visit to Holy Ground and slow photographer with self timer, camera propped up on the ground. City Park, Denver, CO perhaps on Parents Day, April 20, 1973. R-L Brenda Boshart, Steve Mattox, Margaret Browne, Warren Demming, David Bruner, Tom Miner, Edgar Boshart.



Visit to Holy Ground with self timer, camera propped up on the ground. City Park, Denver, CO perhaps on Parents Day, April 20, 1973. R-L Warren Demming, Brenda Boshart, Steve Mattox, Tom Miner, Margaret Browne, Edgar Boshart, David Bruner.



Farewell to Maryellen McCabe (b 1952) at Stapleton International Airport, Denver, CO (self-timer on tripod) late April. Her new mission was up north in Missoula, MT. Counter clockwise from bottom left:

Bob Heliger, Tom Miner, Warren Demming, Steve Mattox, Edgar Boshart, David Bruner, Brenda Boshart, Margaret Browne, Mara Delaney, Maryellen McCabe, Jack Kiburtz.

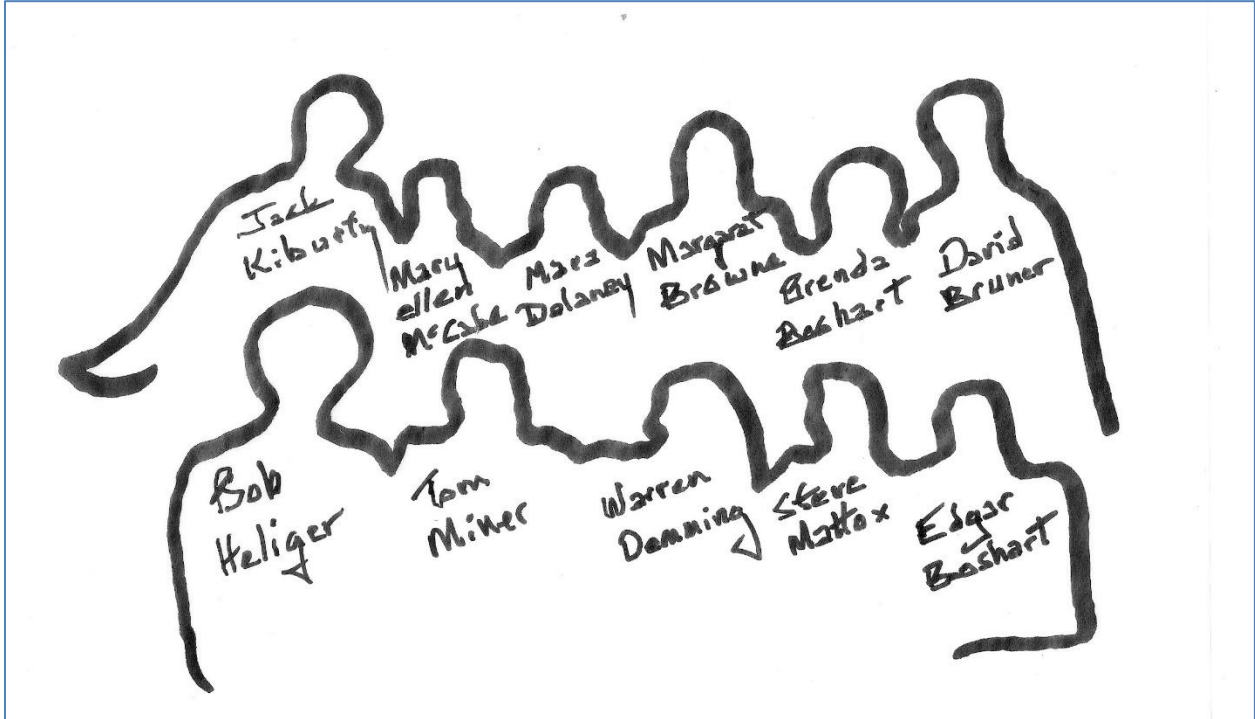


Diagram Farewell to Maryellen McCabe at Stapleton International Airport.



Maryellen had gone to California to become an actress, but joined the Unified Family in Berkeley. Here she is acting goodbye at the airport.

[Idealism - Maryellen McCabe](#)

Thank you, David

While in Boulder, she pursued her dream of witnessing by gathering good friends and gradually reeling them in. It was fun; sustainable! Boulder at the time was a hotbed of spiritual groups and she, or we, had friends in most of them including an Indian swami who came by and taught us a chant "Diadourgay, diadourgay, shevay, shevay, shevayshevaaye..."

When she was sent to the cold north, she continued to thrive until, as rumor has it, an IOWC team came to town and she and her natural way of witnessing was run over by the militarism of the visitors. Apparently that was too much for her and she left.

An April 17, 1974 Montana Kaimin newspaper article "[Moon's followers live his teachings](#)" by Roger Kling focused on her. Clair Bernard, the current editor, sent us a copy on January 27, 2025. Please see attached below.

Maryellen, in later years, put out (wrote, sings, guitar) an audio CD Heroes and Heroines in 2007 (available on Amazon).

Also, the NYTimes published an article on her which describes some of her life after the Unified Family (also attached below):

[The New York Times: Singers Music Evokes](#)

NYT Archives

June 8, 1997, Sunday

Singer's Music Evokes Idealism By THOMAS STAUDTER

THE idealism associated with the 1960's was evident a few weeks ago when the singer-songwriter Maryellen McCabe and the folk-rock band Phoenix Rising performed at the opening of the Riverfolk Coffeehouse in the Irvington Community Center here.

More than 125 people, including parents with small children, gathered around candle lighted tables to hear Ms. McCabe in her semi-theatrical song cycle "Heroes and Heroines."

The songs recall leaders who directly or indirectly have led the country and shaped its values. In a strong, insistent voice, she evoked Thomas Jefferson, Sojourner Truth, Francis Bacon, Hiawatha, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "These are all human beings who have sacrificed their individuality for the common good," she said.

The music was accompanied by short introductions in which Ms. McCabe explained how the heroic archetypes fit into American history. Her 17-year-old daughter, Erinnisse, and a 21-year-old acting student, Lawrence A. Bassin, offered dramatic recitations and soliloquies to underscore the evening's theme.

"I'm striving to give an audience something that will make it feel inspired," said Ms. McCabe, 45, who has lived in Hastings-on-Hudson with her husband, John Michael Heuer, since 1986. "But I'm also very interested in energy and seeing people experience greater connections in a community," she added. "Performing, for me, is always a learning experience -- a chance to see what works."

Many of the ideas presented in "Heroes and Heroines" grew out of research that Ms. McCabe has completed on the spiritual basis of the United States, a subject that has interested her for nearly 25 years.

After studying theater and acting at the University of California at Berkeley, Ms. McCabe, a native of New Jersey, moved in 1972 to Boulder, Colo., to join the

World Family, a counterculture community led by Rennie Davis, one of the Chicago Seven defendants. The World Family combined the antiwar movement with a growing interest in Buddhism and other Eastern religions.

"We were the responsible element left over from the 60's that believed in changes that would be educational, political and spiritual," Ms. McCabe said.

While with the World Family, she said she became "a deep student of ancient wisdom and esoteric teachings." By joining in singing and chanting, she said, she discovered how she could fully express herself.

"Singing, as a form of art, allowed me to say what I wanted to, and it also connected me to a heart place that is very spiritual," she said.

She moved to New York in the mid-70's to work as a theater therapist at the Queens House of Detention and gradually began to focus on her singing and songwriting, occasionally playing in bars and clubs in Lower Manhattan. By 1979, though, marriage and motherhood had taken precedence over her music career.

In 1984 she started writing the songs for "Heroes and Heroines," and by 1986 she had shaped the material into a multi-media program, presenting it at colleges and high schools.

"I feel educational settings are good contexts for what I'm doing," she said. "It's important to be reaching out to kids, especially apathetic ones, with a message these days." On April 7 she performed at the College of Mount St. Vincent's Peace Week celebration. Shows are planned later this spring at the New York Alternative High School and the Waldorf School in Garden City.

Ms. McCabe took a five-year hiatus from her own music career in 1991 when she began to oversee the Sacred in the Arts program at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan, along with helping to plan the 1994 Women of Vision Leadership Conference in Washington and producing a benefit concert for the International Campaign for Tibet. "That was, in a way, an art form, too -- producing artistic events that were also political in nature," Ms. McCabe said. "I felt my mission was to raise the level of consciousness, or change it."

Even though she enjoyed producing artistic events and political conferences, Ms. McCabe decided in 1994 to record "Heroes and Heroines," renting studio

time with her savings and self-producing the recording sessions, which featured members of Phoenix Rising and other prominent professional musicians. Last summer the recording was completed, and a privately pressed CD of "Heroes and Heroines" was released in September.

Jai Bria, a well-traveled musician who has played lead guitar in Phoenix Rising for more than two years, said: "Maryellen is really an artist, a storyteller. She really has a contribution to make, and we all believe in what she's doing."

Tom Charlap, the group's bassist, said that Ms. McCabe "believes that if you hold up something good to people you may inspire them to do better in their lives." He added, "That's why I'm here."

The current lineup of Phoenix Rising includes Peter Lewy on cello, Pete Wilson on drums and, not-so-coincidentally, the catalyst of the Riverfolk Coffeehouse, Mark Jacoby on acoustic guitar. Of her band members, Ms. McCabe said: "I'm grateful to work with them. They don't have to be working with me --they could be paid a lot more elsewhere, and I don't take that for granted."

With long, brown hair and wearing a chamois morning jacket over a white ruffled blouse and jeans, Ms. McCabe looked like a folk-rock singer and at times her style was reminiscent of Grace Slick and Patti Smith. "There is a destiny to help humanity," she sang, and later, "Love must guide the mind on its way."

Between the stage and tables holding urns of coffee, Mary Berke, tall and dark haired, interpreted the songs in sign language and dance movements. Children danced together by the side of the stage to the delight of Mr. Jacoby, who said he hoped the monthly gatherings would make the coffeehouse "a place for people in the Hudson Valley to hear contemporary songwriters and independent artists in a place that's family friendly."

After an intermission, Ms. McCabe handed out sheets of lyrics and led the audience in a sing-along. "This is the kind of community event we need," said Judith Seixas, a septuagenarian from Hastings. "It's refreshing to see a community trying to make this a good place to raise children."

Appearing at the coffeehouse on Friday at 8 P.M. in the last show of the season is the Dirty Folk Revolution, consisting of Fred Gillen Jr. and Chris

Black, with a special guest, Katherine Pritchard.

Moon's followers live his teachings

Editor's note: This is the second part of a two-part news analysis and feature sequence about Korean evangelist Sun Myung Moon and the Unified Family, a local religious commune.

By Roger King
Montana Kaimin Reporter

In an unlikely setting for a religious commune, along the rows of fraternity and sorority houses, the house at 324 Daly St. is the home of 20 young people who call themselves the Unified Family.

The Family, a communal living group of the Unification Church, is dedicated to serving God and mankind. It is united in this purpose by an obedience to the Puritan ethic, the flight against communism, a belief in Bible fundamentals and the teachings of the *Divine Principle*, a book written by the group's inspirational leader, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, a Korean evangelist.

The *Divine Principle* used by the

Unification church as a guideline by which to live is based on the Old and New Testaments.

Mary Ellen McCabe, a 22-year-old former resident of New Jersey is the local family representative. McCabe, who considers herself a reborn Christian is committed to making the world center around God in a practical, non-ideological way. "The churches theorize and intellectualize," McCabe said. "The church of today is dead. . . . It is more attached to itself than to mankind."

"We're building a new foundation of love," she said. "Not a foundation of self-love, but a love of mankind."

Robin Kuhl, state coordinator for the group and formerly from England, said in a letter to the *Montana Kaimin* that the Unified Family provides "a home where people can share and exteriorize their desire for spiritual growth." Kuhl added that the Unified Family is "like the spiritual resistance movement which Roman Imperialism drove underground."

Kuhl said that "members of the Unified Family have found in Christian morality and the teachings of Jesus, not a religion at all, but an approach to experiencing the love of God, in giving and taking, and thus the key to the reality of our existence."

MCCabe, who said she comes from an upper-middle class, liberal Catholic background, studied with the Rev. Moon at the church's international training center in Tarrytown, N.Y., before coming to Missoula. The training center, situated on a 270-acre estate near the Hudson River, is one of three estates owned by the Unification Church. According to McCabe, the Terrytown estate was purchased for \$850,000. The money was raised in one month of selling candles throughout the United States.

The family subsists by selling peanuts, silk screen stationary and candles. It also operates a cleaning business called the New World Cleaning Service.

"Money isn't the most important thing," McCabe added. "It is only a means to accomplish God's ends."

The young people, most between the ages of 18 and 30, live in the two-story house on Daly Street. McCabe said members of the household "live celibately. . . . as brothers and sisters." The Missoula commune is one of 120 throughout the United States.

All material possessions are held in common. Income for a week's work is placed in a checking account. McCabe did not disclose the total weekly income of the Family, but said they always seemed to be "short of money."

On weekends, the Unified Family holds workshops in the mountains around Lubrecht Forest, and on weekdays has evening discussion groups.

One local minister characterized Moon's followers as "people who are interested in an ideal and mystical religious experience, and unsatisfied by the current religious atmosphere."

"They may be naive," another added, "but they're a nice bunch of kids."



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