

## GARVAN-LEYMAN-(JUSTICE) FAMILY CHRISTMAS LETTER 2014

Frank & Cyndi - Gainesville

Michael - Gainesville

Jeff & Brittany, Sydney (age 7) and Claire (2 months) - Knoxville

Gerard - Gainesville

Maggie & Devin - Atlanta

Dear Friends and Family,

Sydney taught me a new concept this year, the concept of a “personal” family. After her sister was born on October 20, she and I and her maternal grandmother went shopping for snacks for her parents. Somehow I mentioned how special it was that so much of her family could be together. Sydney informed us that we were not in her family, we were her grandmothers. I disagreed and said that grandmothers got to be part of her family. “But you are not in my *personal* family! My personal family is Mom, Dad, Claire and me!” So now I know that there are different types of families, and that my personal family has grown to include 10 of us (how quickly this happens!). Usually news about my personal family is included in a paragraph on my parents’ decades’ old annual Christmas letter that we are asked to contribute to around Thanksgiving. This year I felt it would be a lot easier just to insert a URL. It is the year 2014, after all!

Frank is as interesting as ever. His recent exploits have included turning our bedroom/office into a film studio. Using an inverted trash can to which he has attached a holder for his phone/video camera, he makes videos of himself completing homework problems which he posts on YouTube for his students. He parks his bike in front of the door with the red tail-light blinking so that we know he is filming. I must say it was pretty adorable to watch him checking YouTube for “hits” on his posts. I do not think he broke double digits...But he was happy.

Cyndi is as crazy and busy as ever. She loves her work and her family and friends and hates housework and cooking as much as ever. She is reading “Busy: Thriving in a World of Too Much” in order to optimize time and attention. This is extremely important with a personal family of size = 10. She is also writing poetry which she loves.

Michael continues to have a rich social life at the Gainesville Opportunity Center (GOC). In the spring Rosalyn Carter will come to raise money for the center. He has the nicest group of friends and his work at the GOC revolves around looking after his friends. Michael looks after his family too. He can always be relied on for kindness and prayers and detailed information about the happenings in the NFL.

Jeff and Brittany are the proud parents of a gorgeous little girl named Claire Olivia. She has strawberry blonde hair and is seriously gorgeous (she takes after her mother!). Sydney told me

that Claire can now dance. “She moves her little arms and kicks her little legs when she hears music and she smiles.” Claire makes us all smile and Sydney makes us laugh out loud. Sydney has a mind like a steel trap. She is very smart, full of fun, and very popular in first grade. Jeff started working at Blue Cross Blue Shield this year and has the responsibility of working out contracts with physicians. This job demands a lot of his analytic and “people person” skills which he has in abundance. Lately he told me that he is very happy with his golf game and benefitting from the lessons he has been taking with a really good golf coach. He actually had Claire on the golf course before she was a week old!

Gerard has finished his graduate degree in Applied Statistics and is now working part time at the University of Florida while he continues to learn the many skills of a biostatistician. Cyndi is very happy to be working with him. He learns so easily and enjoys medical research and consulting. He enjoys working out and running and playing games on PS4 with Jeff, Devin, and other friends. Even Sydney is part of the group! I forget what “level” she is on but it is very impressive. With the way we are now all wired, the voices of family from other states are in our house on a regular basis.

Maggie and Devin are engaged and will be married on September 6, 2015 in Gainesville! Maggie worked at an internship in Gainesville over the summer and the “wedding committee” (Maggie, Gerard and I) got to work out lots of the details. It is unbelievable how many details there are! Maggie finished her graduate work in Electrical Engineering (EE) at Georgia Tech and now has a job at Enercon learning how to update nuclear power plants around the country. She enjoys her job very much and this new rhythm of life. Devin continues to work on completing his PhD in EE at Georgia Tech. He works very hard and is much needed by his advisor as the senior person in the lab. Maggie and Devin’s dog Whiskey is doing very well and is extremely well looked after as he looks after Maggie and Devin.

I am so grateful that I did not try to squeeze our Christmas news into a paragraph. Maggie and Devin celebrated “Fake Christmas” today. It is their special day before they launch into the larger family Christmas chaos. They exchange gifts, eat the traditional Christmas meat pie for breakfast, and watch Christmas movies. Today they watched, “It’s a Wonderful Life.” Maggie told me that she cried at the end when Harry Bailey makes his toast: “To my big brother, George, the richest man in town.” The messages of Christmas do not change really, but they are beautiful in their truth and inspire me always.

Love to you all, Good health and God’s Peace!