

A Quality of Heart Most Unusual



An authorized biography of
Selma Bartlett



A Quality of Heart Most Unusual, An Authorized Biography of Selma Bartlett © 2010 Selma Bartlett
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A foreword from the author...

A quality of heart most unusual.

These are the most deserving words my mind can encompass to describe Selma Bartlett. Yet, for as much as I have endeavored to find the perfect phrase or sentence, these mere words are not enough to adequately encapsulate the brilliant spirit and exceptional character of a woman who has transformed the destiny of a city and touched the lives of thousands of people. These are not even the words she would enlist to describe herself for, in her own eyes, Selma Bartlett is an ordinary person.



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I know, however, that when you read Selma's story, you too will discover an extraordinary human being with a quality of heart most unusual, most admirable, most inspiring, and most filled with love. Perhaps I sensed the roundness and warmth of Selma's heart nearly two years ago when I first saw her. Soon after accepting employment at the UNLV Foundation, one of my initial assignments was to participate in the check-in process for the "2007 Distinguished Nevadan" gala honoring Selma for her many contributions to Southern Nevada. My charge for this special dinner event was to work the registration desk, which was positioned immediately outside the entrance to the reception



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hall. The plan for me that evening was to leave the premises as soon as the check-in process was complete and the venues' doors were closed to the general public. Unbeknownst to me, serendipity played her own tune when the doors refused to shut in their usual tight seal to insulate its guests. The two massive structures, in their high polish dark wood splendor, gifted me that night with a small gap through which I could peak inside a magical event that hosted the state's most prominent business, political, and educational leaders. The tiny crack allowed me to notice that seated at every table were Las Vegas's "movers and shakers." Many present, whom I did not recognize, had the air of importance and responsibility deserving of public recognition – even if perhaps, like me, it was some unexpected bit of luck that brought them there and not the allure of public acknowledgment for a good deed. I was not paying attention to anything said by the master of ceremonies, as I was lost in the beautiful lighting, the fine china, the elegant business attire, and the pleasant sound of modest laughter that filled the room.

When Selma Bartlett's name was announced, I snapped out of my daze and focused on her procession to center stage. It was the first time I had ever seen her and, to this day, it is what my mind's eye recalls when she glides across my thoughts. There was something about her aspect that illuminated enormous peace and love from within her small and delicate frame; it was an internal light that was both kind and powerful. I was perplexed by how such a tiny and mature body could withstand an energy so strong that I could feel it even at a faraway distance. Her demeanor was humble and gracious, her soft voice was both sweet and wise, and her face was truth. Like everyone who meets Selma, I liked her instantly. In surveying the expression on everyone's faces, all who were present were equally moved and touched by Selma's loving energy.



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I was finally able to tear myself away from the richness of that moment and proceeded to my drive home. It was a clear and brisk night. Seeing Selma embedded in me a sense of heightened well-being. I thought of myself as quite fortunate to have been in the presence of someone who, by all standards, has conducted her life in a truly Godly way; I was thankful for remembering through Selma that true happiness comes from serving others; something that, in my struggles for survival, had never been my guiding principle – not beyond doing unto others as you would have them do unto you. Selma has always understood this proverb but only by way of happenstance; you see, her desire to help, to mend the broken, to make the world better is genuinely selfless and pure. She does not expect, nor does she want, anything in return.

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More than a year later, I was asked to write a feature story on the newly established Tobias Mishel Memorial Scholarship, which was funded in its entirety by Selma and her husband Troy, whom we will get to know much better later in this text. An interview ensued by way of a lunch meeting with Selma, Jack Mishel (Tobias Mishel's father), and two UNLV Foundation colleagues. This is when I was properly introduced to Selma, and when I first learned about her commitment to helping young people through education. Following cordial introductions and upon ordering our meal, I began to offer Selma a series of questions about how



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she and Troy made the decision to bequest a portion of their estate to fund the scholarship. Discussions soon made their way to Selma's contributions to the city of Henderson, Nevada, and to her life-long involvement with education. While my reporting assignment was to focus solely on the circumstances surrounding the Mishel scholarship, I could not resist navigating deeper into Selma's philanthropic history. You see, the question and answer process with Selma was like peeling through the endless layers of an onion; and, though it was not her intent, with every answer, Selma revealed her influence over diverse areas in the community. That lunch meeting was one of the most interesting sixty minutes I have ever experienced. It was a night of the gala déjà vu in the sense that I was once again moved and inspired by her.

Three weeks later, the story was written, approved by my supervisors, and published in several UNLV donor-focused mediums. This assignment was one of those rare and enriching professional experiences that, if you're lucky, make an appearance once in a lifetime. At the end of the day, I checked it off my "to do" list - mission accomplished.

About two months ago, I received a call from Selma. She explained the UNLV Women's Research Institute planned to feature her in its acclaimed "Biographies of Women in Nevada," an archive on the lives of women who played an integral role in shaping the silver state's history. This project reignited Selma's life-long wish to document her personal life story for future generations of her family as well as for her closest friends. Selma said she enjoyed my writing style in reading the Mishel Scholarship piece, and asked if I would be interested in writing her story. At this point, I had learned enough about Selma to



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know that such a request from her is, by all comprehension, an honor and a privilege. I accepted her proposal enthusiastically, but also with a clear awareness of responsibility and an overwhelming sense of duty that I later discovered, through my findings in Selma's history, were unequivocally well-founded.

What you are about to read will take you through the life of an incredible, undeniable, unconditional, invincible, and infinitely kind human being. As I write this foreword, I am nervous about the possibility that Selma may not be pleased with the finished product, nor with its title, nor its tone. My hope is that she will understand that the fullness of this text was born of the loving and grateful testimonies of many of the people who have been touched by Selma – close friends, business associates, beneficiaries of her generosity, and an unsuspecting writer. I've referred to an English teacher friend for his opinion on what you are about to read. "Incredibly passionate" were his choice of words for describing the tone of this biography. But, you see, the text upon which you will now embark echoes the voices of men and women – young and old alike – who passionately love and admire Selma; people who eagerly and wholeheartedly shared with us how she changed their lives and how today, at 84 years old, she continues to be a powerful positive influence on the future of many, including those who are oblivious to her invisible hand of generosity, as well as on the future of her beloved city of Henderson, Nevada.



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Selma Frances Abdallah was born on September 23, 1927, in New York City to Amin A. Abdallah and Louise Heath Abdallah. She was named in honor of her paternal grandmother, who lived in Damascus, Syria, where Selma's father was raised with his small family. Selma's mother, Louise, was a country girl born and raised in a small Texas town. Indeed, her parents came from entirely different backgrounds, yet, as Selma explained, they found in each other comfort, security, and common ground; though it was not until they were in the second half of their lives that they met and married.



“My father came to the United States when he was 20 years old. My grandfather wanted him to get a medical education,” explained Selma. “He did not finish his studies due to lack of funds,” she added. Instead, he went on to open a successful clothing store in New York City, which he owned and operated for many years.

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Selma's mother grew up during the late 1880s, arriving in Oklahoma in a covered wagon. Her parents were very strict and wanted Louise to marry early. She refused and began a successful career as a milliner for high end clothing stores. Louise was well known for her designs. She later became a buyer for a high end women's apparel store. Attracted to the progress of the metropolitan areas and their promise of a better life, Louise left the small town in the early 20s to work as a buyer for a clothing store in Texas.

Neither Amin nor Louise could have imagined meeting each other during those mid-life years. There was a chance meeting in the biggest city in the world.

In this jubilant time in America, Amin and Louise found each other in the city that never sleeps. At that time in their 40s and 50s, their similar paths in the clothing industry intersected. They met, fell in love, and were married in 1925. Life was good for the mature new couple, and Selma's birth in 1927 underscored the joy and prosperity of their early married life. Peace and stability were the pillars in the Abdallah home as they later welcomed their youngest child, Efaf, on August 21, 1929. Life was good, plentiful, and secure.

Then came October 24, 1929 - the crash of the stock market. The coming storms lay ahead. For the Abdallah family, and for the vast majority of Americans, the crash triggered the fall of their



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financial stability, the loss of all the things they earned through the sweat of their brow; this was the start of hunger, of fear, and of desperation for American families.

Amin and Louise were resolute to spare their daughters from the crash's wrath, though they disagreed on the remedy. Amin believed he could best provide for his family by staying in New York; but Louise was determined to move the family to Oklahoma where her brother owned a successful farm. She knew that, even as the rest of the country starved, they would be able to live off the land. Amin finally conceded, and the family used its last \$5,000 to buy 40 acres. Louise, five-year-old Selma, and three-year-old Efaf moved to their farm in Chickasha, Oklahoma, in December 1933. Amin remained in New York City.

For Louise and her daughters, the country life was full of farming and chores. However, food was always plentiful - even as the farmlands in Oklahoma and Texas experienced the worst drouth in American history. During the years when there was adequate rainfall, the land produced bountiful crops. However, as a drought that started in the early 1930s persisted, the farmers kept plowing and planting with increasingly dismal results. Louise proved to be a woman of resilient character and determination. She ran the farm and provided a wholesome life for her daughters, even in the midst of "the great depression" and the destructive "dust bowl." Amin, now separated from Louise, always remained deeply mindful to provide for his daughters. He

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1936 – Selma with her Gilbert Elementary School third grade class.

helped Louise to procure Selma's and Efaf's needs by sending money regularly from whatever jobs he could find in the city. The two little sisters could always count on seeing their father every summer when they visited him. Selma's parents were never officially divorced, but they never reunited as husband and wife.

Selma describes her close-knit family of three as appreciating the beginning of a new day as an opportunity to use it for good. With each passing year on the farm, and especially as she matured into a young woman, Selma grew to develop a personal mantra that is accurately mirrored in a quote by prominent 19th century theological thinker William Ellery Channing: Selma learned to appreciate the importance of "living content with small means, to study hard, think quietly, speak gently, and act frankly." Today, more than six decades after leaving Chickasha, this continues to be Selma's truth and keystone of her inner fiber.

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“On an average day on the farm, my sister and I would walk half a mile to Meridian Elementary School,” Selma recalls. “After school, we would help our mom with the farm chores.” Growing up in the country, especially during World War II (WWII), was markedly tasking. Selma and Efaf are prime examples of their generation. They were disciplined, self-sacrificing, and cautious – character traits that have defined Selma her entire life. Indeed, the unique demands placed on the American people during WWII called for the nation’s youngest citizens to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their fathers, brothers, and their youthful sons and daughters who were sent to fight Hitler’s armies in Europe. “Because all the young people were at war it was the children and mothers who had to do all this work on the farm,” Selma said.

In April, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed the nation and called everyone to action. “One front and one battle where everyone in the United States – every man, woman and child is in action. That front is right here at home, in our daily lives.” Every American citizen was called to “do your part.” They were encouraged to defend the country and support the war effort in many different ways. Farmers were expected to increase food production despite the fact that there were fewer farm workers available. Food and other basic commodities were needed to support the troops and allied populations in Europe, so they were rationed at home.

Roosevelt's call to the masses was heard loudly and clearly in Chickasha. For Selma and Efaf, their contributions to the war effort, as well as to their own family, included picking cotton and loading it to be sent to the gin. "After school, Efaf and I would come home to help our mother tend to the wheat, cotton, and Alfalfa on our land," explains Selma. "On the farm you do many things," she added.

For Selma and Efaf, their contributions to the war effort, as well as to their own family, included picking cotton and loading it to be sent to the gin.

"We were in the high school basketball and track teams," relates Selma. "I was a guard on the girls' basketball team...we became *the* winning team when we beat Rush Springs High School," she said. "I don't know if I was good, but I was fast." Even with her involvement in various student organizations and in sports, Selma was actually shy. As she describes it, Chickasha was an ethnocentric community of Irish Americans, American Indians, Scotch English, and Germans who were farmers. "Because our name was Abdallah, we were not always accepted," Selma explained. "The large majority of the people treated us very respectfully, but some referred to us as "dirty little Jews," she shares thoughtfully. In fact, Selma and her sister were not Jewish; "We knew those people were not kind to us because they thought we were from a different heritage."

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In alignment with other farming families, Selma, Efaf, and their mother survived thanks to their own seeded and harvested food supply. “We had a vegetable garden, potatoes, chicken and eggs, milk from the cow,” said Selma. “But we didn’t have candy or fruits. My uncle’s house was about five miles away. We were ten miles from the closest town, and we would go with Uncle Frank when necessary.”

A much anticipated break from their lives in Chickasha would come every summer when Amin would call for his daughters to join him in Virginia, where he relocated to open a dress shop. “Our summers were split between both parents,” explains Selma. “It did not bother us to go back and forth.” The young teens would take a two-day train trip to meet their father. The long rides provided them with an opportunity to talk and to bond as sisters and as best friends. Selma recalls their father always having plenty to eat and new clothes for his daughters “that were not homemade.” Once, Selma and Efaf remained with their father for a year and attended Stuart Hall School for Girls in Stanton, Virginia. “It was a different way of life than on the farm,” she notes. “My father was a great man; he was very understanding. Having come from Syria and having to work very hard, he was always very thankful for what he had and deeply grateful to the United States.”

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Selma recalls her high school experience as being full of fun. It was during these years that she met Troy Bartlett, a good friend of hers and Efaf. She and Troy had many classes together and, along with Efaf, they were also members of the high school track, basketball, and baseball teams.

“We had no money. For fun, a group of us always went to town on Saturdays and watched people on the streets,” she said. “We lived in a community that did not allow dancing.” As Selma explained, girls would take a box supper to highly chaperoned parties. It was an annual ritual for the young men and women to attend the Oklahoma State Fair every Fall.

In addition to her studies, Selma held a steady job as a waitress at the local W & B Airport during her junior and senior high school years. She saved her earnings to pay for her college education. “In those days, there were no scholarships,” said Selma. “I wanted to attend Hills Business College to become a secretary.” Indeed, upon her high school graduation, Selma enrolled in the business school, where she learned shorthand, accounting, and advanced writing. Because they did not own a car, Selma and Efaf moved from their mother’s house to a small rental home in Chickasha, which was near her new job at Pool Insurance Company and close to the college.

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Selma and Troy's friendship continued to blossom. It was a happy time. Yet, as she affirms, "World War II interrupted this life with the young men leaving to fight as soldiers in Europe." Most of the young men in their community were deployed but, because he was still a student, Troy remained to work on the farms picking cotton for several months until he finished school, and he later joined the American troops overseas.

When Troy returned from duty in Italy, he asked Selma for her hand in marriage. "He proposed to me in the car. We'd gone together for a long time," she explained. Troy was back home from Italy, but with orders to serve in Japan in a few months. Selma wanted to marry Troy after his tour in Japan. "But he said, 'what if I don't come back.'" And she accepted.

On July 28, 1945, Selma and Troy were married in a Baptist minister's house in Anadarko, Oklahoma - only the two and the minister were present. "My mother was shocked at first, but she was later very supportive." "My sister always liked Troy, and they were very good friends; she loved to drive with him and shoot geese together - she was adventurous like him."

Troy, Selma, and Efaf lived together. He worked at a local grocery store, and was also employed as a heavy equipment truck driver for a timber company. At 21 years of age, Troy rejoined the Air Force and was transferred to Albuquerque, New Mexico.



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TROY AND SELMA were married on July 28, 1945 in Anadarko, Oklahoma

Selma and Troy were stationed in Albuquerque for four-and-a-half years. Troy enrolled at New Mexico University to obtain his bachelor's degree. At the university, he met Masters student Kenneth "Red" Sharp. Soon Red, his wife Ruth, and the Bartletts formed a friendship that today still holds strong. They had dinner together often and enjoyed fun fishing trips. The newly-married couple needed their first car, but did not have the money for a purchase. Troy and Selma lent them the money for a new car.



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The Air force ordered Troy to an 18-month tour in an early-warning site in a very remote area of Japan. Selma could not accompany him, and she decided to return home to Oklahoma, where she accepted her first job in banking at 1st National Bank. Upon Troy's return from Japan, he was transferred to Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. The reunited couple decided to buy a car and make the drive from Chickasha to Nellis. They used money they saved over the years to pay cash for a brand-new 1953 4-door Ford.

Selma and Troy arrived in Las Vegas on February 7, 1954.

Selma's boss was deeply concerned for her well-being in "sin city." Coincidentally, the bank would soon open its first Nevada office in Henderson. As a way of protecting Selma, he recommended her for a secretarial position at the branch.

Selma and Troy soon relocated from the base to a home in Henderson. "The people next door, Jim and Nancy Espy and their five children, took us under their wing," recalls Selma. "And we immediately fell in love with the small town."

"When we arrived, Henderson had only 7,000 residents," said Selma. "Henderson was born out of the war, and people came to work in the different industries in town that supported the war. The principal employer in town was the titanium metal plant, which produced titanium for the government," she added. "There was Stauffer Chemicals, Western Wecco Company, and U.S. Lime, to name a few."



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Selma could not have imagined the tremendous impact she would have on this small bedroom community 30 miles from Las Vegas. She began to fulfill the duties of her new position at Bank of Nevada's Henderson office, which was called Bank of Nevada; and she quickly learned about the town, its people, and their needs. Her discipline and work ethic, combined with her warm personality, soon garnered the respect of her peers as well as the banks' clients.

"I met Selma in 1954 when she was an associate at Bank of Nevada," explained long-time Henderson resident and civic leader Lou LaPorta. Henderson did not have a bank at that time, and our residents had to travel to Las Vegas for banking services. So when Selma's bank opened in Henderson I rushed to set up an account," he added. LaPorta describes Selma as being generous, charismatic, and dedicated to serving the bank's clients. He said she also had a keen interest in the public's well being and in the town's progress. "She spent a lot of time working with the government of the City of Henderson," he recalled.

Like many young men of his generation, returning home from the war meant searching for a new career and finding employment. LaPorta took the advice of a businessman friend and decided to open an insurance office in Henderson. LaPorta said Selma recognized his venture would fill a void in the community. As she was asked by her supervisors to play a greater



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leadership role, she was able to make approval decisions on loans. LaPorta said he will always be deeply grateful to Selma for believing in him and for enabling him to realize his dream. LaPorta Commercial Insurance Agency became one of the city's most profitable companies and served its residents for more than 40 years.

As his business expanded, so did his desire to give back to the community. Because Selma became increasingly involved in community affairs, the two often worked together on projects that improved the quality of life for the people of Henderson. For Selma, an environment that is welcoming to new businesses was the most effective way to bring valuable services and quality products to town. "Selma was very smart. She got to know the people and their financial statements; she was detailed in her review of potential new loans; and she could count on an excellent board of directors at the bank that made valuable suggestions," affirms LaPorta.

My reply to Selma was always 'when do you need me' because I knew that, if she felt strongly about it, it was indeed worth our collaborative efforts with our partners in the community.

The two also worked side-by-side on the Saint Rose De Lima Hospital Advisory Board in the 1960s, and served as members of the Board of Trustees. The hospital was established prior

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Henderson's incorporation as a city. "It was a period of time that the nuns took over the hospital for only a dollar a year," explained LaPorta. Because the BMI plants that supported the WWII effort were firmly rooted in town, the United States government granted the hospital a 20-year lease that included free water and power – ensuring that workers and their families would have access to healthcare within close proximity.

Having a full-service hospital strengthened the town's case for incorporation. With an additional grant of \$350,000 from the government, a fire department and a police department were also established. "We had to build up from ground zero," LaPorta emphasizes. "And Selma was there with us every step of the way." Selma provided her time and her expertise in finance to set in motion key public resources.

Through her work as a banker and involved citizen, Selma's community connections were unsurpassed by few. She built a network of people who were equally passionate about Henderson's evolution and continued economic prosperity. "She played a role throughout the years on important issues that required a lot of attention," exclaimed LaPorta. "Whenever there was a project or cause that she believed would help our residents, she would pull together a group," he added. "Lou, I need your help!," she would say. "When she asked people to help, they would come right away." "My reply to Selma was always 'when do you need me' because I knew that, if she felt strongly about it, it was indeed

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worth our collaborative efforts with our partners in the community.”

As a key figure in a committee of civic leaders, businessmen, and concerned Henderson residents, Selma was instrumental to resolving the city’s greatest challenges. Moreover, through her work and her influence at Bank of Nevada, critically important business loans were signed that advanced the city’s initiatives, such as securing BMI when it became “a problem” as a war asset – saving hundreds of jobs and protecting the livelihood of many local families.

“The word ‘service’ comes to mind when you think about Selma,” expressed LaPorta. “She was the most delightful person to work with; she was and continues to be solution-oriented,” he adds. “She was an active and outspoken advocate for Henderson. At that time, everyone knew who she was; she grew with the city.” LaPorta explained that in those early years, the people of Henderson had a lot of camaraderie. “Serving our community gave us all tremendous confidence and satisfaction – it helped us to put our heads on our pillows at night and sleep soundly.”

LaPorta added that “Selma was a shining example of people in business that are devoted to a community; and she did a lot of self-sacrificing to help people out.” “She cared for the general public and those she helped out made it a point to do the same for others,” he concluded.

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Today, LaPorta and his wife, remain good friends with Selma and Troy. They continue a 40-year old tradition of having dinner together once a month.



GRAND OPENING of Bank of Nevada's new Henderson office – pictured with Selma are former Nevada Governor Mike O'Callaghan, Alex Sample, Joe McBeath, former Nevada Senator James Gibson, and city of Henderson officials.

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Arguably, Selma has touched the lives of thousands of people. Whether directly by giving start-up companies a financial opportunity to establish themselves, or indirectly by what those organizations offer Southern Nevada's residents – Selma's presence is evident in myriad of community resources. For Fred Gibson, Jr., one of the most prominent men in Nevada, Selma's helping hand at a critically dark hour, saved both his organization and prevented hundreds of employees from losing their jobs.

Gibson's father was associated with Western Electro Chemical Companies (WECCo). WECCo was one of Henderson's original magnesium companies, and was sold to Kerr McGee in 1955. With that sale, Gibson's father founded PEPCON to produce ammonium perchlorate. Together, they built a pilot plant in Henderson called Pacific Engineering, for which Gibson served as chief executive officer. "That's when we began banking with Bank of Nevada, and our relationship with Selma became close," explained Gibson.

"Selma came to see me at the plant with her boss Art Smith," explained Gibson. "She solicited the support of her boss during the visit, since she was the only woman in banking at that time. But she established and marketed herself very well."

Over time, Selma garnered recognition for having one of the lowest loan loss records in the banking system in Nevada. "She

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understood people and could judge their character,” Gibson said. “Selma was probably the most successful branch manager in the entire interstate system.”

Indeed, from the tiny bank branch in Henderson, Selma was well-known throughout the west for her substantial deposits, successful loans, and unmatched customer service. She was also noted for making a personal connection with the bank’s clients. “Selma forged relationships with the bank’s clients, even learning about their kids and staying in touch as they grew up,” says Gibson. “So, as they became adults with their own banking needs, Selma was the first banker they called.”

More than anything else, it was her commitment to Henderson and her brand of leadership behind the scenes that enabled her to be effective.

Gibson describes Selma as very outgoing. “She made you feel like she had a real interest in you,” he explains. She developed personal relationships with all her clients. Having borrowed several million dollars over time from Bank of Nevada, Gibson met with Selma often to sign loan documents. He tells the story of her hands-on approach to customer service: “One day I came into the branch to sign some papers with her, and she was nowhere to be found. Her secretary finally located her outside the bank directing traffic at the drive-thru window.” He adds that Selma had a reputation as an exceedingly caring banker who went



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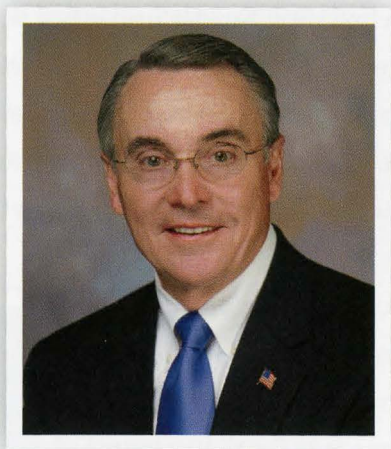
out of her way to meet the needs of all the bank's customers. He says "for many years, Selma's desk was right in the middle of the bank lobby."

Selma and Gibson's partnership extended beyond corporate business banking to civic service. Together, they worked with the Henderson Chamber of Commerce to bring needed services to the city's residents. Of significant note was their collaboration to establish Nevada State College, a politically and financially challenging initiative to bring higher education to Henderson. "We had to have Selma's support, because the State College was simply not going to fly - due to both money reasons and political frictions," says Gibson. "Henderson was growing rapidly. We believed that a city of any substance should have a college," he asserts. "I had been involved with UNLV and UNR, and it was clear there was still an unmet need for undergraduate education in Southern Nevada." Selma's involvement, support, and influence strengthened efforts to establish Nevada State College.

"In my dealings with Selma, I have seen how she conducts herself in her business relationships," says, Gibson. "She was always truthful; in her there was no guile in communications, whether she had to give you a 'yes' or a 'no'," he explains. "Her judgment of character is one of the things I always appreciated; she is also a marvelous friend."

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For prominent Nevada businessman Don Snyder, Selma was an exceedingly important figure in banking. The two met in 1987 when Snyder moved to Las Vegas to become chairman, president, and CEO of First Interstate Bank of Nevada, the largest commercial bank in the state at that time. Selma was the



DON SNYDER

senior officer. “Selma had long been considered a banking legend,” says Snyder. He explains Selma was also extremely well-known in the state, as Snyder describes her fame, as much as any elected official. Snyder says Selma mentored him, and gave him powerful insight about the progress of Southern Nevada’s development. Snyder says that “more than anything else, it was her commitment to Henderson and her brand of leadership behind the scenes that enabled her to be effective.” Snyder explains that Selma was key to advancing the cause for medical professionals in Henderson and throughout Las Vegas.

“Sometimes, those of us that were CEOs of the banks thought it was interesting when we would receive calls from people who wanted to get an introduction to Selma Bartlett,” says Snyder.

“Usually, it’s the CEO that people want to meet, or that make the introductions to key business people in the community,” he adds.

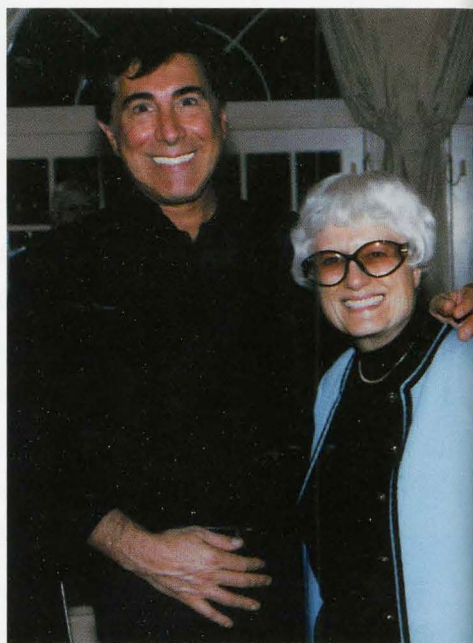


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Selma took Snyder under her wing. Snyder says he benefited tremendously from her guidance. He explains Selma makes young bankers better by the sheer force of her example. “Some people feel that she’s too involved, but that’s Selma’s way. She is incredibly hands-on, and that’s how she gets it done.”

Today, Selma and Snyder continue their collaboration. Only this time it is for their common vision to bring a first-class performing arts center to Southern Nevada. As chairman of the board of the Smith Performing Arts Center in Las Vegas, Snyder is grateful for Selma’s support. She and Troy have made significant financial contributions that will help to fund the center’s construction.

“Selma has also been incredibly supportive as far as opening doors for other people to become involved,” says Snyder. “Her voice is heard very loudly among a lot of people, and this has been incredibly important to us,” he adds.



Selma with casino resort mogul Steve Wynn at his mother’s birthday celebration at John Kish’s home.

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL

THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

Snyder sums up his experiences with Selma as being extremely rewarding. “I learned community building from Selma and from Bill Boyd,” he exclaims. “They both put their money and their hard work where the needs are in terms of helping the community. What Selma did for the City of Henderson is the best example of that.”

In 1991, Selma met Rod Davis, the newly-hired CEO of Saint Rose Dominican Hospital. At that time, Selma served on the Finance Committee of the hospital’s Board of Directors. Davis, who had transferred from a major multi-state healthcare organization, heard about Selma and was eager to begin working with her. He says she was always very sharp, and he was impressed by her knowledge of financing. “Before coming to Henderson, an associate gave me a list of people that he strongly recommended I meet,” he explains. “Selma was on that list and, indeed, she helped me to connect with very prominent individuals in the region,” he explains. “I was golfing with one of her bosses (a president of First Interstate Bank), and I was asking about Selma, since he had been with the bank for many years,” Davis says. “This man, an accomplished banker himself, said he enjoyed working with her, but added that, even though he was the president of the bank, he felt like HE worked for Selma; he said that when ‘Selma wants to do something, we let her because she’s always successful’.”



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL

THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

In his collaboration with Selma through the years, whether for the benefit of the hospital or for Nevada State College, Davis says he is deeply touched by her passion to support and develop her community. Davis says one of the things that makes Selma memorable is her fierce love and passion for the Henderson community – “she would stand up for difficult causes when no one else would,” he says. Davis tells a particularly impactful story of Selma’s commitment: “A number of times in Saint Rose Hospital’s history, financial set backs threatened its existence. Selma, through her influence with the bank, covered Saint Rose and even used her own funds – a personal and professional risk – to keep the hospital running and to pay employee salaries.” He adds, “Saint Rose would not have survived without Selma’s support in its early years.”

Today, Selma is still involved with the hospital as an advisor and consultant. “She always makes herself available when we need her counsel,” says Davis. “She also helps us to engage key figures in the community.”

He and Selma also worked closely together on a capital campaign to raise funds for Nevada State College, and he credits her for recruiting some of the largest private gifts. Davis reflects, “my personal opinion is that Selma in the last 40 years has been the most significant woman banker in the Las Vegas area, and she has been the most significant community leader. She knows every governor, every federal office holder, and most state legislators – and they all have a high level of respect for her.”

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

A MAGAZINE FOR YOUR MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

WomensCare

FALL 2005

EMERGENCY KITS

How to prepare for the worst

ER OR URGENT CARE?

Plus, St. Rose opens new Trauma Center

OPTICAL CONFUSION

Repairing retinal detachments

The BARBARA
GREENSPUN

WomensCare

Center of Excellence



St. Rose Dominican Hospitals

CHW

SELMA BARTLETT

Still going strong at 78

SAINT ROSE DOMINICAN HOSPITAL MAGAZINE,
WomensCare, featured Selma in its cover story in 2005.



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL

THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

Clearly, Selma has touched thousands of lives through her dedication to others, her professional acumen, and the network of powerful individuals who lent their support to her endeavors to advance Henderson. Yet, Selma's nephew, Michael, shares some of the most poignant examples of her giving spirit. "When I was discharged from the military in 1973, I decided to come to Las Vegas to see my aunt," he explains. "I hadn't seen Selma in more than 12 years - when I was just a little boy." Michael adds. "I hitch hiked all the way from Fort Hood; hadn't shaved nor showered in many days - and looked like a homeless person." "I walked in the bank and asked for my aunt. She came out to greet me, not recognizing it was me; and she asked if I needed a place to stay. She asked her assistant to get me a hotel room, and she gave me \$20 for food," Michael exclaims. "I finally said 'auntie Selma, it's me - Michael'." Indeed, she realized it was her nephew and extended her arms to him for a warm hug. As Michael explains, this scenario was not uncommon at Selma's bank. She quickly offered help to anyone who needed it or asked for it. "I have never seen her turn down anyone who asked for help - and she never expected anything back."

In the 1960s, Louise became very ill and moved in with Troy and Selma, where she could receive more personal attention and care. As her disease progressed, Selma and Troy hired an older tenant in one of their apartment rentals, Goldie, to care for Louise. "Goldie cared for granny for about 4 years," said Michael. "After granny died, Troy and aunt Selma took care of Goldie for



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

the rest of her life; she never had to pay them rent, and they would buy her groceries and basic needs.”

Michael explained that Troy and Selma owned many apartments which they rented to people in need. So that their

tenants not experience added financial hardships, they never raised the rent.



Selma with her mother and Goldie.

Selma was also instrumental in the construction of the Boulder City Christian Science Church. Although she never joined the congregation as a member, she was very supportive and even attended its service every Sunday. “I would drive my aunt to church, and we noticed a blind lady walking by herself,” said Michael. “Well, my aunt made it a point to get to know her, and discovered that she was widowed and had no one to assist her.” “From that moment forward, auntie Selma, met her once a week to help her buy her groceries, write checks for the bills, and make sure her needs were met.” Selma added her to an already long list of people she would call on a daily basis to ask if they needed anything.

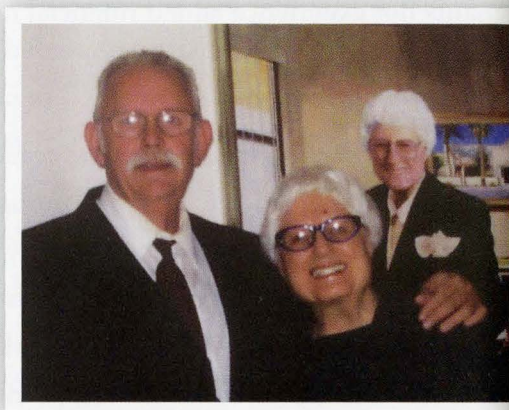


A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL

THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

Selma always found time for people and for her city. In 1991, she united the Henderson community to build the town's first senior citizen center; and she organized efforts to offer its constituents and the city's needy elderly residents with community meals. She spearheaded efforts to establish the Henderson Library and extended her dedication through its phenomenal growth over the years. Additionally, as Michael explains, it is thanks to Selma's involvement, that the Boys and Girls Club opened a successful and popular Henderson facility. "My aunt also donated money to the Jewish temples, she served on the Clark County School District Board Oversight Board - she was involved in so many important causes."

"There was a time when my aunt was the most powerful woman in Nevada," expressed Michael. "She put more doctors in practice than anyone else; and she had no bad loans," he explains. "My aunt was a great judge of character."



SELMA with her nephew Michael.

Michael added that Selma has been the most influential figure in his life: providing him guidance, covering his tuition to nursing school, and being a second mother to him.





Selma's entire life, with Troy as her life partner, has been devoted to serving others.

Selma's entire life, with Troy as her constant partner and support system, has been devoted to serving others. In mapping out the outline for her biography for the purpose of fairly representing her story, what echoes (even screams) is her spirit of giving back. No matter who one speaks to, or the number of magazine and newspaper articles about Selma we read, the conclusion is the same: *Selma has a quality of heart of most unusual; period.*

She recently retired from her most recent post as Bank of Nevada executive vice president. Not only is she distinguished as one of the first female banking executives in the west, but she was also the oldest. Not surprisingly, she is bombarded daily with calls from bank clients, as well as community leaders, for her guidance on financial matters as well as for her influence in opening doors in business and in civic organizations.

Selma's life today continues to be devoted to her community and, with particular emphasis, to ensuring that young people have access to a college education. She continues to be an active member of

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL

THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

the Nevada State College Board of Trustees, and, until recently, also served on the Saint Rose Hospital Board. Most recently, she provides the UNLV Foundation fundraising support by engaging her contacts to become involved in the life of the university and its students. It was Selma who introduced Fred and Harriet Cox to the Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering; alongside Selma and Troy, the Coxes have become major supporters of the university's engineering program, sponsoring capstone academic programs like the internationally renowned Senior Design Competition - each student in his or her senior year chooses, plans, designs, and prototypes a product in this required element of the engineering curriculum. The senior design project encourages students to use everything learned in the engineering program to create a practical, real-world solution to an engineering challenge. The Senior Design competition is the highlight of the academic year.

Selma and Troy continue to help young people obtain their education by also providing significant scholarship support, including the Troy and Selma Bartlett Math Education Scholarship and the Tobias Mishel Scholarship in Music Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). The Bartlett's also support the

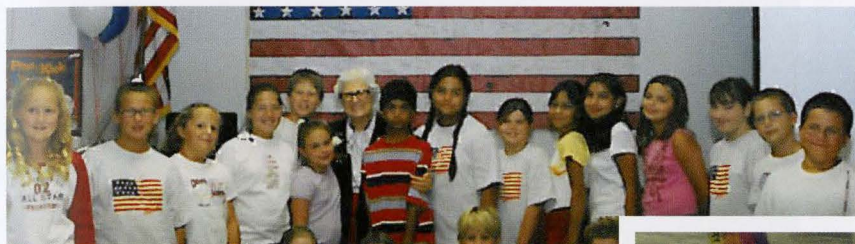


Troy and Selma pictured with long-time friends Jack and Louise Mishel.

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

Women's Research Institute of Nevada on the UNLV campus, helping to ensure that women and girls in Nevada will have a stronger voice on issues that will affect their future.

Selma is also very engaged with Selma Bartlett Elementary School, giving of her time, money, and guidance to help an adoring student body of children who look up to her as a role model. The school was dedicated in her honor on October 29, 1992. Former Mayor of Henderson Lorna Kesterson stated "Selma Bartlett has maintained a position of respect in Henderson and has made no secret of her affection and pride in the progress that Henderson has achieved."



SELMA F. BARTLETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – Dedicated on October 29, 1992, Selma F. Bartlett Elementary School enrolls more than eight hundred students each year. In alignment with Selma's vision for education, the school's administration and faculty are committed to excellence in education. Its mission is to provide a caring, positive, and safe learning environment where every child is challenged to achieve commensurate with his/her ability, is valued as a unique individual, and is provided opportunities for academic, social, and personal growth.

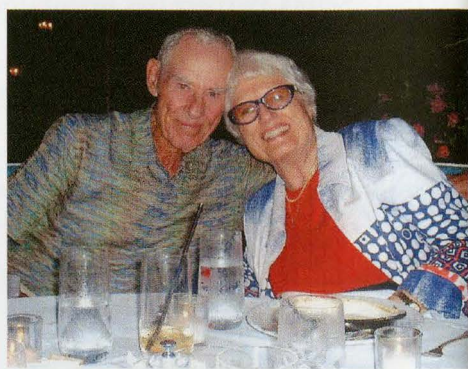


A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL

THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

The list of organizations Troy and Selma support with their time and personal resources is endless – as are their numerous accolades and recognition, which include the Key to the City of Henderson, and a proclamation in Selma’s honor by the State of Nevada. Additionally, Selma has been the recipient of the 1989 National Jewish Humanitarian Award, the Henderson Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Member Awards, and the City of Henderson Commendation Award, to name a few.

Now in their eighties, Selma and Troy have chosen to live modestly so they may be better able to help where the need is greatest in the community. It is not surprising that wherever they go, they are received with love, respect, and gratitude. Selma, with Troy as her partner, is the author of stories of newfound hope and brighter futures for hundreds of students, as well as for the residents of Southern Nevada. Their legacy will continue to touch thousands of lives, and will continue to inspire us to get involved and give back to our communities. ❀



July 28, 2010, Troy and Selma celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary.

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



L-R: Saint Rose
Dominican Hospital's
Sister Bridget and
Sister Georgianne with
Troy and Selma at the
hospital's annual Mardi
Gras Gala.



Selma with Las Vegas developer Mark
Fine, a life-long friend.



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



The newlywed couple with Troy's parents in Oklahoma.

HENDERSON BRANCH

Saturday

FEBRUARY 6, 1954 • NOON TO 6 P.M.

On Monday, February eighth, the Henderson Branch of Bank of Nevada will open for business... bringing to Nevada's third city the complete financial facilities of Southern Nevada's progressive bank.

To give residents of Henderson and its surrounding areas... and our good friends in Las Vegas and Boulder City... an opportunity to go "behind the scenes" in a modern bank, the branch will be opened for a preview inspection and reception on Saturday, the Sixth of February.

We cordially invite you to visit the Henderson Branch on Saturday, from noon to six, to see a demonstration of modern equipment in use, and to inspect vaults and departments normally closed to the public... and to meet Bank of Nevada's President, Mr. S. L. Butterfield, the Manager of the new branch, Mr. Colvin S. Smith, Jr., members of the Board of Directors, and the branch staff. Those attending the Preview and Reception will receive a useful souvenir of the occasion.

The new Henderson Branch is one of the most modern banking structures in the West, and is equipped with every modern facility for prompt and courteous service to its customers. The bank is cooled by a modern air conditioning system... for the comfort of its customers and employees.

The branch is completely self-contained, with service available at Bank of Nevada's checking and savings accounts, Christmas every type of low bank rates, installment deposit loans in a fire- and burglar-proof vault, many additional services including coin exchange, travelers cheques, securities and credit information.

Visit us on Saturday for a preview, re-arrange your banking with a complete line that gives more helpful service and erosion of the financial needs and positions and loan customers.



MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



FEBRUARY 19, 1954 –
Bank of Nevada's
Henderson branch
grand opening.



BANK OF NEVADA 1957 – Selma pictured with original Bank
of Nevada Crew.

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



Original Bank of Nevada building in Henderson.



New Bank of Nevada building with drive-thru teller service.

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



BANK OF NEVADA 1975 – Selma pictured in the her office in the new Bank of Nevada building.



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

There is only one
Selma Bartlett
Henderson's Selma Bartlett.



She is our Selma Bartlett too. Selma is Vice President and Manager of our Henderson Office. She is a knowledgeable, enthusiastic banker with twenty-eight years of banking experience behind her. Selma is a warm, charming, gracious lady who makes banking at our Henderson Office a sheer delight. Selma Bartlett. She is our Bank.

MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

**BANK
OF
NEVADA** 
ELEVEN OFFICES • THERE IS ONE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

Bank at Selma's.



Selma Bartlett, Manager, Bank of Nevada, Henderson Office.

Selma's bank out in Henderson is not your typical run-of-the-mill bank.

It's warm and personal because that's the way Selma and her customers are.

They're the kind of people who won't bounce your check if you make a mistake adding or subtracting and overdraw your account. Trusting her customers (this way makes a lot of sense to Selma.)

And where other banks make it policy to require \$5 to open a savings account, Selma's happy to open one for \$1. (Her only policy is to treat her customers the way she'd like to be treated.)

Selma's Bank is the Bank of Nevada in Henderson.

As manager, she runs it in the same warm and personal way she'd run her own bank. Which is the way her bankers like it.

And the way you'll like it when Selma welcomes you as a customer.

Selma's Bank.
Bank of Nevada.



Henderson Office.

© 1978 BANK OF NEVADA. HENDERSON OFFICE

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



HANK GREENSPUN presents Selma with an original painting to honor her for her outstanding contributions to the city of Henderson.



GOVERNOR MIKE O'CALLAGHAN presents Selma with the Henderson Woman of the Year in Business and Economics award.

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

...ND IN WESTERN U.S.
**Selma Bartlett Appointed First
Woman Bank Manager in Nevada**

Bartlett became the first woman Bank Manager in the history of Nevada when she was appointed to the position at the Henderson Bank of Nevada last week on the board of directors.

Little is known. Mrs. Bartlett is the second woman to hold the position of manager in the Western States. The first woman to hold the position is Miss Gee, who has managed the Town Office of America in San

Bartlett's appointment was announced June 15, 1954, by Robert H. Owens, President of the Bank of Nevada. Appointed to the position of Assistant Bank Manager is Robert H. Owens.

The bank manager position is a distinguished career in commercial banking.

Her banking career began in California where she worked for several years with the Bank of America Company. In 1948 she joined the staff of

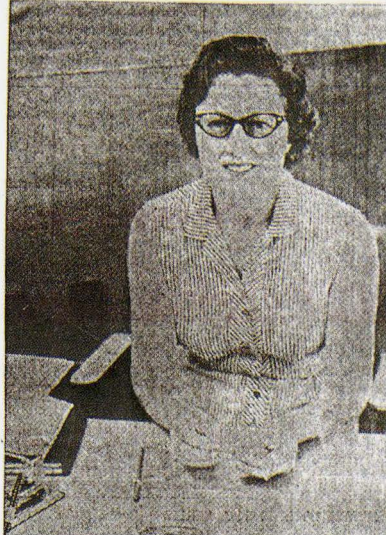
of Henderson Toastmistress Club where she was awarded the group's trophy for outstanding performance of the evening. Robert H. Owens, the newly appointed Assistant Cashier, has been serving in this capacity at Bank of Nevada's First and Carson Office since 1958.

Owens attended Cornell University and the Packard Business College in New York City. While at Cornell, he was a member of Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity.

After college, Owens entered in an aluminum manufacturing partnership. His current banking career had been in the field of bank operations and real estate.

He has taken an active part in the functions of the local American Institute of Banking, having served as governor, treasurer and vice-president. He is presently serving as first vice-president and is a holder of standard and pre-standard certificates as well as being an instructor in Bank Letters and Reports.

Owens resides with his wife, Elaine, and daughters, Jill and Jackie, at 2005 Mesquite Avenue, Las Vegas.



**Use The Bank For All it's Worth,
Selma Bartlett Advises Chamber**



BANKS ARE PEOPLE — was the topic of a speech presented Thursday by Bank Manager Selma Bartlett at the luncheon meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Bartlett is shown here with Chamber President Dan Reed.

college, for automobile loans, furniture loans, modernization loans, real estate loans, home installment loans and commercial loans to business houses.

The result of this action is two-fold: it creates bank earnings to pay interest on savings accounts; it stimulates business in the community; creates work for more people and brings prosperity.

Mrs. Bartlett said that since the Bank of Nevada opened in Henderson eight years ago, \$24,500,000 has been loaned to residents of this city.

"This is your bank," Mrs. Bartlett concluded, "for banks are people. Your funds deposited and put to work in Henderson have contributed to the progress and growth of the city."

"Use your bank for all it's worth, for the more you use it, the faster your city will grow and the more it will prosper."

...pointment of Selma
on Bank of Nevada
first woman in the
the second in the
status of bank man-
ands and customers
with my receiving
the HOME NEWS.
nds and customers
r new position and
of Directors on
our city.



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



TROY AND SELMA loved the great outdoors, and they always found time to spend with friends on their boat.



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT

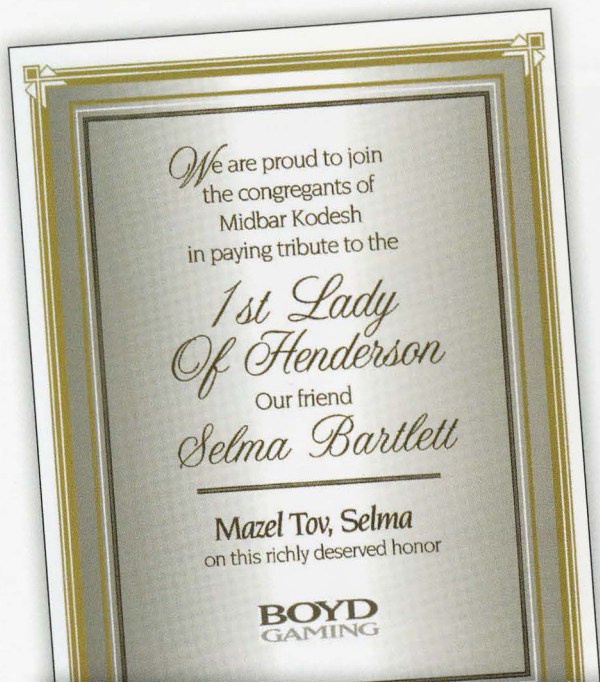


Christmas time at the Bartlett home.

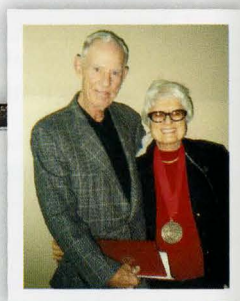


SELMA disguised herself as Santa Clause and surprised Bank of Nevada staff and their children at their annual holiday party.

A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



SELMA is the recipient of myriad honors and recognition from civic, educational, and government organizations for her contributions to the her community. In 2002 she received the prestigious President's Medal from UNLV President Carol Harter. She and Troy have also been recognized numerous times by religious organizations in Southern Nevada.



THE 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL

They are the people after whom the City of Henderson's schools, streets, libraries and rec centers are named. Without them, the city wouldn't quite be the same. They've molded the business community, shaped the education system, developed the neighborhoods. For input, we asked several Henderson contemporaries, including City Councilman Steve Kirk and Henderson Chamber of Commerce executive Alice Martz, to list the individuals who most altered the course of their town.



Selma Bartlett
Executive Vice President
BankWest of Nevada

She has lived in Henderson for virtually as long as the city has been incorporated, having moved here in 1954 from New York City. In 1958, with First Interstate Bank-Henderson, she became one of the first women bank officers in Nevada and served as regional vice president of the National Association of Bank Women until 1960. Beyond the banking world, she has devoted countless hours to community organizations such as St. Rose Dominican Hospital, the Henderson Boys & Girls Clubs, the Henderson Chamber of Commerce and the Henderson Downtown

SELMA was recognized by Greenspun Media Group as one of Henderson's 10 most influential people in the city's history.



A QUALITY OF HEART MOST UNUSUAL
THE STORY OF SELMA BARTLETT



SELMA F. BARTLETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL enrolls more than eight hundred students each year.



SELMA with Bartlett Elementary School Principal Mary Blanchard and Tom MacMillan.



The Beauty of Life

The adventure of life is to learn.
The purpose of life is to grow.
The nature of life is to change.
The challenge of life is to overcome.
The essence of life is to care.
The opportunity of life is to serve.
The secret of life is to dare.
The spice of life is to befriend.
The beauty of life is to give.



*A Quality of Heart
Most Unusual*

Lovingly written for Selma and Troy Bartlett
by Georgina Corbalan.

Once on a clear and starry night you pointed toward the north star and said "that's when you know there is a God."
Respectfully I say to you: meet Selma and Troy, and that's when you know that he loves us. Thank you for your example, your friendship, and for helping me to see the world in a brighter light - to understand that happiness is found through helping others.