

In Memory of Beth Pease

I only recently discovered my dear friend Beth Pease died from cancer on June 3rd 2015. She left two daughters Sherri and Shauna and three sons, Tony, Danny and Joey. Beth was a leading light in the Elvis World and what I call an 'old school' Elvis fan. They were there from the beginning and remained loyal to Elvis all their lives. Beth Pease was a larger than life character who had a heart of gold and will be sadly missed by all that knew and loved her.

Early Years photos of Beth in Memphis



Soden's girlfriend Joni, George Klein, Alan Fortas, Bill Burk, Beth Pease and Jimmy Kingsley, Memphis October 1982



Beth Pease, Sid, Aunt Loraine Halloween mid 1980s

It was Beth Pease who persuaded Graceland to open the gates at midnight so that fans could walk up to the gravesites holding a candle. The "Elvis Country Fan Club" of Texas then became the driving force behind the annual vigil at Graceland, known as the 'Elvis Candlelight Service'. It used to start at midnight on August 15th and it would take four or five hours to reach the grave in this beautiful and moving tribute accompanied by his music from Elvis wonderful ballads. They should produce an album simply entitled the "Elvis Candlelight Service".

Beth was the founder and publisher of the wonderful newspaper called "Graceland News" that Elvisly Yours bought and distributed worldwide. The first advertisement we placed in Graceland News spelt our name wrong, "Elvishly Yours". After many years of struggle Graceland News was sadly discontinued. In the early years it was supported by advertising and newspaper sales of all the local stores at the Graceland Shopping Centre until EPE took possession of the mall and kicked them out. The CEO of Graceland Jack Soden does not care about Elvis. He continually refused to take over "Graceland News" from Beth, a newspaper which had the perfect name for Elvis news for fans worldwide. A special edition was published in 1988 and we have a few copies still remaining.

Beth was one of my favourite people in Memphis and I have such fond memories of her. She was always fun to be around and she introduced me to Aunt Lorraine and Linda Gail Lewis and God knows how many other people.

In the early days after Elvis died "Elvis Week" was a joyful event before the cronies that run Graceland started to take control after they sued me in US Federal Court in 1985. Beth was the architect of many of the spontaneous events that occurred during "Elvis Week" in the early years. She organised Elvis sock hops (discos), Elvis Tribute Shows, Elvis flea markets and gave home barbecues. She was always around the Graceland area during Elvis Week and she was one of Graceland's greatest ambassadors. Beth Pease should have been honoured by EPE and the fans for all that she did for so many years in the Elvis World.

Even though I have been to Memphis 53 times, very few of my Memphis 'friends' ever invited me to their homes except Beth and her family. To me she was the most hospitable person ever in Memphis. We remained good friends until I closed my Memphis warehouse in January 1993 and then, sadly we lost touch until 2010 when I got emails from her son Joey after he read a feature about Beth in and Elvisly Yours Cyber Newsletter. Sadly, emails between Beth and I were lost somehow in cyberspace. The years have just flown by and I very much regret our lack of contact over the many years since we last saw each other in Memphis.

We first met when she worked for Grayline and wanted to get our business on the Memphis tours of my fan club. She wined me and dined me and was the perfect hostess. She gave me wonderful tours of Memphis and took me to my first Blues Club on Front Street before Beale Street was renovated. She was a huge Elvis fan and told me how she would chase Elvis around town with other fans. The early days in Memphis after Elvis died were so much fun. I used to fly to Memphis four times a year for business and for Memphis Tours with my Fan Club. I always met Beth on those trips and had wonderful meals at the Pease home in Horn Lake, always preceded by a prayer, something you will rarely find in Britain.

My first visit to the Pease home turned into a nightmare. There were no cell phones in those days and Beth gave me driving instructions to her home that were quite vague; take Highway 51 South until you reach Horn Lake and turn right at the "Package Shop". I got to Horn Lake and drove up and down Highway 51 looking for a shop called "Package". Your mother never explained to me that a "package shop" was a liquor store. In America you cannot drink alcohol in the street and show the bottle so people drink out of a bottle inside a brown paper package, hence the term, "package shop". I eventually found a callbox and phoned her and finally got directed to her home.

I think Beth never quite understood my British ways and zany humour. Every time we met she promised to pray for my soul each Sunday in Church. Either she did not pray hard enough for me or maybe God was busy each time she tried to get through, but I am still the same "Sid Shaw".

She was a true hustler in the nicest sense of the word and really should have been the Sales Director for Graceland. I have been told I could sell snow to the Eskimos but Beth was my equal...a great saleslady! Even the UK High Court Judge in his summary described me as the "consummate salesman" and would have had the same description for Beth Pease

I cannot remember why but suddenly Beth was no longer working for Grayline Tours and the next thing I know she was the publisher of "Graceland News", a wonderful newspaper and just what Graceland needed at the time and still does today.

I always recall Beth said "Maureen had the power to look right into your soul". If Beth did not understand me she certainly was spooked by Maureen. Beth was always on her best behaviour when with her. Maureen was a counsellor and teacher and she had total and strict control over children. With just a stern look she would immediately affect any bad behaviour. Maureen set very high standards for children and they had to live up to those very high standards or else. I think Beth when around Maureen, acted as if Maureen was a strict school mistress.

Many of my so called "friends" in Memphis completely avoided me after I was sued by EPE as if I had the plague, but not Beth Pease!! She always remained my friend but kept on repeating the same advice year after year..."Sid, you should learn to kiss ass!" She was particularly referring to the ass of Jack Soden and I always responded by saying, "Beth if you kiss ass you'll get AIDS". Beth even came to a Court Hearing during my litigation with EPE in Memphis Federal Court. A friend such as Beth Pease is hard to find and I cherish the many years we knew and enjoyed each other's company on my 53 trips to Memphis. My sincere

condolences to her family and may Beth rest in peace in a “Blue Suede Heaven” rocking and rolling with Elvis and Maureen.

Recent photos of Beth with beautiful daughter Shauna and Graceland News 1988



View more photos of Beth, Shauna and family on [Shauna Pease Bledsoe \(Facebook\)](#).

Please pass on this tribute to Elvis fans you know that have been to Memphis and Graceland who may of met the late, great Beth Pease. Even if they didn't know Beth they should be aware of all that this “Memphis Angel” did for Elvis Presley.