

Surprise, Shock, Celebration

By Kenita Gibbins

My Mother died in April, my step-father passed in September. I followed the advice of a friend to look for found money. I tracked down \$55 in David's home state of Minnesota. I felt proud of myself. The paperwork of both estates took my mind off losing them.

Three years after David died, I received notification from a company called Keane. Their letter said they had found money for me, and if I filled out the paperwork they would inform me how much. I called our attorney and asked if this method might be on the up and up. He said he had heard of such things. I had the proof that I was indeed David's heiress. A Keane person wrote and said they would be sending me \$16,000. Deep in small print I learned their fee was half and they kept \$16,000. The money was generated from General Electric stock. David had worked for General Electric for years. As an engineer he kept track of everything with great documentation. We think this bundle of GE stock probably slipped through because of a split.

Needless to say I danced when the check arrived. My pragmatic husband said, "Aren't you going to reinvest this money?" I answered, "Good heavens, NO. We and the kids are going to Spain."

George replied, "We took them to France for our 50th Wedding Anniversary with the bonds that had matured."

My response, "Look, we couldn't take them places when they were young – why not now? If we invest the money, they will just inherit it someday."

We arrived in Spain just in time for Holy Week. Our oldest son, daughter-in-law and daughter who went with us loved everything we did like lounging on the beach and bicycle riding in Mallorca. After two days we flew back to Barcelona and rented a van to drive to Valencia. From orange country, we took trains to Seville and later to the Alhambra in Granada. I felt no guilt about spending the found bounty in this way. Mother and David liked to travel. The privilege of getting to spend quality time with our adult children can't have a price.

Approximately three more years later I received another letter from a New York City Bank that said Keane had not researched enough about the so-called 'found money.' They were not privy to half of \$32,000 which the General Electric stocks were worth. I received another check for \$16,000.

I always wanted to take a photography trip to Venice. The *National Geographic* trip magazine showed up. I asked my other daughter-in-law, who is also a photographer, if she wanted to go to Venice with me. Our son, who doesn't want to travel to Europe, agreed to take care of their three children. We made friends from all over the world. To this day we still correspond with them. I'm forever grateful to my step-dad.