

Making Our Way



A McMAHON / CHEYNE PODCAST

Season 2 - Episode 24

3/12/25

Roma, Martin, & Barbra

Our Hosts

Janet Cheyne McMahon is a lover of family, dogs, nature, travel, books, and music. Born south of the Mason-Dixon line, she left after 9 months for parts north, landing eventually in Michigan, which will always be “where I’m from.”

Love of learning led Jan to a Bachelor of Arts (History, Political Science) at the University of Michigan-Dearborn (Go Blue), and a Master of Arts (Library and Information Science) at the University of South Florida. Amid all that, studied for a time with Rob at Colorado State University, a pivotal time in their lives.

Worked at the U of M-Dearborn Library, and then The Salvation Army Florida Divisional Headquarters, with the greatest reward being in serving as the Divisional Librarian. A librarian is who Jan is “in my soul.”

Jan and Rob have made our home in Florida since 1983, and live now in retirement with their dog, Skye, who makes it all the best adventure. They travel as much as possible, spending time in nature and in diverse places on this amazing planet. It has all been, and continues to be a fascinating journey, with hope of making a difference, in small ways, by being brave enough to speak and act on behalf of others.

Rob McMahon is a native Michigander, born in Saginaw and raised in the suburbs of Detroit. Rob attended Michigan State University, graduating in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science degree. He did graduate studies at the University of Michigan and the University of South Florida. Rob is retired, having spent 36 years in public education teaching both high school chemistry and biology and middle school science. He worked as a total quality management trainer for the Pinellas County School District and served four years as the president of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association. Rob cofounded a non-profit total quality management training center, The Learning Co-op, for Teacher Unions interested in applying the W. Edwards Deming continuous improvement principles to their day-to-day operations. He worked with teacher unions in Colorado, Maryland, New Mexico, North Dakota, Texas and Michigan. He also worked in a similar capacity with Jim Shipley & Associates. In retirement Rob has written a series of science related children’s books, and enjoys traveling with his wife, Jan, and their black Labrador Retriever, Skye.

Deanna Cheyne, born in St. John’s, Newfoundland, earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Toronto (1996), studying with such luminaries as Elmer Eisler, Doreen Rao, Greta Kraus, Lois Marshall, and Rosemarie Landry.

Dee taught music at Mississauga Christian Academy, served as music director for Meadowvale Bible Baptist Church (Mississauga, Ontario), served as Assistant Divisional Music Director for The Salvation Army in Florida, is a former member of Tampa’s Master Chorale, and, for the past 18 years, has been a public school teacher.

Dee has visit 36 of the 50 U.S. states, and 12 countries. Her favorite destinations include France, Prague, New Orleans, National Parks, & Hawaii.

Dee & Jim live in Florida with Brigus (Golden Retriever) and Pip (Teacup Yorkie).

James Cheyne, born in Galesburg, Illinois, earned a Bachelor of Music degree (Theory and Composition) from Michigan State University (1978); and a Master of Music degree (Theory and Composition) from the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign (1981), studying with David Liptak, Salvatore Martirano, and Ben Johnston.

Jim has served as music director for The Salvation Army in Central Illinois & Eastern Iowa, Orlando Area Command, and the Florida Division, served as a pastor with The Salvation Army, and was a public school teacher for 17 years.

In travel so far, Jim has visited 50 states and 27 countries. His favorite travel destinations include National Parks, New Orleans, Newfoundland, Argentina, Prague, & France.

Jim continues to write music and support Dee’s musical endeavors, and cooks whenever absolutely necessary. Jim & Dee live in Florida with their dogs Brigus & Pip.



L-R: Brigus, Jim, Deanna, Skye, Jan, Rob.
Inset: Pip

This transcript of the podcast, Making Our Way is housed at
cheynemusic.com/podcast/transcripts.
©2025 by James Cheyne, all materials, unless otherwise noted.
All rights reserved.

Roma, Martin, & Barbra

Season 2; Episode 24

3/12/2025

Hosts: Jan, Rob, Dee, & Jim.

Dee presents the 3 people who have had a significant influence on her as she has been Making Her Way: Roma Hayward, Dr. King, and Barbra Streisand.

[Music]

JIM (voice-over): Today, we continue the series Jan proposed where each of us would select three people who have greatly influenced our lives and our way of thinking. We'll recall Jan's choices of Dave McMahan, Bev Minn, and Dr. Jane Goodall. It's Deanna's turn at the mic, and I've got to say while one of her choices was a gimme, the other two took me completely by surprise.

[Music]

DEE: Okay, this has been a hard one for me, and Jim can tell you because he'll say, "Who are your three people?" And I'm like, "Oh my gosh." And he's asked me that umpteen times since this whole thing...

JIM: I think one o'clock this morning in bed was the last time.

DEE: Yes. So I said to Jim, I said, "It's not so much individuals but certain experiences or places I've gone to." But I did come up with three but...

JIM: Well, who are some unsung heroes, people that you would like to highlight that would not be so obvious to everybody else?

DEE: Okay, the first person I ever knew other than my mom, when I was born, and that's Roma. I've known Roma literally since my birth. Our cribs were next to each other in the hospital. Our moms were in the same room. So I've never not known Roma. And I would say that she's been probably one of the most influential people in my life in terms of understanding friendship, and how that can change. I always remember Roma was my best friend. And I've said to my mom, I said, "I think the first time I felt, like, real authentic love when I was a little, little kid was Roma." Because they moved away to Edmonton. I was three years old. It was preschool. And we would get letters from Aunt Patsy and Roma, and mom would read them to me and I'd say, "Oh, let's write back." I had this pure sort of love. That's my best friend. That's the person I've always known. And so that's who I would say has been influential just because how many people can say a person they're not related to they've known since the day they were born sort of thing, but...

JIM: She stood up with you in our wedding.

DEE: Yeah. Yeah. So I mean, that was significant and it was important because of the

relationship we've had.

ROB: Yeah.

DEE: So.

JIM: I met her first at the Clearwater airport. I picked her up for the wedding. Both you and she have lost your fathers. You were very young. She did as an adult. Are they still in Bermuda?

DEE: Yes.

JIM: She married Kent...

DEE: Hayward.

JIM: ...Hayward.

DEE: All right. This next one. Okay. Let me prep this. So I grew up in a home where the news was constantly, on before 24/7 news channels. In the evening, the evening news would be on and then it would go into another two hours of special news programs. My dad was a history teacher, social studies. He loved and lived the news. He stayed up on current events. He was active politically. So this was my environment, both my mom and my dad. So I was always around debate, and I would walk into the teacher's lounge at my father's high school and dad would be in a debate with another teacher on some topic. So this is the environment I grew up in. So I always was aware of politics, aware of having your own ideas and arguing your point. So as I got older, I came to appreciate more Martin Luther King.

I'd always known who Dr. King was because my parents, well, my dad as a history teacher, I would constantly hear these names and be aware of it. But when I got older and I was able to appreciate it for myself, I was highly influenced by King, his teachings, the way he would speak out when it was hard to speak out, go to jail for what he believed in. I read his books, and it was way for me to see how my faith and how I live out my faith are the same. And so I would say Dr. King has been highly influential on me for those reasons.

ROB: Good one.

JAN: That's a really powerful choice.

DEE: Yeah. I mean, it seems like, oh, that's one of those obvious ones. Everyone would say Dr. but I mean, that's not...

JAN: But he influenced like the programming you did in your job.

DEE: Yeah, that's right. One of our Christmas celebrations had at least one of his prayers.

JAN: Yeah.

DEE: I remember we had highlighted in our program.

ROB: Yeah.

DEE: It was on worship, I remember.

JIM: See, that's legacy stuff because, unlike the other three around this table, he was not alive during your lifetime.

DEE: No.

JIM: So you're receiving his legacy as an influence, which is...

DEE: Yeah.

JIM: ...pretty strong. We visited his home, his church...

DEE: Yeah.

JIM: ...in Atlanta, his grave site, his monument in Washington.

ROB: Yeah.

DEE: Yeah. That's powerful. On the wall are some of his quotes.

ROB: Quotes.

JAN: It's interesting. He's sort of the safe person to say nowadays, until you look back at what he said in the context.

DEE: Yeah.

JAN: And then you realize he's been made into something that doesn't fully represent the depth of his action at the time when he spoke and acted and why he was such a lightning rod.

DEE: Yeah.

JAN: We've gotten away from that now.

ROB : Revolutionary.

JAN: Yeah, he was.

ROB: It's like Jesus. That's my next...

[Laughter]

DEE: I was just gonna say. Yeah. Okay. Along with parents, can we just say...

JAN: Jesus is a given.

ROB: Yeah. He's a given.

JAN: Sorry.

Dr. KING: *All we say to America is be true to what you said on paper. If I lived in China or even Russia or any totalitarian country, maybe I could understand some of these illegal injunctions. Maybe I could understand the denial of certain basic First Amendment privileges because they haven't committed themselves to that over that. But somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly, somewhere I read of the freedom of speech, somewhere I read of the freedom of press, somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for rights. ...Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now because I've been to the mountaintop. I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like*

to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he has allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land. So I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

DEE: Okay, Jan, do you remember when you became aware of your gender?

JAN: No.

DEE: Okay.

JAN: There's probably several times.

DEE: Okay.

JAN: So speak.

DEE: Yeah.

JAN: But I never really focused that much on it.

DEE: Mm-Hmm.

ROB: I noticed right away.

JAN: Oh, shut up.

[Laughter]

DEE: Well, I was going to ask the same question of the two guys here. Do you remember ever being made aware of your gender?

JIM: Okay. I'm going to - because this is a whole other topic - when we're talking about gender, we're talking about the way a person perceives themselves. When we're talking about sex, we're talking about a scientific category, okay?

DEE: Okay. Yes.

JIM: So, "It is henceforth the policy of the United States that there are two and only two genders, male and female."

DEE: Uh-huh.

JIM: He's completely messing up the language.

DEE: Right. Yes.

JIM: Perhaps his advisors don't even know that you have to make a distinction...

ROB: That's true.

JIM: ...of what you're talking about because you can't tell a person how they're going to perceive themselves. So are you talking about how you're aware of, "Oh, look!"

DEE: Correct.

JAN: I'm a girl.

DEE: Yes.

JAN: I'm a boy.

DEE: Yes. Yes. Girl, boy. Yes. That's what I mean. I'm talking about like way back when you were little, like, do you remember ever being conscious of, "Oh, I'm a boy." "I'm a girl," or that being presented to you?

ROB: Not presented. I think growing up in Saginaw, I spent a lot of time with my cousin, Karen, who was the same age as me. And I think at a very young age, I realized she was different than I was.

JAN: It's funny because I've never thought about that as a significant definer...

DEE: Mm-Hmm.

JAN: And I don't know why, until I reached puberty, and then it became something I needed to know about.

JIM: I remember being slapped. I remember someone saying, "It's a boy."

DEE: Oh, geez.

[laughter]

JIM: And then I - and I'm just thinking, you know, "Oh, fine life this is going to be it starts off like that."

DEE: So I grew up on a street where all of the kids that were my age were boys. And that's who I would hang out with. I was a tomboy, and I never questioned being able to do anything different. I was always very competitive. I'm going to run faster. I'm going to hit the ball harder. I'm going to win at whatever I do. And my parents never made me feel I was supposed to be or act a certain way. And it wasn't until I went to primary school, a boy said to me, "You can't do that. You're a girl." And I remember looking at them and thinking, what? And I told them off and I said, "That's not true. You're stupid." *[laughter]* And I remember saying it to my dad, "Can you believe a boy told me this?" My father, I can remember from that day, he never said because I'm a girl or, or whatever. He always said, "Deanna," he said, "you can do whatever you want to do." And he always said, "And you can be whatever you want to be." There was never any question about that. So I was raised in a way that I never questioned. If I put my mind to something, I could do it. So then as I got older and started realizing there is differences and you're treated differently because of your gender or your perceived gender or however you want to put it, I always fought back to that idea, because in my heart, in my soul, it was false. And it was such a foreign thought to me, like, how could somebody think that way? And then when I see people in history and how women have been treated as secondary citizens or learning about having to fight for the right to vote or all of those things that stuck with me.

One of the role models I have for that, not only for fighting for your rights and proving that you can do anything a man can do, a woman can do better, Barbra Streisand. So she's been a role model in the way that she's been strong and she had to fight against the system as a woman in the entertainment industry. She was one of the few women who produced,

directed and acted, and I think wrote her movie, "Yentl" ...

JAN: Mm-Hmm.

DEE: ...and how she had to fight against, "Well, you can't do that" ...

ROB: Mm-Hmm.

DEE: ... "It's never been done before." And the whole reason is because you're a woman. What does that have to do with my ability? She even early in her career was told to do certain things and she said, "No, I'm doing it this way." She fought for that and she knew who she was and she's had to keep fighting for it. And I remember the first time going to California with my family and we did one of these Map of the Stars tours...

ROB: Mm-Hmm.

DEE: ...and the guide said, "Oh, and Barbra Streisand lives there." And I remember him calling her, "Well, she's known in the business as a B-I-T-C-H." And I thought, why is that? Well, because she was a strong...

ROB: Woman.

DEE: ...confident woman and a man would never, who was the same way, be called that. So anyways, she's a role model for me for female empowerment, independence, and also as a musician, because one of my teachers - my voice teachers - introduced me to her Broadway albums. I've listened to her music a lot, listened to the way she would sing a phrase. I learned a lot about phrasing and how to sing a line by listening to Barbra Streisand. So as a musician, she's been highly influential as well.

ROB: Good one.

JAN: That was a good one. I think partly it's because I had the mother that I did, that it never occurred to me that I couldn't - until I came up against a barrier that was imposed on something I wanted to do, that when I wasn't the right, I was a girl, not a boy.

DEE: Right.

JAN: And there was one barrier that I had to get through for something that I really wanted and was told, "You can't because you wear a skirt," or whatever.

DEE: Right.

JAN: There's a really good lesson in being on the other side of that and learning what that can mean when it has nothing to do with your ability. It's just a good, it was a lifelong lesson that I got out of it. So.

JIM: Who was it?

DEE: Bobby Hobbs. *[laughter]* What a name, hey?

JIM: I don't know what it was, but when I hear, "Oh, you can't do that because you're a girl" can talk about permission or ability, you know.

DEE: I think it was both. I think at first I assumed it was ability, but I don't even know what the thing was. I just remember that was the first time I had ever heard someone say to me, "You

can't do that," and it had to do with because I was a girl. And that was the first time I became aware of somehow it was perceived as inferior.

JIM: Thank you, Dee, for those choices and for that insight. So, I think I'm up next, and that presents a problem. I have been "making my way" in such a circuitous route, how to limit my choices to three only. Well, I'll work on that...

...until next time.

[Music]