

The HOPE Organization Board of Directors

The 6-member Board of Directors is demographically representative of the people we serve; five of our members were born and raised in polygamous families. Each member of our team conforms to a "Code of Ethics Policy", "Confidentiality Policy" and "Conflict of Interest Policy", in addition to providing two character references and agreeing to a background check. No salary or other benefits are provided for the Board members.

Kristyn Decker, President - Kristyn was born and raised in the polygamous lifestyle, growing up in a family with 22 biological siblings. Her father was the leader of the Apostolic United Brethren (Allred group), which is the second largest polygamous group in the United States. Kristyn later lived as a polygamous wife herself - with her husband, his second wife and their eleven children. She chose to leave the marriage when she turned fifty years old. Her book *Fifty Years in Polygamy – Big Secrets and Little White Lies* was written to help others, in or out of polygamy, realize that they too can have a wonderful and productive life outside of that stronghold. Kristyn has always been an advocate for women and children. She will retire this year after 30 years of being a devoted school teacher, and will continue to assist, in any way possible, those who want to leave abusive situations. Kristyn is excited about being a part of The HOPE Organization and would like to help anyone who wants to leave polygamy, including family members and relatives from Hildale/Colorado City, as well as from other polygamous cultures.

Ellen Beynon, Vice President - Ellen and her twin sister were born into a large polygamous family in Salt Lake City, Utah. She married her high school sweetheart when she was 17 years old. Although the couple chose not to live in a polygamous marriage, they still have many family members who are currently practicing that lifestyle. While raising her eight children, she went to school to learn how to style wigs and worked in a styling shop for a short period of time. Later, Ellen sold home interior decor for a few years before the family moved to St. George, where she then worked as a waitress for eleven years. While waitressing, she took classes to earn her high school diploma and also worked as a dental assistant. Sadly, her boss laid her off after he learned about her polygamous background. The Beynon family started a very successful cultured-marble company, which they managed for twenty-four years until the slumping economy caused them to close the business. Ellen looks forward to serving on The HOPE Organization's board because she wants to assist people who desire to leave the polygamous lifestyle.

Elaine Tyler, Treasurer - Elaine is a native of Atlanta, Georgia. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Georgia and 2 Associate Degrees in Computer Science from Arapahoe Community College. After working in the Pharmaceutical industry for 22 years, she moved to St. George, Utah and became a volunteer with The HOPE Organization. Other non-profit volunteer activities in which she has participated includes Treasurer for Quota Club International (an organization helping the deaf and hard-of-hearing); Girl Scout Leader; Big Sister and a member of the Big Sisters' Activity Committee; Junior League of Denver; D.O.V.E. Center Victim Advocate; a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate for abused and neglected children) Volunteer and is currently a vice president on the board of the Washington County Historical Society.

Marla Gledhill, Secretary – Marla was also born in the small polygamous town of Lister, B.C., Canada and lived there until she turned eight, when her family moved to Hildale, Utah. Marla was home schooled in Canada, but started public school in Hildale in the 3rd grade. Due to a disagreement with the leaders of the community, her family moved away from Hildale when she was twelve. After graduating from high school, she attended Dixie College and received an Associates Degree in Secretarial Studies. Marla then attended Southern Utah State College (SUU) in Cedar City and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education with Minors in P.E. and Fine Arts. She currently works in shipping and receiving at the Boulevard Home Furnishings in St. George. Marla's family is very important to her and she enjoys spending time with her 20 grandchildren and one great granddaughter. Marla and her husband recently celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. She loves to read, travel, play the piano and sing, garden, create scrapbooks, and research her family history and genealogy. Marla finds her involvement with The HOPE Organization to be very rewarding, as many of the victims coming to HOPE for help are related to her.

Brenda Jensen (Voting member) - Brenda was born in Lister, British Columbia, Canada to Harold Blackmore and his second wife, Florence, whose sister was Harold's first wife. Their family farm later became what is known today as the Canadian FLDS polygamous community, Bountiful. Brenda's father was directed by the Priesthood Council leaders to move his family from Canada to Colorado City, Arizona in the 1960s to help build houses and develop farming in that community. At the age of 15, she was to be placed in marriage with one of the Priesthood leaders, Marion Hammon (Sara's father). Brenda had an older sister who was already his 11th plural wife and she did not want to become, at 15-years-old, another one of the many plural wives of this man who was in his 60's. Fortunately, Brenda's father honored her wishes and they moved from Colorado City to LaVerkin, Utah. Brenda later married a young man who had grown up in the LeBaron polygamous group in Mexico and today they have 3 daughters. Brenda is a strong advocate for Human Rights and protecting women and children from abuses that occur in polygamy.

Sara Hammon (Non-voting member) – Sara was born in Hildale, Utah and raised in Colorado City, Arizona. With more than 90 people in her immediate family - 19 mothers, 74 siblings and one father - she comes from one of the largest families in America. She is the 62nd child and her mother was the 10th wife. Growing up in an isolated polygamous culture proved to be unbearable for Sara. She watched her mother emotionally disintegrate under the pressure of being a polygamous wife, unable to grasp her own self-worth and unable to protect her children from rampant abuse. Her mother suffered nearly two dozen nervous breakdowns during Sara's childhood. Sara's father, Marion Hammon, could never remember her name or which wife had given birth to her, due to his vast number of children. While growing up, Sara witnessed arranged marriages of underage girls to adult men who were as much as three times older than these child brides. She became terrified that staying in this group would lead to a fate identical to that of her mother's and she dreamed of a different way of life. Today, after years of recovery and re-education, Sara volunteers with The HOPE Organization to raise awareness about the polygamous cult she was raised in and to help people who have left this group integrate into mainstream society.