

# Next Best Thing: Linda Brimhall; From beekeeper's daughter to entrepreneur

Barbara Bruce The Independent | Posted: Tuesday, April 12, 2016 5:00 am

TAYLOR — Linda Lee Brimhall's family moved from the Valley to Taylor in 1977. This was Linda's senior year of high school. She was a shy girl, but not so shy she didn't find her a high school sweetheart.

Brian Wynn Brimhall was that sweetheart.

Linda planned to go off to college, but Brian was not sure what direction in life he wanted to take.

"If he had said, 'I love you,' I would have stayed," Linda said.

Linda and Brian went their separate ways and began building their lives and careers. Both married twice, and Linda had four children and Brian two.

Wondering about old friends, both joined Classmates.com. They reconnected when Brian wrote to Linda to see if she was coming to their 30-year class reunion in 2007. Linda lived in Utah and Brian in Snowflake.

Linda did come back for the reunion, and that spark which had ignited in 1977 between them seemed to still be smoldering.

Unhappy with her life in Utah, Linda returned there and made some major life changes. Then the emails began. Then, with family in Taylor who lived on 40 acres and Linda needing a property to put her Missouri fox trotter horses on, Taylor ended up moving there in 2009, and the courting began.

On March 27, 2010, Brian and Linda became Mr. and Mrs. Brian Wynn Brimhall.

The time of leading different lives between 1977 and



Linda Brimhall

Hanging out her shingle for business, "Now Open," Entrepreneur Linda Brimahall did not just open a business to "open a business," she opened SynKroMax to carry on her late husband's dream of finding the "next best thing." Brimhall, herself, has communications experience with both Mountain and Pacific Bell, so she can talk and understand the lingo of the biz.

2007 didn't seem to matter to them. They had "now."

"We had to grow into who we were," Linda said.

Brian had been the face of AZ Digital Dish in Taylor for years, handling both the residential and commercial side of business. The company was making changes and the residential side went with corporate, and Brian was left with the commercial side. With these changes having taken place, Brian took a job with Navajo County as a security guard, and Linda went to work for Farr Plumbing.

Everything was serendipitous.

The dream and reality of two soulmates finding one another again, and then getting married, seemed like a "happily ever after" fairy tale.

In February 2013 the fairy tale took a turn. Brian came down with pneumonia, followed by a series of gall bladder attacks. He had surgery in April but did not improve. In May he was diagnosed with cancer. When he returned to see the doctor in July, he was too weak for treatment and was hospitalized. He died a week later. The day after his death, the tests revealed he had bile duct cancer.

Though Brian died on July 11, 2013, that is not the end of their story.

The job Brian had taken with Navajo County provided him with insurance, a real blessing. The job Linda took with Farr Plumbing allowed her to take time off to be with her husband and then to have a means of taking care of herself after his death.

The commercial side of AZ Digital was still operating while Brian was ill and is now run by his family.

Linda, in an effort to work through her grief, kept looking for a way to keep Brian's entrepreneurial spirit alive.

"He was always looking for that next best thing," Brimhall said.

When she was almost ready to throw in the towel from not being able to find that "next best thing," she got a call from LocaLoop Inc. When the man told her LocaLoop was a 4G broadband internet service with no bundles, no contracts and no internet data limits," Linda knew this was that "next best thing" and SynKroMax was born.

Having had somewhat of a communications background herself in troubleshooting and repair with Pacific and Mountain Bell, Brimhall understood what contracting with this company meant for rural Arizona.

"The concepts are similar," Brimhall said.

With the help of Mel Larson, system analyst and technician for SynKroMax and AZ Digital Dish, Brimhall moved forward with the opening of SynKroMax. She resigned from Farr in October 2015

and put all of her efforts into this new company.

Larson and Brian worked together for years with AZ Dish, and Linda says that Larson is the brains behind her operation.

“I feel like (Brian) is backing me from the other side,” Brimhall said.

“When I wondered where will I get the dollars to do this, it just works out. There are always little blessings along the way. I have sold silver and gold to make ends meet. I have used life insurance monies. It is risky. It is an expensive investment, but the timing is right. I have gone so far to make it happen, I cannot quit now.”

Working with Larson, they have been able to erect two towers. They are now working towards a third. Brimhall is seeking out grants and looking for ways to satisfy the need for service east of Snowflake.

LocaLoop is out of Minnesota, and as part of the service agreement, they came to the Snowflake-Taylor area in March to help get the first customers hooked up.

“It is like a turnkey solution,” Brimhall said. “It is part of what we purchase from them. They get a percentage from us, and they offer the product, and they allow it to be our own business. All over the country they are doing this in rural communities who are lacking. The federal government wants the internet and a computer in every home by 2020. It may not be fiber, but if we have the technology 4G, 5G is just around the corner.

“Brian always said this is where technology is headed. We should have redundancy within the next couple of months. I am just waiting for the house to sell or to get a grant.

“I can't not do this,” Brimhall added. “This is needed in our community. It is another option for the future. So many things run off of the internet today, our cell phones and computers. What is out there in the future is broadband, not Ethernet cables.”

Brimhall is well on her way. Now that she is up and running, has an office at 34 Casa Linda Drive in Taylor, has joined the chamber of commerce and is focusing on grants, expansion is her goal. One of the grants she is hoping for would enable her to get service into the Concho community and east of Snowflake.

Even with building a new business, Brimhall knows the value of a personal life. She has grandchildren, and even if it is a quick trip to California, or the Valley, she makes the time.

“My family is still first,” Brimhall boasted.

Linda's parents were beekeepers, and while at Snowflake High School, she was known as “the beekeeper's daughter.” Today, living at home right now with her mom, she is “keeping herself.”

The once shy high school girl has found her own voice after reuniting with the love of her life and keeping alive his dream.

“The business has caused me to come out of my shell,” Brimhall said.

Moving forward with determination, Brimhall, who has always been afraid of heights, decided to overcome that fear. She took herself to a ledge on a mountain top, got as close as she could to the edge and meditated until the fear subsided. Then she felt she had let the fear go. She's proud of herself and she said the experience was exhilarating.

“I felt more empowered after that,” Brimhall said.

Though she probably won't climb any of the SynKroMax towers, Linda would like to add flying in a biplane to her bucket list. She also loves to hike and loves to paint landscapes. She loves to ride her horses. She has three of them. Though she never did like the competing end of horsemanship, her idea of Heaven on earth is just going out in the mountains and enjoying the scenery on a horse.

Brimhall does have one more important thing on her list with regard to her business.

“I hope to get to a point where I can do service things for the community. I want to help people that need help. I don't just want to take dollars in and sit on it. I want to give back,” Brimhall said.

Though it has been over two years since her husband died, Brimhall has discovered that true love transcends time and space and can be kept alive even through the fulfilment of another's dream.

J.K. Rowling said, “Love as powerful as your mother's love for you leaves its own mark ... to have been loved so deeply ... will give us some protection forever.”

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