

“Hey look! Isn’t that _____?”

Even the stars are probably a little star-struck. Is meeting someone famous in the stars for all of us?

By DONNA LYNN RHODES (open post)

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Larry King and Oprah.

For the last 25 years, they have been the reigning king and queen of talk. Who haven’t they met? Who haven’t they interviewed?

I was watching a show that highlighted their careers and I truly marveled at the number of famous – and infamous – people they have sat down and talked with. It’s mind boggling when you think about it, I mean really mind-boggling. One of the guest they have both had on their shows numerous times, is the former Princess of York, Sarah Ferguson – you know Andrew’s ex wife.

While watching the clip, I suddenly remembered that I met her too. I had kind of forgotten about it but at the time, it was a pretty big deal. It was about 12 years ago when the Duchess was a spokeswoman for Wedgwood China and was making an appearance at Macy's in Stoneridge. Not only did we meet, but also had quite a long chat. When it was time for our close up, we started putting our arms around each other, when, one of her bodyguards stepped forward and scolded her. She dismissed him and we went back to mugging for the camera.

Was Sarah Ferguson the most famous person I have ever met? I met Robin Williams and Sally Field at Bridges Restaurant when they were filming Mrs. Doubtfire. I was tongue-tied when I met Apollo 13 Commander Jim Lovell but had wonderful conversations with journalist Lisa Ling and Senator Barbara Boxer. I used to be a huge fan of Larry King – until I actually met him.

Which brings us back to the Duchess of York. Yes, I think she is the most famous person I ever met. And that got me thinking; who is the most famous person you have ever met?

I put that question to some people who live or work in Walnut Creek and their answers are as interesting as they are diverse.

From presidents and peacemakers to celebrities and superstars, they certainly give Oprah and Larry a run for their money.

Here are some of my favorites...feel free to add your stories to the comments section of this article and your photos next to my cutout with then-candidate Barack Obama.

Lorraine: In 1971, I met Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood during the intermission of a Lauren Becall play in San Francisco. They were both beautiful but he wasn't very nice.

Valerie: I got to dance with Joan Baez at our 2007 holiday party. She told me to relax and enjoy life and was just like I expected her to be.

Keith: A few years ago I was at a dance club in LA and I literally bumped into Jessica Alba. She is even prettier in person and I totally fell madly in love. I'm sure she did too.

Mark: Just last month I was in line for Beach Blanket Babylon and met retired Secretary of State George Schultz. He was much friendlier than I expected.

Deborah: The summer of 1984 in New York City. My daughters were on a ballet scholarship at the American Ballet Theatre and Rudolf Nureyev was in their class. He is absolutely beautiful, very small, but incredibly muscular and we talked for a long time -- until he had to go outside for a smoke.

Kimeri: In 1993 my husband got to spend a half hour talking one-on-one with President Ronald Regan. And at a White House party in 2003, we both got to meet President George W. Bush, Laura Bush, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Very impressed.

Herb: It was 1959 and my wife and I were musicians in Berlin. Composer Igor Stravinsky invited us to his hotel room for a glass of Scotch. He was brilliant and very entertaining.

Paige: OMG. June 29, 2004 at Cody's Books in Berkeley. I met William Jefferson Clinton. When we shook hands and talked -- it felt like the only person in the room. It was incredible.

And speaking of Bill Clinton...

Caitlin: My friend and I went to see Riverdance when it was playing in the City around 1999. At intermission we waited in line for the ladies room -- which of course was a mile long -- but we didn't care. We were in line with Chelsea Clinton. She was totally down to earth and we talked about what else? How long the line always is for the woman's bathroom.

Riva: I have met a lot of people, but the most famous would have to be following the Yom Kippur War in 1973, I met Abba Eban in Rehovot, Israel.

Peggy: It was during the 1996 presidential campaign and my husband and I were in Boston, boarding a plane back to SFO. We ran into Jerry Brown who was busy on the campaign trail and he was incredibly sweet. We had a wonderful conversation and talked about everything from Cal and snowstorms.

Ann: Patty Hearst. We went to elementary school together and I was invited to some of her birthday parties. In fact, she's the one who taught me how to dance. I have also met Willie Mays, Joe DiMaggio and Mark McGuire. Oh! And of all things, I met Jackie Chan in the elevator of a Hong Kong airport.

B. Todd: In 2003, I got to meet and talk to Alan Greenspan. At the time he was the Federal Reserve Chairman and I had and still have, a tremendous amount of respect for him.

Alex: In 1999 my dad and I met Olympic Gold Medalist Bruce Jenner relaxing on the beach in Hawaii and he was really nice. But the person who really stands out as the kind of guy I could hang out with and have a beer -- is Nick Swisher. I met him in Scottsdale at an Oakland A's ticket holder appreciation event and he was super nice and a lot fun.

Peter: I have met quite a few famous people, but the two who stand out the most are Greg Norman -- he came over and apologized when he almost hit my son with a golf ball, and Jimmy Connors -- when he and I were playing in the same tennis tournament many moons ago in down in Burlingame.

Brad: Retired Golden State Warrior, Adonal Foyle. We met years ago and now he is more of a friend. He is one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet.

Katharine: It was the late 90's and I was in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I was at one of the must-see national cemeteries -- specifically the gravesite of Eva Peron. I look over and who should be standing next to me but Mick Jagger! I had heard the Stones were in town, and he has got to be one of the most recognizable people on the face of the earth.

What about you? Who is the most famous person you've met? Where? When? 'Whaju' think? We'd love to hear from you.

And we'll get to your answers -- right after the break.