

## Joan Garry's Personal Bio

I was born in Amityville, NY. I am not the Amityville horror. I am the youngest of four kids. I am the only girl. I am not the girl my parents ordered. Pretty sure they wanted someone who wears dresses.

Here's one of the few pictures I have of myself wearing one. It's actually a gown. It's likely as close as I'll get to a wedding gown.



Oh, did I mention that I grew up Catholic? We went to church every single Sunday. I was a really good kid but I still had to go to confession each week. I had to make sins up. I played guitar in the folk mass group. Yes, I can play Kumbaya and know all the verses. I sang every Sunday at 10am until I realized that I wasn't doing it because of my deep faith. I was doing it because I loved to sing in front of a microphone.

I grew up in a wildly homogenous world and I continued to live in a world without color and without exposure to any other religions until after college. It was not until I entered the work force that I met people who were different from me. Including my Jewish partner.

I guess I'd say my dad was the most influential person in my life. We were close. I have three brothers but I think I might have been my dad's favorite "son." We both loved music and harmony of all sorts. He taught me that there is a seventh sense – common sense. He was a genuine, authentic person. And really funny. I like to think I'm a lot like him. I wear a ring that belonged to him. It's like carrying him with me.

My best friend is my sister-in-law Peg. I've known her since I was 12 - she and my brother were high school sweethearts. I've never missed not having a sister because I feel like I have one.

One of my three brothers passed away from alcoholism two years ago. He was the funniest person I knew. I was his chauffeur to and from too many rehab facilities to count. I miss him but I don't worry about him any more. Sometimes that makes me feel guilty.

Peg and I take the lead in keeping an eye on my 88-year old mom. Because that's what girls in families do. This would be my feisty mom who lives on her own, plays bridge twice a week and is better read than almost anyone I know. And she never misses her martini at 5pm. Never.

Our family values commitment. Each of my brothers has marriages that have lasted more than 25 years. I'm going on year 34 with Eileen. When my dad died, my parents had been married for 55 years.

My partner Eileen is the smartest and most generous person I know. She and I met in 1981. Her parents were Holocaust survivors and in 25 years, I was never welcomed in their home. Neither of her parents ever said my name out loud.

Eileen told me on our first date that she wanted children. Eileen gets what she wants. And she helps me to get what I want too. I wanted to be a parent too. But it was her drive and determination that made our dreams come true. That's been true about so many things in our lives together.



Here we are as a group. Don't worry. It was Halloween.

But I think we clean up nicely.

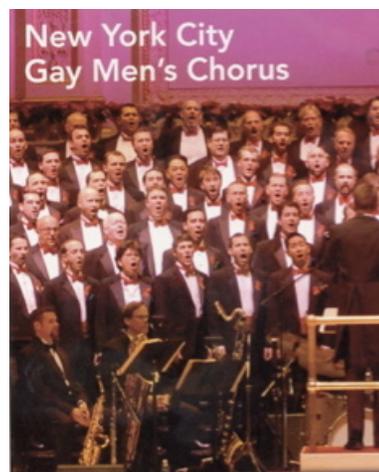


I used to play racquetball 3 times a week. Sometimes I imagine faces on the little ball. Good for anger management. Then I hurt my neck and gained 15 pounds ☹️. I also sing. In 2005 I became the first and only female singing member of the NYC Gay Men's Chorus. See if you can spot me.

One of the two best things my kids have said about me

- 1) *"You are like an 8 year old trapped in a grownup body and I hope you stay that way."*
- 2) *"My mom is like the 8<sup>th</sup> wonder of the world and gets more done in a day than Beyonce."*

These comments offset the numerous times I hear:  
*"I hate you and you have ruined my life."*



Favorite movie of all time? The Sound of Music. I didn't want Maria to leave the convent for Captain VonTrapp. I wanted her to leave the convent for *me*.

*Joan Garry*

BECAUSE NONPROFIT  
LEADERSHIP IS MESSY