



The sun rises at Lucy Vincent Beach. *Larry Glick*

Island Introduction Is Gift of Many Lifetimes

Michael McAuliffe *Thursday, May 25, 2023 - 4:08pm*

During a trail walk on a Vineyard morning, I think of Marvin Rosenberg, my late father in law. The oaks are unfurling. The night air retains a comforting coolness. With the longer light, the performance that is spring gets more of our attention. But it is in the quiet moments that our Chilmark home allows memories to linger.

Marvin died earlier this year at the age of 88. My wife Robin was his first-born and only daughter. We lived for 28 years in Florida within six or so miles of Marvin and Baylie, my mother in law. That's a lot of closeness. And plenty of giving and taking.

One of the most cherished gifts I received from Marvin was my first trip to Martha's Vineyard. That introduction decades ago has resulted in countless days of undiluted joy for my family.

Robin and I — newly married — spent the year 1993-94 teaching law and public administration at a university in the newly-independent Czech Republic. We returned from that adventure to the warm welcome of family and a rented Chilmark home. The home was perched over the Vineyard Sound and shared a narrow path down to the less-populated end of Menemsha beach. With Robin, her parents and her two brothers (and their significant others), we filled the house for a September week of walks, wishes and wonder.

Up-Island mesmerized me with its understated, steadfast beauty. It still does.

Marvin and Baylie, who visited the Vineyard for decades before I joined the family, eventually bought a bay home in the Mattakesett community in Katama. The home had low ceilings and an attached neighbor, but it also was within walking distance of South Beach and a short bike ride to Edgartown. Our three children danced around its drop of a lawn and disappeared for hours on their rental bikes. Marvin and Baylie, who owned a beautiful estate home in Palm Beach, didn't want or need to replicate such significance on the Vineyard. They created a cozy retreat for us to use as the children grew. The place — unromantically called "M-5" — was too small to host more than one family, so we took turns developing our own Vineyard traditions and rituals.

When Marvin retired from his dentistry practice, we urged my in-laws to spend more time on the Vineyard and to invest in a larger home, admittedly with some self-interest at play. However, by then, they were downsizing and eventually they sold the bay home. As a consequence, we decided to buy our own home, migrating up-Island to Chilmark. Marvin and Baylie visited but at times seemed uneasy as if they were imposing on us. We tried to convince them that it was there to enjoy, the home and the Island. By the time their enthusiasm for Vineyard visits returned, Marvin's limited mobility became a barrier to traveling.

Marvin could go on and on about his intimate knowledge of the Vineyard, a familiarity based on more than five decades of seasonal presence. Marvin loved the Vineyard's beauty, its sense of place and its peculiar history. He recounted his Island tales with perpetual enthusiasm as we listened with impatience and a little envy. That he shared the Island with so many thousands of others never diminished its magic for him.

One small example reveals the dynamic well. He had shot a sunrise on Lucy Vincent Beach and had the resulting photo printed large (very large) and framed. We re-heard the backstory countless times, the piece of art being a proud product of a treasured photography

course he took (maybe from Peter Simon or Alison Shaw?). One might conclude from his description that he was the instructor, not the student. The framed sunrise still adorns one of our children's college dorm or apartment walls, it being dutifully passed around as a family treasure from Poppy. Every time we walk on Lucy, I hear Marvin's voice instructing me on light and angles instead of the breaking waves. For years, I shook my head at the notion but now my eyes well up.

I too have become a self-designated authority on the Vineyard, often hosting friends and seeing the Island anew through their eyes. When Marvin started forgetting a Vineyard fact or a road name, I often jumped in with a correction. Over time, I stopped that regrettable habit. He knew and enjoyed the Vineyard well beyond the lapsed trivial fact or mystery intersection.

The Vineyard gives more than it asks. We are so fortunate the Island encourages spiritual bequests, such that they often remain in families for generations. My family has weathered all types of challenges and celebrated all manner of successes together on the Vineyard.

I am my better self when on the Vineyard. I am a beneficiary of its bounty. I have Marvin to thank every time I am here, whether in the possibilities of spring or after life's eventual losses.

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