

Twenty IFs - The Yearly History of a Change in Plans 1974-1975 - The Start of the Center and Two IFs

The End of CIME and The Start of the Center

Although it was common knowledge among the other instructors, including Marilyn, why Leonard had hired Mary, she still did not comprehend the reason. Since Mary had not turned to Leonard for any assistance at all, and my being placed at the second level had not resulted in my failing as an instructor, Mary remained clueless. Yes, Mary had heard the rumors of Leonard's fixation, but to her, that was just silly talk.

Mary and I were still CIME instructors. In the Summer of 1974, there was a CIME workshop to be conducted in Santa Rosa. We were both scheduled to instruct. However, in advance of the workshop, Leonard called me and said there were not enough enrollees signed up, so Mary would come, but I would not be needed. I told Mary not to be surprised when she went to Santa Rosa, because there would be another instructor there in my place. Mary dismissed that notion. However, when she arrived in Santa Rosa, she could see that I had been replaced. Now she got the message. Mary completed that workshop and never again taught for CIME.

In that same Summer, Mary and I gave our first independent workshops to see if anyone would come. The first ones we gave were for Creative Publications. They cancelled mine and put all of my people in Mary's. The second ones we gave were entirely our own. People showed up for both our workshops. Being on our own would be fine.

We had wanted CIME to give follow-up workshops for its participants. We had also begun writing our two books to be used by those same CIME participants. CIME was now a place neither one of us wanted to work, so we decided to start our own workshop-giving company. Our books would be guides for our participants to use in their classrooms, and we would offer follow-up workshops, as well.

We had already formed a company called Baratta-Lorton Educational Services, but that name would not do. Mary's friend Marilyn had named her company Marilyn Burns Education Associates. That name implied that if you took a workshop, Marilyn would be there. We did not want our names in the title of our company because we expected to train other classroom teachers as instructors. We wanted people to come based on the company's reputation and not based on our names.

In December 1974, we established the Center for Innovation in Education, Inc. as a non-profit educational organization.

The Royalties

I had chosen to be fired, and Mary had chosen to resign. Coincidentally, the royalties from *Workjobs* had just started coming in at that point in time. Even without the royalties, we both would have made the same getting-fired and resigning choices. However, without the royalties, Mary and I would have had to find new teaching positions right away, or we would have ended up losing our newly purchased home. The *Workjobs* royalties made possible all the career choices we made after our unscheduled departure from Mayfair.

Because the *Workjobs* royalties had provided us with the support we needed at that time, and were continuing to do so, we decided the Center should have the same kind of support. We had the Center listed as the author of our math books on our publishing contract with Addison-Wesley. All the royalties from those books then went straight to the Center tax-free. As a non-profit, the Center is tax-exempt. Our names are on the covers of our books, but the Center's name is on the Author's line for every book we have written except for *Workjobs*.

Name Change

In the Fall of 1974, Mary came to me with a request. Mary said that she had learned that it was now okay in California for married women to keep their maiden names. Mary asked if I would mind if she went back to being Mary Baratta instead of Mary Lorton. I understood the reason for her request. My mother took great pride in her family name. While it stayed with her as her middle name when she married my father, she was never referred to as Jean Steinbeck Lorton. She became Mrs. Paul V. Lorton. For those who may not make the connection, my mother's father was John Steinbeck's cousin. My grandfather is the tallest young man in the back. John is the Little boy on the bottom step.



Mary took great pride in her Italian identity, and that identity had disappeared when she became a Lorton. Initially, I said, “No problem. I’m fine with your being a Baratta.” However, after I thought about it for a while, I said, “The problem with your being a Baratta is we will have to keep explaining to everyone that we are not divorced.” I said, “How about you keep my name and I take yours?” Mary was fine with that. The cover of *Workjobs* already had her name as Mary Baratta Lorton. All Mary would have to do is add a hyphen to future printings of the book to become Mary Baratta-Lorton.

I then legally changed my name to Robert Baratta-Lorton. I received the court’s final approval of my new name on November 4, 1974. Since the Center was not formed until December 1974, Mary and I were Baratta-Lortons from the Center’s very beginning, and all the books we authored for the Center bear our joint name.

Two IFs

IF we did not have the royalties from *Workjobs*,
Then, we would have had to find new teaching jobs right away, to make
our house payments and cover all our other expenses, and there would
never have been a Center for Innovation in Education.
IF CIME had not lost Mary and me as instructors,
Then we would have remained CIME instructors and written our math
books with CIME in mind.