

Elizabeth Maupin Biography

I was born post World War II in Lansing , Michigan, a few weeks before my parents started their first year in college. I spent most of my first 4 years living with my grandparents on a 9 acre farm. After my father graduated, he was sent to serve in Korea and my mother and I lived in Japan. When I was 8 we spent some months back in Lansing where my father began studies in Political Science and my mother became the department secretary until the family was sent to join a project in South Viet-Nam training provincial officials in public administration.

When we arrived in Saigon, refugees were still streaming into the city from North Viet-Nam following the departure of the French colonial rulers and the establishment of the Ho Chi Minh communist regime. I saw trucks come by in the mornings, prodding people lying on the sidewalk to see if they were sleeping or deceased. Dead bodies were loaded on the trucks and hauled away. I have never forgotten the smell of death or the pain of displaced families and the war orphans.

When I turned 14, my family moved back to the US, to Florida. The US was not exactly as State Department folk and homesick Americans had described it. I saw segregation, discrimination, political corruption, and crime that I had not expected. I spoke book English and knew no slang. I felt quite out of place in this new culture where I looked like everyone else, but was really clueless. While my parents looked for work I went from having servants to clean and cook for our household to being the cook and cleaner. Each year I went to a different school as we moved from place to place. I changed school 3 times in my junior year of high school before my parents moved to Guinea in West Africa and allowed me to spend the last part of that year and all my senior year at a boarding school in Virginia.

I went to college with hopes of training in medicine and returning to Southeast Asia where I had seen great need. My first semester of college chemistry derailed those plans and I ended up majoring in Religion with a minor in Psychology. During my last year of college my parents were back in the area and I moved off campus to live with them. After my mother and I had a disagreement, she asked me to leave. I was out on the street with \$20 and my toothbrush. Unable to afford the college dorm, I pretended to be still living with my family and quickly found a temporary position as a live-in cook. Following graduation I first worked in a public library and shared lodging with other women, but the person with the lease kept our money and did not pay the landlord, so within a few months we were homeless. I had a car to live in and found employment as a social worker and an apartment above a garage.

Disillusionment with the welfare system in Florida and a sense of adventure prompted me to move to the woods of Nova Scotia where I lived under a tarp in the forest in the Upper Margaree Valley of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia for a summer and then couch surfed in Newark , New Jersey till I found another library job. From that point on I had stable housing until I went through a separation and divorce here in King County and was back living in my car between live-in jobs in the mid to late 1980's. Those were tough times. Since 1988 I have rarely lacked housing, and when I did I was able to stay with friends.

I have been very concerned about displaced and unhoused people whether they are fleeing domestic abuse or war, or are unhoused due to economic issues , discrimination, or public policy. My house has been a host home for families through the Catholic Community Services host home

program in the early 1990's and has sheltered a number of individuals and couples from time to time with no supporting agency. My daughter and her family have lived with me for the past few years because they can't afford to pay the rents that now prevail.

I am now a 77-year-old community organizer and activist working primarily with faith communities around issues of housing and homelessness, primarily in East King County. I helped to start the Sophia Way in Bellevue and the Safe Parking program in Seattle and was instrumental in bringing Tent City 4 to Issaquah and Sammamish.

Elizabeth Maupin's Letter of interest

My own experience of homelessness and my relationships with others who have been without housing or in danger of losing their housing have compelled me to stay active in advocacy for housing that is affordable and for more humane treatment of those who cannot currently find housing. I am very committed to finding better solutions to end homelessness. I have experience as an outreach worker for safe parking, as shelter staff and sometimes shelter volunteer, as an organizer, as an encampment host, a host home, and an advocate.

My work related to addressing homelessness. I helped get Sophia Way off the ground in Bellevue and worked as a night shift supervisor for 7 months. About a dozen years ago I did outreach work to get Seattle's Safe Parking pilot project going. I collaborated with SHARE/WHEEL on the hostings of Tent City 4 in Issaquah, including their final in Issaquah. I have often encouraged faith communities to become more involved in serving our unhoused neighbors. While I have never worked directly for a housing provider organization, I did host several families through the Catholic Community Services Host Home Program several decades ago, and later housed some homeless individuals in my homestay bed and breakfast. I have helped with the point in time counts in both Seattle and east King County. I am currently the home care aide for a woman who experienced 8 years of homelessness. I know people who are currently in some East King County affordable housing projects and sometimes try to help them through the rough spots. I was a board member of Preserve Providence Heights, a non-profit which sought to save a local campus worthy of the National Register of Historical Places and its dormitories from destruction in hopes of saving dormitories which could have housed about 200 people. I put out a newsletter about twice a month to local faith communities and interested individuals highlighting community needs and opportunities for service or advocacy in a variety of areas, but with special concern for those on the margins, including our unhoused neighbors. For the past 20 years or more working to alleviate homelessness has been central to my life.

I also care about the **criminal justice system** but have no personal experience beyond being involved with some prison ministry and having been married to a man who was convicted and incarcerated for a crime he did not commit and released from maximum security in Walla Walla following a successful appeal.

What I bring aside from dedication is an ability to network and to foster collaboration, plus a lot of connections with faith communities, especially in East King County.