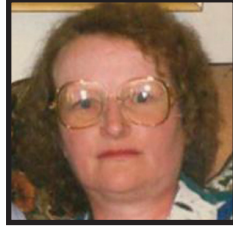


The IFOPA proudly presents to you a Legacy Member . . .
Sharon Van Slyke – Founding Legacy Member
by Nancy Sando



Sharon Van Slyke, of Austin, Texas, was one of the members in my pen-pal circle which was established prior to the International F.O.P. Association. She was married for over twenty years to Tom who worked for the State of Texas. They were truly devoted to one another as they had little family contact for support.

Sharon enjoyed doing crafts, reading, writing her friends and being a wife. She didn't leave her house often and travel from home was usually to visit the doctor when necessary. Tom was a good man and provided for her care and companionship.

She was quick at sharing advice and ideas to make adjustments in life as FOP reared its ugly head. In the mid 1980's, Sharon was instrumental in helping me when my jaws became affected by the progression of FOP in my body. She always seemed happy and positive.

Unfortunately, her world crumbled when her beloved Tom took his own life. Sharon struggled with her broken heart and a hidden addiction to prescription drugs. This proved to be too great for her to rise above and she passed away just three months after Tom died.

I think about Sharon from time to time. Her story is sad but true. A life lesson that must be told so other couples or families can be saved from such tragedy.

If you know someone who is struggling with the reality of living with FOP or caring for a loved one who has FOP, please [contact me](#) or the [IFOPA office](#). Our association has a Mentor Program for all IFOPA members. Thank you.