

## Senior in Action - Neile Adams McQueen

SENIOR IN ACTION Neile Adams McQueen as told to Marilee Marrero Stefenhagen (interview in italics), with background information courtesy of Steve Moyer Public Relations

Born in the Philippines on July 10, 1932 of Eurasian descent, Neile Adams McQueen is 57% Basque (Spanish), 10% English and Irish, 26% Asian (Chinese, Japanese and Mongolian) and 7% Polynesian. She spent the Second World War in Japanese-occupied Manila, emigrating to America with her mother in 1948.

**Neile:** "I finished writing the book *Miyami San (A Love Story)* during the pandemic, but I had started it a long time ago. What my book is about parallels so much of what is going on in Ukraine right now. It is a love story loosely based on my mother's side of the family in the Philippines. Before we left war-torn Manila after WW II, my mother and I lived on the streets for about three months. When we left, we had no records, no birth certificates with us, so my birth was recorded as 1932."

Neile Adams graduated high school from Choate Rosemary Hall in Greenwich, CT. Marjorie Webster Junior College in Washington D.C. followed, and as soon as she was able, she moved to New York and was given a scholarship to the Katherine Dunham School of Dance. A year later she was part of the opening act of the Lena Horne Show at the Cocoanut Grove nightclub in Los Angeles. Shortly thereafter the 21-year-old was selected by choreographer Jack Cole to become a featured dancer as a Princess of Ababu, in the original Broadway production of "Kismet." Her appearance in New York's Versailles Club prompted director George Abbott and legendary choreographer Bob Fosse to immediately cast her as the dancing lead, Gladys Hotchkiss, in the Broadway musical, "The Pajama Game." There she first saw her name in lights on Broadway.

**Neile:** "My Broadway dance days were wonderful; hard work, but the happiest time of my life. Bob Fosse and Jack Cole were great choreographers who influenced me as a dancer. I'm not a fan of the hip-hop style today. Although I've been a singer, actress, and writer, I think of myself as a dancer. If I'd met the fabulous choreographer Miriam Nelson sooner, I might have joined the circus instead. In the Boomtown Show, she taught us dancers how to do things we'd never done before like flying through the air."

Neile Adams danced her way into the hearts of producer Joe Pasternak and director Robert Wise where a seven-year contract at MGM awaited her. Her first feature film was "This Could Be the Night" and she became the studio's hottest young starlet. During this period, Neile Adams met and married young actor Steve McQueen. When Steve's star rose, they wound up on the cover of LIFE magazine and became Hollywood's

newest "power couple." They were married over 15 ½ years and had two children together: a daughter, Terry Leslie McQueen (1959-1998), and a son, Chadwick Steven McQueen, born in 1960. The union produced four grandchildren: Molly, Steven R., Chase and Madison McQueen. Neile Adams later married Alvin Toffel, then president of the Norton Simon Museum. They remained married until Toffel's death in 2005. Neile Adams McQueen is a member of the charitable organization, SHARE (Share Happily And Reap Endlessly) and is a board member of The Boys Republic of Chino Hills, CA.

**Neile:** "My son Chad McQueen is very busy producing The Friends of Steve McQueen Car and Motorcycle Show to raise funds for Boys Republic in Chino Hills, my late husband's favorite charity. This car and motorcycle show held the first week of June began with 25 cars and now there are thousands of vehicles displayed."

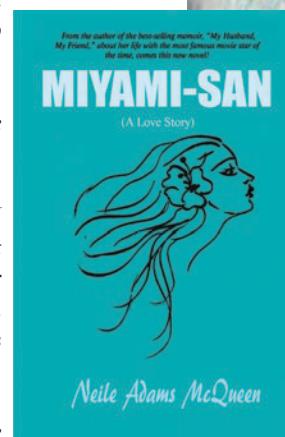
A feature film is currently in development based on Neile Adams McQueen's first book. In addition, a documentary film on the life of Neile Adams McQueen is currently in development.

**Neile:** "My first book, a memoir called, "My Husband, My Friend" is being made into a film and I'm involved as a consultant. I'd really like to see the movie when it's finished. I'm perfectly healthy right now, but when you're almost 90, time is not on your side."

"I exercise every day. Being a night owl, sometimes I throw on my sweats and just walk the hallways inside our complex after most people are in bed. Every day, I do calisthenics 50 times for each part of my body. This is how I trained as a dancer, and my regimen is not complete until I've stretched my limbs every which way. For my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, I'm dreaming of a big dance party somewhere."

"My other hobbies? Now that it's safer to be social, I get together with friends when they're available. I love feeding the wild birds on the balcony outside my kitchen and watching them. Right now, I don't have pets because I'll be traveling to Spain soon. I want to visit Costa Brava where my grandparents are buried, and will spend time with my cousins. If I were younger, I'd probably move to Spain."

To learn more about Neile Adams McQueen, please visit [www.neileadamsmcqueen.com](http://www.neileadamsmcqueen.com), <https://www.facebook.com/neile.adams.5> and on Twitter @adamsmcqueen



For information about the Steve McQueen Car and Motorcycle Show, visit <https://boysrepublic.org/steve-mcqueen-car-show/>

MIYAMI-SAN (A Love Story) is now available for purchase online at:

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) and [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com)

Neile Adams McQueen will be signing copies of her book MIYAMI-SAN (A Love Story) at the Garden Grove Strawberry Festival scheduled May 27-30, 2022, accompanied by her granddaughter "Maddy" Madison McQueen, Co-Founder of McQueen racing. For details, visit <https://www.strawberryfestival.org>

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