

Remembering 'Forrest Gump'

Written by Margaret Evans
Tuesday, 28 January 2014 13:31



On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, locals look back at the Oscar-sweeping cinematic sensation whose Lowcountry roots run deep.

By Margaret Evans, Editor

Who'd have imagined moving from metropolitan Atlanta to an obscure barrier island off the South Carolina coast could drastically broaden a girl's horizons?

It was the summer of 1993. I had lived on Fripp Island only a short time, but already my life had taken a decided turn for the glamorous. I'd met my literary hero Pat Conroy, who turned out to be a neighbor . . . and now, a movie was being filmed right down the street from my house!

It had a weird name – *Forrest Gump*? – and according to the scuttlebutt, the movie would be every bit as odd as its title. People weren't quite sure what to make of it. I figured it'd probably go straight to video. Nevertheless, it was a movie. Excitement was in the air. Tom Hanks was starring, and rumor had it he was staying on the island. I dreamed of bumping into him "casually" – maybe on the beach or at the marina bar. I would play it cool, no fawning, and he'd be taken with my low-key southern charm. We'd end up chatting away like old friends and he'd ask me to show him around the island . . .

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Never happened. I did, however, pass Hanks one day on the jogging trail. I was out for my daily



run, and coming toward me along the path was a perfectly ordinary-looking man with a baseball cap pulled low on his forehead. We made brief eye contact, as you often do in these situations, and he was already past me when I realized who he was. Needless to say, the encounter fell slightly short of my dream. Still, my heart pounded. Tom Hanks!

Later that week, a very nice woman came into the dress shop where I worked, and we talked for almost an hour. Her name was Moira, and I can still remember her gravelly voice and her merry, pale blue eyes. We hit it off like gangbusters, just kind of clicked. She told me her husband had a part in the Tom Hanks movie and that she and their kids were enjoying a beach vacation while he worked. He was an actor I'd never heard of before, and I assumed his role was a small one. His name was Gary Sinise.

Those are my personal *Forrest Gump* stories. They're not much, but they're mine, and I cherish them. Do we ever grow so old, so jaded and world-weary, that we're no longer thrilled by a fleeting brush with celebrity? Do we ever get beyond being dazzled by The Movies and those rarified creatures who make them? I haven't.

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On the day of the funeral, I was in the hospital and I was not able to attend. I was very sad to hear of his passing and I hope he is at peace.



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