

Reflections

My Mom's siblings have extended their regrets in being able to be here today. Distance and illness have prevented them from being able to travel. So we wanted share a few of their thoughts.

Mom's brother, Doug wrote he admired all the work and effort she put into getting the entire family, extended and otherwise, to gather in Drumheller for family reunions and birthdays.

<And it is so true...Mom made it a point that we got to Drumheller at least once every year and for this we got to know her family well and we still stay close to them today. We got to know her friends, our cousins, aunts, uncles, our grandparents, our great-grandparents. We fell in love with Drumheller and consider it our second home, to the point that I even got married there a few years ago>

Mom's sister Phyllis wrote: I remember her playing the piano in our living room on 5th street and singing "Cherry Ripe", then Bess would mimic her and really put on the airs. There was a road crew standing outside the picture window watching them. They were kind of embarrassed once they knew the crew were there.

Darlene was so great at sewing, whenever she wanted a new outfit to wear, she would go buy material and by supper she would have an outfit that you would think came from a store. I was always so jealous of her talent.

<I remember Mom sewing – she used to make Leanne and I these frocks, I remember specifically the red & white striped ones with frilly edges – she always made them the same, so Leanne and I would look like twins...David...it was a good thing that you weren't a girl!!!! We'd end up being the Family Von Trapp!!>

Phyllis also wrote: Every time Darlene would phone I would say, well where is it this time? I wasn't really expecting an answer, so I was always shocked when she told me she had another cancer. She suffered more than anyone I know. She was one BRAVE lady to live for so many years with that disease.

Darlene and I seemed to have an intuition when it came calling each other. Several times something would happen in one of our lives and the next thing you knew we were talking to one another and both having a good cry. I am really going to miss her for these long talks about life. Now I don't know who to phone. Say a prayer for her, from me. I will miss her.

My mom's brother, Bill is not a writer, and neither does he do email, so the memory that I'd like to share on his behalf is about a little surprise we had for mom. In September, I teamed up with my cousin Chad, Bill's son, and persuaded his dad to come on trip to Ontario. We totally surprised Mom! She knew the effort that it took for Bill to travel that distance, and she was able to spend a wonderful afternoon and dinner with them.

One of mom's best friend's, Mrs. Betty Lee, told us that she has many memories of Darlene, and not one of them is bad. David told you earlier about Norm and Betty setting Mom & Dad up on their first blind date, and Betty tells us that shortly after this introduction, they hosted a party in their 2 bedroom duplex. The house was full of people and Darlene and John sat on the kitchen floor throughout the party which went into the wee hours. They never moved from that kitchen spot until they went home. Betty also writes: A few years ago Darlene and John came to visit us in Cochrane, Alberta. They had rented a car, the new electric Prius. Well, I wanted a ride, so off Darlene and I went. We backed out of our driveway and it quit moving, even though the motor was still running. No matter what Darlene did it

would not move. Finally she said "well, I will just shut it off, that's what you do with a computer". She did and it worked. Feeling sad. Love, Betty.

And finally a story from one of Dad's best friends, Murray Forbes: The quality about your mother that sticks in my mind is patience - the patience of Job when it came to dealing with my old Air Force friend and your father, John, who was always tilting at windmills, whether it was the Air Force, Air Canada, or the government, especially the Income Tax bureaucracy.

Her patience was most evident to me when my wife and I spent a weekend with John, Darlene and you three kids sometime in the 1970's. At that time John was building your home in Arkell. John's building priorities were, as I remember, obtaining suitable gravel for the driveway, planting various types of trees, shrubs and tending the vegetable garden and sorting out trees in the woodlot that would be suitable for processing into lumber.

Meanwhile, the interior of your home was still under construction, and the 5 of you were then living in rather primitive conditions. For starters, there was no kitchen as such - no stove nor a sink. Darlene had to do all the cooking on a miserable little 2 burner electric hot plate. And you kids, after each meal, were dragooned into hauling the dirty dishes upstairs in a laundry basket, and wash them in the bathtub. I seem to remember your mother refereeing the squabbles as to who would wash and who would dry.

Through all this your mother managed to look after and feed you three, and tried to convince John to turn his priorities indoors rather than outdoors. The patience that your mother showed during those years was formidable, and why she didn't end up clanging your father over the head with that miserable hot plate, I'll never know. She held all of you together and looked after you and out for you all of her life. And so now she has gone to her rest, and all of you can be thankful for her being there for you.

We all have our special memories of my mom and we encourage you to share them. Mom was a much loved and respected lady. And with that I will close with this quote from Helen Keller "What we have once enjoyed and deeply loved, we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes a part of us."