

Verna Marguerite Cochrane's Eulogy

Once upon a time in a land far away a beautiful young girl named Verna lived on a dairy farm with her family. She was good and kind and worked hard on the farm but had visions of helping others, so at the age of eighteen enrolled in nursing school. Along the way she caught the attention of a young handsome man named Arnold who would watch for her as she walked by where he was working at the time. It was later revealed that those sightings were not by chance but by design for she had noticed him as well. Verna continued to work hard to finish Nursing School and not only graduated in 1949 but married that handsome young man Arnold the next year.

They made the difficult decision to leave family and friends behind and start their life together in Hamilton so they packed their bags and headed for what they hoped would be the land of opportunity.

Now if this were really a fairy tale the next line would be "And they lived happily ever after. The end."

But no life is a fairy tail and the stuff that comes between finding love and happily ever after is what determines what kind of people we become.

It didn't take long for the babies to arrive and mom had her hands full. Raising kids, supporting dad, keeping house and working part time as a nurse left little time for herself. But we never lacked for love and attention and believe me in the tiny houses that we lived in there was nowhere to hide if she wanted to find you! Dad was a great father but it was mom who you had to watch out for when you did something you shouldn't have!

Mom and dad were all about family and their lives revolved around each other and their children. I remember them dancing in the middle of the living room when a country and western song would play on the radio and the look they would share with each other. As a kid you don't think much of it but as an adult you understand how special that was.

Sometimes life was tough but there was always time to take a drive somewhere, hike a trail or play a game of cards. Mom didn't drive so her job was to keep us quiet in the car or keep track of us as we scattered in ten different directions once we got out into the woods. Camping, fishing, or a picnic. Anything to get us out doors as a family and tire us kids out!

By the time we moved up the mountain I'm sure mom thought that her life was set. She had a good husband, a nursing career; some time to her self now that her kids were all in school and bingo, along comes Gary, child number five. So now we were seven in a three-bedroom house. What to do! No problem. Dad built a bedroom downstairs, put a lock on their bedroom door and we adjusted. By this time Mom had been through it all before so what was one more?

How she survived our teenage years I will never know. By that time I think her work was her salvation. Even though she dealt with crying babies at work it must have seemed like heaven after living with five kids and Alan's drums!

But survive she did and so did we all because of her. She was a no nonsense women who loved her family more than anything but she made it very clear that our lives were ours to live and that success or failure was totally up to us. Advice was always available but it was our choice

and ours alone to take it or leave it. I am sure there were many nights when she agonized over us and the journey we were on but she tried hard not to try to change us, knowing we had to find our own way. We always knew we had her support no matter what decisions we made.

As each of us left the nest, mom and dad had more time for each other and after dad retired spent as much time away from us as they could. They were always going somewhere or playing cards with friends or out to Harry's for dinner. If you wanted a babysitter you had to book ahead of time otherwise you were out of luck! But once and awhile Wendy, mom and I would have a girls day out. Mom loved an outing with just the girls and it gave us a chance to connect with her.

The last few years of mom's life were the hardest. She loved and cared for dad as he struggled with his health. Mom never wanted to be a burden to her kids so we will never know how much she endured during that time because she kept a lot to herself. She survived her own health issues weakened but determined to make her last years with dad happy ones. But her greatest sorrow came when she lost Brian to cancer. Her heart was forever broken and yet she found a way to carry on and embrace life.

Each of us has our own special memory of mom that is unique to us.

For Brian it was the long talks he had with mom after she came home from work at 11pm.. He says in a letter to Linda that he came to appreciate what a strong person she was and how to respect that in other women later in his life.

Mom and I had many things in common. Two of them were our love of God and the other was "I Love Lucy reruns." We spent one of her last good days watching Lucy and even though we had seen it a million times it still made us laugh.

For Wendy, in her young teenage years, mom made it Wendy's Saturday morning job to bake a dessert for Saturday supper and there was no way out of it. Girlfriend sleepover or not-the baking got done! In her later years,

Wendy was her tea buddy. It became a regular event for Wendy to share a "soup deal" from Timmy's with mom and on other visits a cup of hot tea and a sweet. It was one of those small pleasures that mom was able to enjoy right to the end.

For Alan it was the unconditional love and support she gave him all her life. They could always share a laugh over the silliest things even when things were hard.

Gary remembers the time when he was 8 and one of his friends threw a rock at him and it bounced off his forehead. As head wounds do it bled profusely, and he ran home screaming. Mom heard him coming and was waiting for him at the backdoor with her triage skills at the ready. While most parents might freak out at the sight of their offspring covered in blood, mom calmly told him to stop bleeding on the floor and get in the bath tub. She cleaned the blood off his face and found a tiny little puncture that wasn't even as wide as her fingernail. She finally convinced him he wasn't going to die. He doesn't even think she put a band-aid on it! After 4 kids and 20 plus years as a nurse, by the time Gary came along her panic threshold was very high!

Her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren were her greatest joys.

Even when she could no longer hear well she loved being in the room watching us laugh and reminisce. She took great pride in the accomplishments of not only her children but also her grandchildren, knowing that she had a part in making them who they were. Even after she suffered a stroke, which left her with very little mobility, she still kept her unique sense of humor and was able to laugh at herself.

She once told me she thought she hadn't been a very good mother and I told her nothing could be farther from the truth.

As we held her hand in those final moments we told her what an amazing mother she had been and my prayer is that she heard and believed.

She also told me that when she got to heaven she was looking forward to having a long conversation with her sister Lois, who was never able to speak here on earth. I can imagine them all, Dad, Brian, Lois, Mim and all the rest of those who have gone before us welcoming mom into their circle of love.

You may be gone from this physical world but because we live and carry on, so will you. And because you loved us, so will we love others. We will honor your memory by being the kind of people you taught us to be.

We love you mom and will always cherish the time we had with you.