



Eulogy

(by Michelle Goff Braden)

DOROTHY GOFF
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My friend asked me what was special about my grandmother. Without hesitation I told her that Grandma was a sweetest, most thoughtful, most gentle and kindest person I've ever known – so much so that I don't believe she ever spoke a mean word to, or about anyone – with the exception of maybe a nurse or two in recent weeks.

As I really considered my friend's question though, I realized that there was so much more to Grandma. She was also talented, smart, interesting, strong, and had a great sense of humor.

Talented

While Grandma's talents included sewing, gardening and cooking, I think I have a great deal of insight into the latter – cooking. Everything Grandma cooked or baked turned out wonderful – yet she was her one and only critic - often commenting that she should've put in more salt or sugar or something. At family dinners, she never quite understood why my aunts and uncles would fight over the last one of her homemade hot rolls. Or, why there was never a drop of gravy left after one of her meals. Or, why anyone would want her to spend a couple of hours teaching them how to bake an angel food cake when all she'd have to do was share the recipe. But doing that wouldn't reveal her secrets of success. Of course, ask her and she'd say she didn't have any cooking secrets. I watched her make her famously delicate and light angel food cake. As I took copious notes I realized that the way she stirred the batter delicately with her special wire egg beater, and the gentle bounce of the pan on the counter, were most definitely secrets to the lightest angel food cake anyone could imagine. Thanks to her patient instruction, I now make a pretty darn good (and light!) angel food cake!

Smart

Grandma was also smart. She was "schooled" as she would say and even completed high school at Lawrence Memorial High before marrying Grandpa. I'm not sure how many women in those days actually completed their schooling – but Grandma did.

She kept up-to-date on current events by reading the paper and listening to the news. Also, no matter what day it was, she knew what the weather was going to do. And, she wrote about it in several cards and letters to her family. I loved receiving her notes about the rising temperatures, or the coming storm or her plans for planting her garden or "putting up" some corn or tomatoes or something before the weather became too cold.

Interesting

Grandma was also interesting. Every now and then she'd share one of her many stories of her childhood. She'd tell us how she met Grandpa at a church dance where they played "Skip to my Lou" or how one time her mother piled Grandma and her siblings in a train to visit their father in El Dorado, Kansas while he was working as a carpenter in the oil fields.

On the flip side, she also was a person who was interested in many topics. She loved to read books such as westerns by Louie LaMour or biographies. And, in her later years she loved to watch TV – mostly basketball (KU of course), cooking shows and the Travel channel. The Travel channel allowed her to live vicariously and see the world. Once of the places she loved most was England.

Strong

In addition to being talented, smart and interesting, Grandma was also strong. She lived through a lot of struggles during her life – not only due to the times, with events like the great depression and both world wars,

but also personally. Her father had some pretty serious illnesses while she was a child. Plus she herself had complications from a couple of her pregnancies, but she survived.

When she was a child, she had to help care for her little brother, Howard, because her mother was ill. After she married Grandpa, she helped care for his mother until she passed. She was thoughtful and cared a great deal for others, chipping in and helping where she could.

She also endured a lot just to get to school. She and her sister, Pearl attended school together and had to walk quite a distance to get there – even stepping on rocks to cross a creek there and back. Can you imagine kids doing that today? I personally think she was one of those infamous people who actually did walk a mile and a half through snow just to get to school!

Grandma's strength served her well after Grandpa passed away as she was able to live alone, on her own, for quite awhile and care for herself quite well. During that time, she learned how to pump her own gas, drove herself to church, did her own grocery shopping, visited friends on her own, and kept her spirits up by staying in touch with her friends and family.

Sense of Humor

Grandma had a very sweet sense of humor – she loved listening to Grandpa's silly quips to the grandkids. Plus, she just enjoyed being around little kids, always having a sweet smile and a fresh-baked chocolate chip cookie for them. And she never really took herself too seriously. I remember one of the times when she had Christmas dinner at my house and we each opened a Christmas cracker. After reading the silly riddle inside, Grandma put the accompanying paper crown on her head just like every one else did – and, she sat there and ate her entire dinner with it propped graciously atop her head never considering for a minute how silly she looked. It was so cute.

I'm going to miss Grandma. But I'm taking comfort in knowing that she was at peace in the end. Last week, while very serene, she told my Dad she was really enjoying her journey – peacefully reliving all of the days of her life. She said she'd lived a long, fulfilling life and was ready to move on. She also commented that she was very proud of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

So, to my friend I say, my Grandmother was a sweet, kind, thoughtful, gracious, fun, smart, strong, gentle, interesting, talented, beautiful, loving lady who lived her life the way God intended not only her, but also all of us to do.

Grandma, may you rest in peace. I love you.