

My sister, Doe, wrote and read this wonderful eulogy of our Mother at Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church in Rochester. Doe did quite a job capturing Daisy's gifts in words, and leaving us with a lasting message about Daisy's life.

Daisy Wood Winslow

*Sincerely,
Sally*

My family received a gift last summer. It was this: thanks to Dr. Ling Ong, we were given the opportunity to know that Mom was close to death. We were given time, but without knowing how much.

I had always loved and admired my mother: she was resourceful, she had the courage of her convictions, she loved to laugh, she loved to do for others, especially her family, and she was strong, especially in a crisis.

But I never really understood how much I needed my mother until I knew for certain that I wouldn't have her for very long. So, I sat with her and talked with her, asked her questions, answered her questions and came away as comforted as if I'd been a small child whom she'd rocked to sleep.

Two weeks ago in Florida, my mother's family and friends gathered in the few days after her death on Thursday, the 21st. On Monday evening, we all stood together outside, at sunset, looking out over the mangrove keys in Florida Bay where her ashes will be scattered. It was a perfectly beautiful evening and my mother's brother George spoke about Mom with great affection and humor.

He remembered her as possessing a sensitivity, striking beauty and boundless capacity to love.

At a certain moment during Uncle George's comments, I realized that my mother had been graced in life and in death.

Not that she had it easy - not at all. I can only imagine how difficult it had been to be an Army nurse in North Africa and Europe during World War II; I can only imagine how difficult it had been for a warm, Southern woman to settle unknown into a cold, Northern town; I can only imagine her worry for her children and grandchildren, through our various traumas and crises; and I can only imagine how difficult it had been for Mom to face her own life-threatening illnesses and creeping blindness, along with her concerns for Dad's health as well.

No, it wasn't exactly easy for Mom, but I do believe that she was especially graced with the ability to reflect on the meaning of life and having done so, to love others: family, friends and strangers, in a way that we realize that we've been graced too...graced for having had her in our lives.

I believe that it was a result of her faith in the power of love that allowed her to die peacefully and painlessly, at a time when she felt that her work was done. Now we need to go on.

And she showed us the way to go on. She showed us that family and friendship are not automatic...that we ourselves will have to keep up with each other and care for each other, if we want to continue to feel as loved as she made us feel.

In the poem that Sally read, Mom said, "If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain...". I know something for certain and I believe it strongly: my mother lived a full and graceful life, without regret. And she showed us how to do the same thing.

March 13, 1991