

Thank you Aunt Carol

One of the best memories I had when back in Fairfield for my father's funeral in October was visiting with my Godmother, Aunt Carol. It had been some time since I had seen her and though much frailer than I expected, her beautiful and warm soul was the same as I always remembered since my youth. We talked about memories of my Dad, and she explained some of the images in a very old photo album of our family. After my brother and I left I realized I had not thanked her for all the joy she had brought into my life, there will be another time I thought. I thought wrong. So here is what I wish I had said.

My first memories of you in my pre-school years was taking me out to let me pick a toy before my surgery for being born tongue tied. I could pick a toy after surgery as well. I remember how this joy helped me through the fear of the unknown I was facing.

Then every birthday you took me out to the toy store and let me pick out the presents I wanted. How cool was that! Giving me the gift of choice, to let me bring into my life what I desired, empowering me in what otherwise was a very controlling world in which I lived.

You also taught me skill of saving money as the other half of our gifts went into a savings account I could see grow years after year. Many years later in

College when I needed money for a car your savings plan for me came in real handy. Your gift helped me complete the purchase of the wheels I needed to start exploring the great State of Montana. Oh, the road trips you launched that you never saw, but let me see scenes of the West I had only dreamed about back East.

Thank you for memories and joy of the day I spent with you every August when you took me with to help set up your Kindergarten class. As I write this my mind can vividly see your class room, the woods out the windows, the play stations around the room, the books on the wall, what a joyous space you created. I always wished you were my Kindergarten

teacher as your space had a completely different feel than the authoritative, harsh classroom I went to where Miss Murphy ran the joint with a ruler in her hand. How different might have my start in education have been. The fortunate students who went through your classroom Aunt Carol received a start of love and joy, your passion for being a teacher was your true calling and you made the world a better place.

There was always one special Christmas gift above and beyond the rest, not trains, bikes, Tonka toys or matchbox cars . . . it was the plastic plate and sometimes mug you hand colored and illustrated just for me with my name on it. Oh how I loved it when Mom let us eat off those plates for dinner. I remember how you always wrapped the plate in such a way it was always a surprise to open.

I can still remember the day my Dad was driving Eric and I along the winding lakeside road to a fishing spot near the Lake Waramug Inn when we saw the white house with the huge front porch and a for sale sign. Your purchase of this home forever changed my teenage years as the lake gave

my exploring a spirit a place to spread it's wings.

There was no place in Connecticut I was happier at then at your Lakehouse. I loved going there and the memories created are my most cherished memories of my youth. My first real drive ever (outside of local grocery store trips) was from 82 Tahmore Dr to the Lakehouse in the families yellow Dodge Volare station wagon with the GTO spinner hubcaps. What a long drive I thought it was, now many hundred of thousands of miles later I still remember pulling in and seeing you and the rest of the family on the porch.

From your dock at the bottom of a very steep trail was moored our 12' Sears and Roebuck row boat complete with a 4.5hp Johnson outboard motor. Not quite a longship, but the perfect craft to launch endless fishing expeditions where I could escape a controlling family and societal environment. To be totally free of everything in the world, if even for just an hour, to create my own Walden, is a gift I will always be the most grateful for from you Aunt Carol. Your Lakehouse gift let me

develop the confidence and challenge I needed to explore on my own, I was calling the shots, and it led me West to hundreds of new adventures with a foundation of confidence in myself. Thank you Aunt Carol.

Thank you for all the wonderful memories of holidays through out the year, Thanksgiving and after the Memorial Day Parade at the home you grew up in with Grandma and Grandpa . . . Easter eggs hunts, Labor Day Celebrations and New Years Eve at Jack & Stacia's . . . Christmas at our place . . . and the best vacation of all the time we all spent at Briar Dell along the shores of Lake George. My mind can still see you in a reclining lounge chair, under the shade of huge

Black walnut trees in front of our small lakeside cabin. You were always willing to take time to listen to the newest great song I had badly taped off the radio . . . mymymymymymymy Sharona . . . you always took the time to listen to the whole song, no matter how bad it may have really been.

Aunt Carol. there's been a bucketful of tears shed writing this to you, blurry eyes through my glasses most of the time, the amount of sadness felt is a directly related to the amount of joy experienced. You have no idea of the amount of joy you created in my life, and while I was not back east much after I headed West the impact you had on my life carried through everywhere I went.

Rest in Peace Aunt Carol, you made the life of thousands of children a better place with the love and joy of teaching which was your gift to the world and you were the best Godmother a young boy and later a man could ever ask for. Love - Bob