

## *Remembering Mom ...*

**Hebrews 9:27** says, “It is appointed unto men once to die...” did you hear that ... *only once*... Most of God’s guidebook of life then shows us how to live ... and mom, Pennee Murphree, lived.

Brent, Patrick, Curt and I thought the best way to memorialize our mom was to highlight her character traits and share stories -- many of them from you.

Before we begin, I want to tell you a quick story on Dad that set the course for our memorial for mom and hopefully will glorify a living God in the process. After mom left us to the limitations and constraints of this life, dad drew all four of his kids into the room and sat beside mom’s still body. He said looking at us with his great loving eyes, “I cussed mom out for leaving me, I’m assigning you kids to manage mom’s affairs, don’t argue ...I’m going home.”

If you know dad, he wasn’t running away, he was running to that place that he and mom call home. He ran there to heal and to celebrate the woman he still loves.

***Trustworthy*** = You could always depend on Mom. Shirley Ann Hartman and Judy Blair would highlight mom’s trustworthiness

to drill: As a member of the Quadrille de Mujeres, mom had to earn the right to ride. But she regularly showed up for the weekly practices on time and every time, even without the promise of getting to be a part of the team ... which of course she eventually earned. But she could be trusted to be part of something and do her part regardless of the challenges and circumstances surrounding it. Mom used to joke, “The Mujeres actually like Ginger and put up with me.”

***Intelligent & Well Read*** = Mom did not earn her college degree and often shared the regret of not going. She did take a number of college courses. She loved history and biographies; would sometimes quote Winston Churchill, and had more knowledge of England’s history than professors that teach on the topic.

***Funny*** = Mom’s humor was the best. Here’s one example. Dad and mom were always being told, “It’s so far out where you live. And, aren’t you concerned about the illegal traffic that’s coming across the border?” Without skipping a beat, mom told one visitor, “No, they’re passing right through our place and heading to your neighborhood.” Brett Honeycutt shares a classic funny about mom Too: Pennee once took me on a tour of the new Santa Fe-style house they were building on their farm in Maricopa. There was a closet off the master bedroom. She said that it was Pat’s room. She stated that she was going to place a chair, candle and a copy of "The Ten Commandments" in it!!! Barbara Lutjen recalls during a trip to Santa Antonio that when they came across a booth with Christmas ornaments, she found one and said, “I like getting ornaments to remind me of trips I’ve taken.” Mom proceeded to say, “Oh, well now you have two.”

***Loving & Compassionate***= I now tell a story on brother Curt. Since he is the baby, we kind of beat up on him a lot ...not maliciously but ... one day after mom had sent us all off on the bus, Curt, just a little guy and not yet in school said, “Mom, let’s go in an love on me.” Mom was the best cuddler. But, she didn’t baby us, she loved us. Curt said about our recent experience, “We all get beat up from time-to-time and we need some loving. It’s crazy how the parent/child roles get reversed ... all of us were so blessed to be with mom and to be able to love on mom through her cancer fight. We were all with her to the very end, to her last breath. Mom even had a three-year old angel (Jillian) holding her hand loving on her a couple days before she died. I remember mom winking at her because she couldn’t speak. Mom taught us that we all need each other.”

***Moral Compass*** = She was in *no way religious, but in every way* in love with Jesus.

***Good Listener*** = All of us could call her any time and just talk. She would just listen. She loved to visit with her grandchildren.

***Optimistic*** = Even at the worst of her cancer fight, she was smiling, thanking us incessantly and giving us courage in the midst of the battle.

***A Healer; a Fixer*** = Mom always worked to make us feel better. Curt reminded us of how mom valiantly worked to help get Brent and Julie over their asthma. He recalls when he fell in the fire and burned his hand and mom knew exactly what to do to heal it. Mom always made us better, Curt says.

***Calm in a Crisis*** = Jacquie Clark Martin shares this story: We were at your house in Maricopa one night for dinner, which we

did a lot because my father, Jay, loved Pennee's salads. Being the naughty little girl that I was I swallowed a marble, it stuck in my windpipe and I couldn't breathe. The next thing I know your Mom is flipping me upside down (I was 3 or 4 years old) and spanking me while shaking me up and down. The marble goes shooting out! I looked at my Mom and she had a look of sheer terror in her eyes. Thank goodness that happened at your house, your mom was good in a crisis.

***Forthright*** = Curt also recalls when a friend of his was with us for dinner. Mom had prepared homemade spaghetti. Curt's friend leaned over to him and said, "I don't like spaghetti." So Curt told mom. Mom proceeded to say, "Well too bad, that's what's we're having for dinner." She never felt compelled to be politically correct. Which brings me to Jennifer Barnum Murphree's (Curt's wife) about her: Pennee was always inclusive, always direct (which I loved) and always happy to have us around. I appreciated that I could call her anytime for asthma advice, horse advice, a recipe or spiritual direction. Her laugh was contagious; her love for her family had no bounds. I'm grateful every day for the boy that she raised who became my husband and father to my girls.

***Fun*** = She always played with us on the farm including shooting hoops with us on the basketball net dad set up for us. One year, Mom, along with others, played against the Maricopa High Girls' Varsity basketball team and won by one point. Mom shot the winning basket ... nothin' but net as the game-ending buzzer went off.

***Confident; Superwoman*** = On the Farm, mom literally lifted a one ton cultivator off Brent's knee. We were playing around the

equipment lined up around the shop ... and, yes, that was a no no. The cultivator was up on wooden blocks and somehow it slipped off and pinned Brent like a wild animal. Cousin Lisa and I ran and got mom. Of course, at around 2,000 pounds it wasn't even budgable ... mom yelled, "Jesus ..." and she lifted it off his leg. Yes, science says enough of an adrenaline rush will make you superwoman strong ... well she was superwoman that day.

***Creative*** = She made Quadrille uniforms, designed booths for special events, sewed clothes for our National Cotton Women Committee Fashion shows and even wrote a children's book called *The Adventures of 100% Happy Shirt*. Oh, yes, she was part of City Of Grace's Women's ministry, their *Apples of Gold* program. Where mom joined other women to mentor younger women. Julie Jo Murphree, Patrick's wife, said the following: I first met Pennee on her way to a Christmas party on a cool December evening in 1993. When she walked into the room, she displayed the essence of pure beauty, dignity and class. I remember the elegance of her black velvet Prairie skirt and how her Turquoise and silver jewelry lit up her stunning complexion. As she was heading out the door, my date leaned over and gave her a peck on the cheek. "Love you", he said to her. My heart melted right then and there. Many fond memories were on the horizon and Pennee soon taught me the finer things about being a true Pioneer woman. Pennee's Pioneer woman spirit was surpassed only by her spirit for the Lord. Under her guidance, I drew nearer to Him. From our heart-to-heart talks about

husbands, kids and the Word, to those early days serving with her at the Maricopa community church and Word of Grace, it was evident that the Lord was at the heart of her home.

***Resourceful*** = Like her mom, Lucille, mom could look in any refrigerator ... I think particularly of mine ... with hardly anything in it and make a meal fit for a king.

***Supportive*** = Brother Patrick selected supportive saying, “I was reflecting on what our friend John Gunn wrote me...‘I trust you shared with her the pictures from your cameras and jaunts so she knew how fully you and your boys are living your lives.’ She was my biggest fan and enjoyed my hunting. She was overjoyed (and actually in tears when she saw the photo) when I killed my Bighorn ram. That hunt and her support meant the world to me.” Another example of being supportive comes from Suzie Myers Nelson: When I wrote and thanked Miss Pennee Murphree for teaching me about Jesus, and told her I directed my church's children's choir, she sent me copies of All of the Band of Love songs and a cassette tape of us too!! I have her handwriting etched in my mind and heart.

***Hard working*** = Brent says, mom could work faster than anyone. Explains Brent, “Once I was talking to Mom and she noted that some friends were painting their house and probably needed help as one of them had been ill. We got there and they had painted a little bit, but still had a great deal to do. Mom and I pretty much just stepped in, got the rollers and brushes and went through the house in what I think they thought was an incredibly short amount of time. We just worked until the job

was finished and got it done. It is an example of how she worked and how she taught her kids to work. As she might say, don't pussy foot around, just get it done.

**Wise** = My story: One year as a local chapter election, I thought I'd run again as president. So, I checked with my officers to see if they would support me. "Sure," they said. In fact, my Vice President indicated she didn't want to be involved the next year. I said, "Great, I'll have your vote then." On Election Day my vice president's mom showed up with a vanload of kids; some I didn't even know were involved in this organization and suspect might have had a quick initiation. Still unsuspecting we moved through business during the meeting and came to elections.

When nominations were presented my current vice president was nominated from the floor as president. The vote took place and she became the new president of the local chapter. I was in shock and as a kid felt the betrayal to the bone. Overcome with embarrassment I made it even worse by beginning to cry—worse than what you're seeing today ... you know the dry heaves kind of crying, so I ran out and hopped in our car's backseat to let the tears pour out. Guess who came out not more than 5 minutes later. Mom told me to go back in and finish the meeting. I did and it was the best lesson in perseverance mom bestowed upon me. Wise beyond her years in dealing with this, to this day I credit mom with giving me the ability to plow into anything and not be afraid or ashamed of what others might think. Oh, yeah, they voted me in as secretary that year and I still ended up running the club.

**Comfort** – Brent tells this story. Mom was, forever, a great comfort, even when I thought I was comforting her. One day, when one of her horses had just died, she was just terribly sad.

We were in her house on the farm and I went over and gave her a great big, heartfelt hug. We just stood there embracing and for some reason it reminded me of when I was very little and she would rock me back and forth when I was sick with asthma. I said, "Remember when you used to hold me and I would go, uh hu, uh hu." It made her weep a little more, but there was an assurance there that was actually comforting me.

A few years later I had gone through a horrible breakup. I never let my family know how hard it was on me. Again, we were in their house on the farm and I just made a small statement about the ordeal in passing. She just looked at me like she understood walked over to me with her arms open. I wept from my soul like a baby. She didn't say a word. She just stood there, hugging me. I may have even gone, "uh hu, uh hu."

Okay, now the Joy part. - If you knew Mom, you knew her sense of humor. And, while it may have been a bit dark, there was a great deal of Joy in it. It is especially evident in her prose. Her Christmas letters are a great example. Even in her discomfort, like when we floated the Grand Canyon for a week while she had back spasms, her Christmas letter that year was hilarious and reflected the joy of the trip with family and friends. She loved travel and faced it with a sense of adventure and *joy de vive*, always up for an exciting excursion or adventure going on a chunk of those trips with Julie and Dad. Joy is a state of being and she was often in that state.



We could list more ... and tell endless stories; these are some of the highlights ... And, if it sounds like we idolized her, we did. She was that special.

*And, though these last few years were challenged by great suffering by mom ... we hold on to Psalms 126:5 that says, "Those who sow with tears will harvest with shouts of joy"*

*Finally:* The Bible also says in 1 Corinthians 15:55, "O death, where *is* you sting? O grave, where *is* your victory?" There is no sting today, and the grave doesn't get the victory. For those in Christ, I firmly believe we're not having a funeral, but a Life Graduation. A term I coined a few family life graduations ago.

1. Our Maricopa family
2. Apples of Gold Women
3. Our agriculture family
4. Quadrille de Mujeres
5. Band of Love Choir
6. Family ...