

Eulogy for Diana C. Volcheck

July 29, 2010

Thank for you coming today to honor the memory of my mother, Diana Volcheck.

[Caring]

One of my early childhood memories of my mother is her taking me to the Alexian Brothers Nursing Home on Signal Mountain, near Chattanooga, Tennessee, to play bingo with the seniors there. This seemed like a chore at the time, but it made an impression on me. The seniors had few planned activities and mostly did nothing but sit around. They really seemed to like having someone help them read their bingo cards so they could play. I learned how a little effort on my part can brighten someone else's day.

My mother loved to help people, in an unassuming, hands-on, personal way.

She nurtured people and cultivated friendships. She helped an elderly friend, Anna Szekely, over many years, with visits and errands. With the "Save the Children" program, she sent care packages to children in need and offered financial assistance to children like Idette from Haiti. She extended hospitality to friends in need, giving people a place to stay, like Brittany, who came to us through the Fresh Air program from the Bronx. Or my brother's friend, Phil Bernstein, who needed a place to stay while looking for a job.

My mother was known to friends and relatives as a kind and caring person, who gave generously of her time.

She volunteered at the Encore Shop of Chester County Hospital, served as a Cub Scout Den Mother and Girl Scout Troop Leader, helped out at libraries, knitted and sewed clothing for charity, and visited seniors at nursing facilities like the Alexian Brothers and the Pocopson Home.

[Learning, plus Caring]

My mother's curiosity and love of learning lasted throughout her life. She found ways to combine her love of learning with her love of service and helping others.

She was an inquisitive young woman. As a Girl Scout, she loved earning merit badges because they encouraged her to explore and learn about new things. She earned a Girl Scout's highest honor, the "Curved Bar", which is known today as the Gold Award. She went on to become a Girl Scout troop leader, sharing her love of scouting with a younger generation.

Her love of language began with Spanish in college, when she earned a Bachelor's degree in Spanish and taught it in high school. In her 60s, she studied Mandarin Chinese at the Chinese American Community Center in Hockessin, and shared her interest in Chinese with friends.

My mother loved to read and loved books, so no surprise, she volunteered at libraries. This gave her the chance to share her delight in reading with others. She volunteered at libraries in Chattanooga, Tennessee and here, at Patton Middle School and Unionville High School, and probably elsewhere.

Her friends and family know that my mother loved to share what she learned from reading Scientific American, Science News, Technology Review, and the Wilmington News-Journal by clipping and sending them articles.

My mother also had a great love of natural beauty, the beauty of the earth. For many years, she was the Editor of the "Geogram", the newsletter of the Delaware Mineralogical Society. Her love of gardening led her to earn certification as a Master Gardener. She shared her appreciation of minerals and gems with others through the newsletter and gifts of rocks, fossils, and semi-precious stones. She shared her love of gardening by giving plants and clippings to her friends.

She nurtured beauty and cultivated plants like they were friends.

[Religion]

Her caring for others and her love of beauty helped form her religious faith. The caring community of the parish offered a sense of belonging. She enjoyed singing in the choir. She enjoyed the comfort and order of the mass. These important parts of her life came together for her at church.

[Conclusion]

What can we learn from my mother's life?

Growing up with Diana Volcheck as your mother means you take it for granted that you spend much of your waking hours volunteering for charities, visiting elderly friends, and serving and caring for others. You grow up in a household where visiting the nursing home is part of your routine.

We learn from my mother's life the importance of helping others, of maintaining your curiosity and love of learning throughout your life, and of being part of a caring community. If you take these lessons to heart, you will honor the memory of my mother.