

A tribute to Jacqueline Kelly

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

One of my dearest friends passed on last week. When I think of energy, I think of her. When I think of talent, I think of her. When I think of creativity, organizational ability, community service, devotion to family, I think of her.

She gave me voice lessons. She designed the dress I wore to my son's wedding. I cherish the clothes that she created and made for me. She introduced me to her wonderful friends when we first moved to Gallatin. She took me under her wing and treated me as a daughter.

We worked in church together. Many services she played the organ or soloed while I was leading the service. We shared wonderful inspirations before and after those services which those who have prayed to have the love of Christ shine through their work will relate to. We prayed together. We had healings together. We shared our love of Christ together.

And I am just a little window on the tapestry of her active and productive life. She sang and played organ in many churches including her son's. She taught music for decades blessing countless children. She played bells, sang in community choirs, acted in Music Man. She shared her love of sewing and incredible talent with children in 4-H. She served in leadership roles wherever she was, because she is a natural leader. She loved to travel, to read, to learn, to think, to grow. She was always looking forward and toward the grander view. She chafed against perceptions of narrow-mindedness. She raised their two sons, Stewart and Rick, to be individuals and took pride in their activities. She valued her husband, John Frank, especially his steadfastness and strength when she needed him.

The author of Proverbs 31:10-31 must have known her because his essay describes her so well. Part of the passage says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies...She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine

linen, and selleth it...Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

The book of Revelation tells us, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.” (Rev 3:12) When I think of Jackie, I think of a pillar in the temple of God. She has awakened to eternal life. She has been met by those who have gone on before and she is being loved and cared for. Her voice now rises sweet and strong singing the new song.

There are a few people that I hold especially dear and refuse to feel separated from—my dad, my stepdad, my aunt, and Jackie. Since neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God, then we cannot be separated from one another. We are eternally united in God. I love you now and forever, Jackie. We will remain united in thought, and I look forward to seeing you and hearing of all of your adventures. I know it will be quite a story.

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