

## **A Remembrance of Caryl**

When I was 12, I started junior high here in Anaheim. Most of the faces were new to me. I remember one in particular – a freckled girl with long brown hair and bangs. I thought she looked interesting and wanted to get to know her. And so we became friends and our friendship continued for close to fifty years.

We spent hours together throughout junior high, at school, at the shops outside Disneyland, at the movies, roaming around downtown Anaheim. Her family's house was a warm home base for us. We had the same favorite TV shows and made fun of the same songs on the radio. She was clever and cheerful and fun.

One summer, Caryl's parents invited us to go camping in Yosemite. Since we were cool teenagers, we thought maybe it would be more fun to stay home, but at the last minute we changed our minds. It was a wonderful vacation. The long days and summer nights in Yosemite were magical. We hiked, floated in inner tubes down the frigid Merced River, hung out on the bridge, and whiled away the days.

We attended different high schools, but school district boundaries were permeable for us. Our social life together continued at parties, at high school football games, at impromptu gatherings with friends. Our standard hangouts were not the mall, nor a diner, but rather the front lawns of friends, where we would simply gather like birds flocking from perch to perch.

In our early college years, a house on Crescent Street in Anaheim became our hangout. This house was so large that it accommodated numerous roommates. Legend had it that the roommates sometimes barbequed inside the cavernous living room. With these friends, we became avid concert-goers. Back then, you could actually get reasonably priced tickets to acts such as the Grateful Dead, Bob Dylan, and the Allman Brothers, and we attended as many as we could. We also experimented with more sophisticated pastimes. One evening we all went to a local art house to watch a French New Wave film that we had learned about in a film studies class. Most of us fell asleep about a quarter of the way into the film which probably meant that we weren't yet sophisticated enough for the New Wave.

Our paths diverged when Caryl went to UCLA and then on to graduate school in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I visited her in Chapel Hill and later traveled to Kentucky for her wedding to David. By now, Caryl was on the faculty at Kentucky and was graduate advisor to a young man. He and Caryl compared notes and discovered they each knew an unattached person in Southern California who might be compatible. So Caryl gave my phone number to her graduate student, who passed it along to his brother, who is now my husband and father of our daughter.

Caryl and David joined the faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill, and later took positions at universities in Amsterdam. Two years ago, I spent a week in Amsterdam at their home and got a glimpse of their lives in Europe.

In between visits, I would receive the most marvelous letters from her, pages and pages that painted pictures of her life for me. From junior high, through high school, college, and her professional life, her circle of friends grew wider and wider, and heart her expanded to welcome new friends while she cherished her old friends. Even as we pursued our separate daily lives, I knew I was tucked into her heart, as she was in mine. This past week, as I was contacting old friends to tell them of Caryl's passing, more than one told me that Caryl had come to mind just recently. And talking to each of the old friends made me realize a fundamental truth – Caryl was simply unforgettable. She had friends throughout the world and they all mourn her because her friendship made an impression on their hearts. Her many friendships are a testament to her joyful and loving nature.

In this life, she got to the finish line first. And that has caused me great sadness, but because I have faith, it is a sadness I can bear. I will close with a prayer that I first came across a number of years ago.

I beg you, Lord,  
Help me accept the partings that must come –  
From friends who go away,  
My children leaving home,  
And most of all, my dear ones  
When you shall call them to yourself.  
Then, give me grace to say:  
"As it has pleased you, Lord,  
to take them home,  
I bow to your most holy will.  
And if by just one word  
I might restore their lives  
Against your will,  
I would not speak."  
Grant them eternal joy.