

Grandma Neeley Tribute

As we met as a family with Grandma's doctors the evening of her stroke to make some decisions regarding the path her life would take next, her doctors asked for some words that we think describe her. We would like to share some of the words that came to our minds as we thought of grandma.

Our grandma was fun. When we were younger grams would let us help her drive and she would encourage us to hit the potholes. The bigger the hole, the more points they were worth. We are wondering now if maybe she didn't like that car because when she got a new one, we didn't hit potholes anymore. She loved to take us shopping and we often came home with a new outfit. She always had little presents from ABC ordered in bulk to give out while we were staying for one our grandkid only week long sleepovers. She continued the tradition of giving little gifts to her great grandchildren when they would come to visit. I don't ever remember her getting after us when we were young for being too loud or crazy as we ran through the house like wild animals and rearranged the furniture to make some pretty awesome forts. She just enjoyed seeing her family have fun.

Our grandma was a great cook. Some our favorites were dressing for Thanksgiving using a recipe that was passed down from her great grandma Cloward. Unfortunately the recipe consisted of add this until it tastes right and it has taken us quite a few years of making it with her to get it down. Homemade hot chocolate after a day of sledding in Woodland Hills, ribbon sandwiches and crab dip at Christmas, frozen fruit dessert in the summer, and fudge any day of the year. It took me years to figure out why her toast was better than anyone else's...she used good bread and lots of real butter.

Our grandma loved to sing. If she didn't have a song for the occasion, she made one up. Some of our favorites are Milk Bottle, Cherry Tree, Oh You Can't Go to Heaven, There's a Hole in My Bucket, and I've Been Working on the Railroad. She enjoyed listening to Josh Groban and we liked to tease that she was a Grobie. When we would ride in the car on family vacations we always listened to Phantom of the Opera and Ann Murray.

Grams loved Christmas and Christmas at her house was magical. She had three trees that she set up every year. Her candy tree, doll tree, and flocked tree. She held a huge family Christmas party complete with Santa and Mrs. Claus. The grandkids spent most of Christmas break at her house at one long sleepover where we made huts, watched movies, colored and ate as much candy as we wanted from the candy drawer. Later she was introduced to Department 56 and she enjoyed collecting those houses for many years. Each Christmas we would help her set up over 50 houses around her tree complete with snow, sledding elves, skating pond, and mountains.

Grandma was very loving. She always had a kiss for us and supported us in everything we did. She spent many days at the ballpark watching us play and buying us ballpark hamburgers. Whenever we left her house she walked out to porch to wave goodbye, even if she wasn't feeling well. She spent many hours lovingly hand stitching precious silky blankets for every new baby in the family. She loved gramps very much and he loved her. They were always very affectionate with each other and always held hands while riding in the car. Grams has missed him so much these past 12 years and has been anxiously awaiting the time when they would be reunited for eternity.

Grandma was very giving. Money wasn't fun unless she was sharing it with others. She continued to give a birthday card and money to every child, grandchild, great grandchild, and any spouses in the bunch too. She was giving of her time. She was never too busy for us and like being involved in each and every one of our lives.

Grandma was brave. When grandma and grandpa got the devastating news that gramps cancer was terminal, the doctor told them he would give them a few minutes alone. Grams response was, "We don't need a few minutes we need to know what to do next." Grams faced trials head on with faith and determination that things would work out in the end.

Grandma was a storyteller. Some of our favorites were when she was chased by the man with an ax when she had gone outside one night. She loved to share how she met gramps on the bus and how she slept in a crib until she was eight. She also had to use an outhouse for much of her young life and they had a two holer with sears catalogs to use for toilet paper. One of her sadder stories she would tell was how much she wanted a little sister and how devastated she was when Marie died soon after birth. We can't wait to meet her great grandma and grandpa Cloward after hearing all about them and how they helped raise her. She says great grandma Cloward is the very best cook.

Grams and Gramps loved their family. They worked very hard to create opportunities for the family to be together and to make lasting relationships and because of those efforts we have many fond memories with cousins, aunts and uncles and continue to pass that sense of family onto our children. We spent many hours driving on adventures in the fun machine which was a motor home grandpa had built. The whole family would pile in and we would take off to exciting destinations. Grandma loved each one of us and we are all convinced we are her favorite. We know grandma loved being surrounded by so many members of her family during her last week on earth reminiscing about old times and enjoying each other's company. There were a lot of tears but also a lot of laughter.

Our grandma was faithful. We interviewed her at Thanksgiving and asked who her superheroes were when she was young. Her response was, "Well we didn't have super heroes back then. Mine were all something to do with the church. I was very active in the church and I led the singing when I was in the fifth grade. I kind of always did something like that. The church was very important to me because my grandparents and parents and everybody were members of the church." In Spring of 2000 she and grandpa packed up their car and went to Lansing, Michigan to serve a mission. We know this wasn't easy for them to leave their family behind but they also knew it was what their Heavenly Father wanted them to do. She was an example of Christ like love. She was very forgiving and always had something nice to say about others.

President Hinkley said, "In all of living have much fun and laughter. Life is to be enjoyed not just endured". We are so thankful for our grandma and for the example she was of this. She brought so much joy to all of us and we will miss her dearly. But we also know that families can be together forever and she has been reunited with grandpa and Nicole and her parents and so many others that love her as we do. I am thankful for the gospel of Jesus Christ in my life....share testimony.