

Remembering Aunt LeeJoy

Teresa Donley Townsend, Storyteller

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

March 16, 2014

So, I really do not remember the date, but I do remember the day.¹ It was a sunny day in Grants Pass, Oregon when LeeJoy Anna Hlobil Walker, known to me and a lot of others, as Aunt LeeJoy, decided it was time to eat and live in my point of view, while she was in her rehabilitation center recovering from a stroke. I was so excited to tell you the truth that she was wanting to eat; I felt that she might be on the road to recovery.

So staff from the Highland House brought in a lot of different puree foods ranging from peaches (which are my favorite) to peas and other stuff in between. I started her with peaches which she enjoyed, but Aunt LeeJoy, she really liked her veggies . . . go figure. Her son, Jon, was there and kept telling me I was going to fast and smaller bites. I understood why, but Aunt LeeJoy seemed to be able to handle what I was doing, but I followed Jon's instructions because he is my elder.

During this time my Mom, Rosemary Donley, was there who is Aunt LeeJoy's sister. She kept asking Jon questions about the past which I really was not listening to because I was focused on Aunt LeeJoy, and the JOY I felt that she was finally eating and hoping and praying that she would survive her stroke.

Her son, Thomas, and her daughter, Chrissy, were both there with huge smiles on their faces and happy hearts. I really cannot express the joy that we all felt about her eating. It was a big hurdle for her to over come and a huge relief to us all. Just when I thought she was done, she would ask for more. Think about it, if you go with out food for 4 - 5 days, see how hungry you are so I gave her peas, chicken, mashed potatoes, peaches, and juice, and she ate a lot, but do you know what she really wanted was a salad.

So my husband, Jim, the ever "I'm going to get it done" type guy, got the nursing home to make her a puree salad. YUK, but Aunt LeeJoy seemed to enjoy that. Her friend, and I'm so sorry I cannot remember her name, took over the feeding and set up times for the quilting club to come in and feed her, with, of course, the help from the family, such a nice lady!!²

Soon after that Linda and Trista, and her 1,000 and 1 kids came to see Aunt LeeJoy, but we all did not stay for long as you could see Aunt LeeJoy was trying. It was a very joyful day, and as we all went out to the parking lot with high hopes that Aunt LeeJoy would get better, we smiled and hugged each other.

That would be the last time I saw she alive because sadly Aunt LeeJoy died on March 6, 2013, and I for one will always miss her.³

Teresa Donley Townsend,
Daughter of Rosemary Hlobil Donley
Niece to Aunt LeeJoy Hlobil Walker

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1. Saturday, February 16, 2013 Around 1:30 p.m. or so, Teresa Townsend telephone Tom Walker. For lunch Teresa had feed Mom a lot of food. She asked mother if she wanted pureed potatoes and gravy. It was not french fries which was what Mom wanted, but she said O.K. The long list of food that Mother ate without choking was amazing. She did choke some on the milk, but this simple action of eating seemed to be a miracle.
 2. Mom's friend from the Hugo Ladies Club, Nancy Pullan, sorta adopted Mom as she was not with her own Mom when she passed. She became the Hugo Ladies Club's coordinator in helping share information and visiting by the ladies, and just being with Mom.
 3. LeeJoy Anna Hlobil Whalen Walker. Beloved sister, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend, LeeJoy passed away on Wednesday, March 6, 2013, in Grants Pass, Oregon. She was born February 2, 1923 in Kenner, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana to Rudolph Josef Konstantin Hlobil and Mary (Osmera) Hlobil.