



Carolyn M Wolffe

September 3, 1915 - June 9, 2014

As mother lay dying, people she had cared for and gathered into her tender arms, were coming into the nursing home to pay their respects.

"I love you" her godson Dominic Gerard, would say. Mother would open her eyes and say " I love you too Dominic." Alana, a young lady she had known since she was four and had taken her under her wings, said "Carol, I love you." Mother, fighting to rise out of that coma, responded "I love you too Alana. I love you too Tommy and Kathy", she said to her nephew and his wife.

"Monica, I love you." she said in response to a young lady who lived with her when she was young and was a tremendous loving caregiver who told her of her love.

My turn finally came. "Mom," I said loudly because of her lapses of consciousness were growing longer. "This is Jerry, I love you mother." Almost instantly she opened her blue eyes and looked at me and said "You should."

And she's right.

Without her and my father Vince's love I would have spent my life in an institution for the disabled, which was the norm in the late 1940s.

"Get Blanked" she and dad told the doctor when he said "It would be better for all if Jerry was institutionalized." They took me home and raised me to be normal. My sisters, Nancy and Rene, helped. They fought the dumb bullies who tried to beat on me. They ran the bases when I played catch in the neighborhood with the boys. Nancy, as a two year old, would get down on her

hands and knees in deep snow or ice and let me use her pack to push off so I could get back up after falling. She demanded I be able to go to school 30 years before the federal law was passed requiring that a boy or girl with a disability had the legal right for a public education because she knew how important education would be to a child with cerebral palsy. She and dad demanded I be able to go to Osborn Public High School in 1960 at which time I told the principal I would not go into a room that said handicapped."

I got a key from the principal for the elevator and probably was among the first kids with a disability to be mainstreamed.

When I was refused jobs because some foolish employer could only see the way I walked instead of my smile, which I got from her, and my ability, she comforted me.

She loved my dear wife JoAnn as her own daughter. She made JoAnn promise when she died, JoAnn would stay with me.

She also told us children you are now old enough I don't have to worry about you any more. People say I am an advocate. She was the prime mover in my life and the strongest and most noble advocate I have ever known. When we moved into a new neighborhood, she would scout out all the boys my age and tell them about Jerry and how he had a small disability and how he'd like to be their friends. One hot summer day 55 years ago or so, she came out while I was trying to fit in and play baseball with a platter of ice cold watermelon. After that, I was in like flint with the guys. We fought, we cried together. She is more than likely the most significant driving force in my life to succeed and that of others than anyone else I have ever met... and after being a reporter for 45 years, I've met thousands. After each of the 31 surgeries I had, mother was there outside of the operating room to take care of me, sometimes with Nancy and Rene. She fought through her own fears to help ease my fears of pain, death and dying. There will never be another Owens Wolfe. When she would come in to Leland, an orthopedic school, everyone would say "who is that beautiful red-headed lady dresses so fine?" I'd proudly say "that's my mother. She sure is something, eh?" Now many hearts are broken but she helped

changed a large part of the world and the good she did will not be buried with her but will live on for eons. She not only got me into school, but many other children with disabilities, including twins Dennis and Donald Lipinski who had Muscular Dystrophy. She would feed stray cats but deny it when we caught her. So now I know mother is with God and there's a hole in my heart that I shall live with until I go to be with her and all of our ancestors in the presence of God. So now at night I will look into the heavens and there will be a bright new star just east of the North star. We all will love you forever ma. Jerry, Nancy, Rene, JoAnn, Bob, Paul too, and everyone else.

Tribute Wall

SA

“ Carol dear friend, you were a 'Godmother' to all the Gerard's especially your dear friend Barbara Ann Gerard. Blessed Be. The Gerard's, Perry's and Allison's.

Sarah Allison - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SD

“ Candice and I will always remember your Mom as the crazy and fun aunt that she was. We know that she is now talking Bobby's ear off and they are both celebrating with all those that she now joins. We both send our blessings. Sue and Candice

Sue Dolkowski-Gorski - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ I don't know your mom or your family but, what a lovely tribute both of her life and that of your family. Prayers to all who love your dear sweet Mom.

Jane Mack - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM