

Thanking Mother on Her 100th

Today June 22, 2017 is Mother's 100th birthday. Johnny, Clare and the rest of us siblings want to thank her in a special way for so many things. She was the dominant force in our family growing up and it was against her, more than Dad, that we rebelled when we started to act out. In hindsight, though, all of us have come to recognize that it was from her that we got the skills for navigating through life.

We have also come to admire all that she accomplished in her own work apart from Dad. She was a superb Sunday School leader of the Young Married Couples group at the Templo. She was one of the key founders of Colegio Monterrey. After Dad's death the way she embraced a new multi-pronged mission is awe inspiring.

- She became a UCR Professor creating the first program for Kindergarten teacher training.
- She gave her students a practicum in the Model Kinder set up at Colegio Monterrey.
- She worked with Milrae and others to help Roblealto set up Daycare Centers in four of the poor barrios of Costa Rica, and
- She encouraged her students to mobilize political support for Kindergartens in the Public Schools



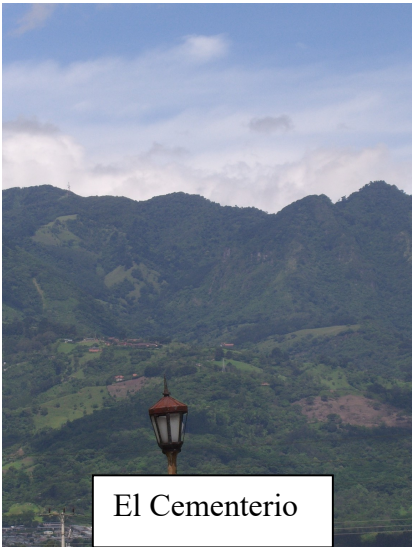
When she died many of us were still reeling from Dad's death, "wandering in the wilderness" as Aunt Grace, I believe, put it. I fear she died thinking she'd been a failure as a mother; some of us weren't exactly on the path she'd envisioned.

Most of us today are grateful for our lives, feel blest beyond anything we deserve. Much of what gives us great satisfaction in our lives, we know we owe to her. If there is anything we regret it is certainly not due to her mothering.

To this tribute, let me add some thing I wrote 10 years ago which is still as fresh and true as it was back then.

Thanking Mother

Today, June 22nd, is Mother's 90th birthday. I went to the Cemetery to put some flowers on the family gravesite where she is buried and thanked her on behalf of all of us children. I took with me Iddo, our office messenger/driver, because I also had to pick up a cedula and needed some guidance around the city.



El Cementerio

Besides working in our office, Iddo is a lay assistant pastor in a poor church in his barrio. He is always full of enthusiasm and questions. He's the person who requested a scholarship from our Foundation for a gifted pianist in his congregation. On the way over he introduced the subject he wanted to talk about as we drove to the Registro. "My son puts his school satchel on his back and runs around the house gunning his motorcycle and pretending he's weaving in and out of traffic. He says he wants to be a messenger like me, but I want him to get educated the way you Strachans were. What was your parent's secret?"

Several pictures immediately come immediately into my mind: all of us on the big

double bed with Mother reading to us; Mother on the stool at the head of the breakfast table giving us "Word Power".

But I didn't answer his question directly. "Iddo," I said, "I think it is great that he wants to be like you! And if he sees you all the time reading and studying and writing as



Strachan Grave

I do, I don't think you have to worry. Do you read to him?" And the conversation evolves from there in Socratic fashion.



And I realized my debt to Mother goes far deeper. Another picture comes into my mind. "Now I can't tell you the names, Harry, but your Daddy is facing a difficult decision. This single missionary nurse working at the Clinica came into his office today to tell him that she believes the Lord

is calling her to Guanacaste. The other General Directors feel she really belongs at the Hospital where she is doing a great job in the Nursing School. How do you think Daddy

should handle this?" I screw up my brow, think about it, and tell her what my plan would be. She listens carefully, always say, "That's very good, Harry." And then describes to me what Dad had done, not just the decision but the solution incarnate in its



implementation. My life has been spent as a case method teaching, a consultant, a problem solver. Far more than school "education" I got the skills that have helped me in these areas began with her.

We came to the Cemetery. And as you can see from the pictures, I bought a lovely arrangement of flowers. It's a beautiful Costa Rica morning of sun. The family tomb sits partly in the shade and partly in the sun. The mountains behind the cemetery are etched against the sky. You can see the Cross up there though it doesn't come out clear in the picture.

I have been writing a piece for the Workshop on Spiritual Writing that I'll be taking at the Glen

Workshop in early August. It is centers on the summer of 1965 after Dad's death when I went to Costa Rica to collect his papers and interview missionaries. It was a pivotal summer in my own journey. Writing it I'm feeling a new identification with both Dad and Mother and feeling a deep sense of gratitude for what they gave us.



Ido took a picture of me saying "thank you" in which I am looking more pained than I felt. I couldn't make your "thank yous" as specific as mine, but I did consciously thank her for each of you and tell her how important she was in each of your lives and that things have turned out well!

