

The tale of a life is often abridged into flash cards of memories through time. The real affect and impact that one life can impart to others, is potentially a more deeply ingrained, visceral sense that is undeniable.

Mother, your love seems boundless even now. You have never let us down, or disappointed us, and we know that you have always had our best interests at heart, we know that you wanted us always to learn, to improve and you wanted us most to be Happy in whatever we chose to do. For these things and your endless love, you will always be cherished and remembered.

The Children three. Danica, John, Alexander

## Memories of Mother

A note that was intended to be formulated and read while mother was still present. Sadly, and fashionably late, just as mother taught us to be, it is here.

As it becomes more apparent that our rock will not be coming home this time, a flood of thoughts, feelings, & memories become a swirling vortex in our minds. There is a great unrest here, as the very source of our being has slipped into an endless distant sleep. A forced abandonment of us, not by will or constitution but just a matter of cumulative episodes that had eroded an old & tired body.

With what seems endless hours of a kind of desperate loneliness, it seems easier to sort through the memory banks to reflect on the attributes that make Laryssa (mom to us), so special, revered and loved. From the very beginning after a year of servitude for the trip across the pond, her focus and task was entirely for the betterment and advancement of her progeny. Somehow one must wonder how the new

penniless immigrants, Dusan and Laryssa could manage in a few short years, to acquire a massive rental house with five tenants and our new family of four with one on the way. There is no doubt in our minds that the impetus for the planning and decision making for this endeavor was mother. She sought opportunities wherever they might be. This affinity led her to enroll us in any direction that might be deemed cultural, educational or beneficial.... We all had exposure to sometimes forced enterprises of improvement. It could be Russian instruction by Madame Anderson by age 5, at our melamine kitchen table, obligatory dance classes for all of us, perhaps failed musical instruction with the recognized best private instructor in the City... we had all these opportunities offered to us and more.

To this day we have to wonder what the magnitude of their sacrifices where, that allowed us many unique and special opportunities? Mother even sewed my first satin tunic for me.

The list of advantages and support are almost endless. There is no doubt that we were fitted with some of the best footwear that money might buy at the time. Our salamander imported shoes might well have been three times the cost of regular shoes, but mother insisted, despite the fact that we could easily and carelessly ruin them in weather or sport. The same penchant for quality and exclusivity that mother enjoyed was willingly shared with all her children. She would wait for the once a year sale at the best shops in town and treat us all, or perhaps she would load up at the Hadassa annual bazaar and come home with more shopping bags than one could carry... somehow managing to get the goodies home by corralling someone kind enough to assist the lovely lady and a car full of stuff with a drive. We didn't have a car till 1967, and father would heartily disapprove of more 'stuff'.

This reminds me that mother had an endless energy about, partly driven by necessity, as to give us all the advantages, it would be necessary to travel by bus most often. It was a weekly ritual to get Danica to dance class in Toronto, and often we travelled as a family group to get her there. The National Ballet School was many hours and miles from our home in East Hamilton. The reward for our travel was often in the form of a treat from the Chinese Market close to the Toronto Bus Station. Perhaps a little end piece from the BBQ pork Tenderloins, or for the ladies gnawing on those chicken feet. No thanks!

Life always seemed an adventure then, and all memories include the affable and unflappable Mrs. T. Mother could easily endear herself to others. There are many tales where her genuine love of art or fashion or even beauty would cause her to speak and engage with whomever. Often a shop-keeper would happily spend too much time with her, as she had a real appreciation for the unique, the artistic, the well-crafted.

Mother had her favourites and she was theirs as well.

Doctor Miklea, was a spark for mother in the past decades. A great physician who might have booked mother as his last appointment for the day, as the conversation would keep them there, well into the supper hour. His life, his family his well-being where all part of how she could connect. They were dear friends as much as patient-Doctor.

Mother had the same kind of connection with her favourite Yorkville salon. Not that she went often, here wisps of baby-like hair were fair game for an occasional colouring, (until Alexander the Great Studio, at 54 Kirby Avenue.) You have to know that Mother met Zoran in his overpriced Spa, but she made a friend of him too. Her last minute appointments were accommodated and more importantly the modest charge he continually gave her ( perhaps a third of

what it could have been,) was honoured throughout her time there. Did you know that mother didn't tip? She firmly believed that whatever you did for someone was a kind or reward in itself. Many times she used the example that in her many years of work and her many over-time hours (without compensation), doing research or searching for some obscure scores, was an expression of love and care. She wasn't tipped, didn't expect any, and the concept discussion ended there.

Mother always sought out the better things in life... one of the best examples, is the find of the property on Kirby Avenue in Greensville. Her weekly drive with father where as much a search for an ideal lot, as much as a casual outing. I remember walking along the dirt path at the top of Crooks Hollow Creek. The acres were tilled farmland with a small sign for a future development.

Leave it to mother, she had eyed her favourite pines anchoring a particular piece that she favoured. Mother befriended the developer and so got her spot some years later. She was tenacious in many ways, resourceful and tireless in the effort to succeed. The design of the first house on Kirby Avenue, was by one of Canada's preeminent architects that was a commercial Architect. She found him, found a way to get a tour of his escarpment home, and ultimately he designed her house for her because of who she was and how she was. Mother was and will always be special.

The love and care that mother had perhaps was most enjoyed by Alex. In one of his worst times, it was Mother that found a top notch Labour Lawyer in Toronto that had refused this case due to the fact that it was too small by his standards. Mother was gifted at getting through the red tape, but more importantly she was able to connect and relay heart-felt information. Mori ended up assisting us, and for all his trouble, he didn't even charge a penny.

Mother's greatest joys seemed to always be family gatherings. Her Easters and Christmas celebrations with her mother and sister were especially important to her. She was connected closely to her culture, and Orthodox religion of Birth. Truth be told, dad, who was a good looking potential mate was a mere consideration of many, until he offered that he was Orthodox too! That clinched it.

This short (somewhat) summation would be incomplete without the acknowledgment that for many of her latter years mother's caring and love for us, would be returned to her through Alex principally. She no doubt would have passed much sooner, perhaps years earlier. There was a level of love and care and responsibility that resembles exactly, a complete roll reversal.

Mother knew and graciously accepted it. Alex freely and diligently provided it. It is fitting that the care and love she freely gave us, was freely returned, mostly by Alexander. For this immense showing of love and care for mother, we other siblings are also eternally grateful.

Mother always had a blessing for us as we left for school or work or play. The simply cross and a few whispered words were automatic it seemed. God Bless you and Keep you.

This we now say to you dear mother May God Bless you and Keep you. Love Always!