

Service in Celebration of the Life of
Mary Howard (1933-2015)
March 28, 2015, 3:00 p.m.
Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, VA
Rev. Dr. Barbara Coeyman, Officiant
Pianist: Sophia Morreale

Prelude: (collaboration Sophia, Lisa, etc.)

Opening Words

Rev. Coeyman

A human life is sacred.

It is sacred in its being born.

It is sacred in its living.

And it is sacred in its dying

Lighting of Chalice and Chime

Mark Lim

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, our flaming chalice is a symbol of free faith and loving community. I invite Mark Lim to light today's chalice to symbolize this community that we have created here together today. Our hymn response is #123: "Spirit of Life," found on the insert in the order of service.

Hymn Response: #123: "Spirit of Life" (see insert)

Welcome

Welcome to this celebration of the life of Mary Howard. This is a day of both sadness and celebration. We who are assembled today have come here to mourn Mary's death. Just as important, we are here today to remember and to celebrate her life.

Mary was born in 1933 and died on February 26, 2015. She leaves behind many who love her: in particular, her husband of forty-four years, Bob; Bob's brother Norm and wife Maxine Jaubert; Her brother Bruce Boss and Gaeyle; her sister Pam Hietanen, stepbrother Paul Hietanen, and Nancy and Laurie; stepbrother Dale Hietanen and Marty; Bob's son Jerry, and Debbie, Ben, Alex and Sara; Bob's son Mark and Lisa; and nieces Barbara Boss and Erica Boss-Barrett

At a time like this, it is good to be together. At a time like this, we need one another. Each of us grieves, and each of us remembers. When we grieve together, we can give one another comfort. At least for this hour, we here together are joined as a compassionate family. It is indeed good to be together.

In our time here together today, our words, our silences, our tears, will be our offerings of remembrance. Later in this service you will have an opportunity, as you wish, to express your affection for and memories of Mary, by coming forward and lighting candles in silence or with brief words and stories. You might recall your love for Mary and her love for all of life. It is good to be here together.

May we be joined together in the spirit of prayer, meditation, and reflection. Spirit of Life, in this community assembled here, we open our hearts in thanksgiving for Mary and her life. We come into this community, this circle, with our many emotions: grief and sorrow, gratitude and love. We remember all that Mary was. We remember the love she gave the world. Now in a brief moment of silence, let us find comfort, knowing that others grieve and celebrate with us. We are not alone, here, together. Mary's presence is also with us, in this moment, in this place.

Let us be together for a moment of silent reflection.

Amen and Blessed Be.

Opening Music

Reading: Jerry Howard

Musical Meditation

Reading: Norm Howard

Eulogy

Rev. Coeyma

Mary Howard was a creative, witty, artistic woman, a snappy dresser and an engaging spirit. Even though challenged by declining health in recent months, she maintained her zest for life until those final weeks in hospice. She made a variety of connections in her active life and gained the respect of many: one could not help but be inspired by Mary's presence. Her spirit and her style remains in what she touched: in the Greater Reston Arts Center, in this Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, in her family. Mary's spirit remains alive in so many of us: she continues to be loved by many, as she loved others.

Mary Howard was born April 18, 1933 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, into a family of Dutch descent. You may wonder about her middle name --- 'Boss.' It's not a descriptor of her role in life, it's an Americanization of the Dutch family name 'Bos.' She had one brother, Bruce, two years younger. After their parents divorce, Mary and Bruce's mother remarried, creating a blended family in which Mary was one of **five** children, her step-siblings being Pam, Paul, and Dale.

She had hopes of advanced education after high school, but family dynamics prevented her from achieving a college degree in her early twenties, at the point in life when many do graduate. Finally in 1996 at the age of 63, she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Corcoran School of Art. Bob will tell you more about that.

Mary lived in Korea for five years, serving with the Department of State. She married Jim, who she met in Korea, in the mid-1950s. She then spent five years in Paraguay. This career afforded wide-ranging travel: to Japan, Hong Kong, and Europe. Mary was indeed a woman of the world,

Family reasons brought Mary to the Washington DC area. She moved to Reston in 1965. She became the 219th resident of this community. As a single mom with two children, she accepted an administrative position in the real estate establishment of Jeff Wellborn. In that real estate office, she met a man named Bob Howard, who had moved to Reston in part for personal reasons and in part because of planning for this congregation. Bob and Mary hit it off immediately as business partners, and then the partnership turned personal. Bob will tell you more They became estate brokers in 1970 and married. They were married by UU minister Rudy Nemser, the second minister of the UU Congregation in Fairfax, at their home here in Reston.

Rather suddenly, Wellborn resigned from this company he had created and the Howards took over its leadership just around the time of their marriage. Mary served as President of Wellborn Real Estate in co-ownership with Bob, heading up the residential brokerage branch. At that time she was one of the few women in leadership in real estate brokerage. In that career, she received many awards, perhaps most noteworthy was in 1982, when she served as President of the Northern Virginia Board of Realtors, an organization 15000 members strong. She was then only the fourth woman to hold this position.

On retiring from real estate Mary pursued a lifelong desire to study art. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Corcoran College of Art in 1996. Some of her sculpture was shown at the Corcoran Alumni Show in 1997, which she attended in a wheel chair after a biking accident, and she had various other art shows, in Arlington and at the Greater Reston Arts Center, of which she was a founding member.

She offered parallel leadership here at the UU Church in Reston. Her experience and skill in leading small business gave her skills in planning . She also served on the board as vice president.

After their blended family was grown and out of the house, Mary and Bob became devoted bikers, some years biking as far as 2000 miles. They joined the Reston Bike Club and took trips in this country and abroad, their first in 2002 to Holland, and later France, and Belgium, in Dorr County Wisconsin, Lancaster PA, New York's Finger Lakes region, and more. Bob admits that some Sundays they weren't here in church because they were out biking. Bob will tell you about other two-wheeled adventures.

They did other travel as well: around the world: China in 2001, India in 2006, Russia in 2011, and their final trip together, to the western United States: Badlands, Black Hills, Mt. Rushmore, Yellowstone Park: believe it or not, all new locations for Mary. They also traveled close to home, as close as the Vienna Inn, which they might frequent 3 or 4 times a week. Bob says there was no trip they did not like, and there was never any regret to come back home.

Mary was eclectic. Her fondness for biking was partnered with her intense interest in art. Biking trips were about much more than peddling: they included many other cultural activities, especially to visit art museums in Europe.

Mary's artistic bent came through in her flare for clothing. One of my earliest memories of Mary after I arrived here in summer 2013 was her classy dress and our common taste in mixing blues and purples. Oh yes, there was also her amazing nail polish! Mary was also a straight shooter and a tough examiner... frankly, I'm glad I never had to experience Mary as a member of something like a search committee: she was a probing questioner.

Mary also endured many life challenges, but did not let them change the positive person she was. Mary contracted Wegener's, an auto-immune disease, in 2013. A consequence of this disease was kidney-failure. She did not let the disease define who she was. With the benefit of at-home dialysis, she maintained many regular activities, including that trip out west. It was only in late 2014 that she had to curtail most of her social and church contacts. She fought bravely to the end: even the last time I saw her, she was feisty Mary. She died peacefully on February 26.

Dear Mary, rest in peace. You will always be remembered in the hearts of so many: Your family, your many friends, your church community, your professional colleagues. Your spirit will live forever in the hearts of all who were blessed to share some of their life with you.

SO BE IT

Musical Meditation

Remembrances of Mary

Bob Howard

Terry Mitchell

Robert Goudie

Community Remembrances and Candles:

Reading: "As We Spoke," Rudolph W. Nemser

As we spoke, you and I,

Of how the sky at sunset hits the earth
 Gaily flung notes sounded
 Of some bird's birding.
 I was that bird in an instant.
 The music fell like fiery drops within my ribcage.
 I felt the tones-
 Felt them and yearned-
 And smiled at you and your sunset.
 Some day if we trust one another long enough
 With care and worth
 I'll ask you if you heard that house wren.
 You'd remember.....

Musical Selection:

Extinguishing of Chalice

Mark Kim

We extinguish the flame of our chalice, but its spirit can remain burning brightly in the hearts of each of us.

Closing Words

Rev Coeyman

Guests, please remain seated during the postlude, while Mary's immediate family leaves the sanctuary. Then, everyone is invited to the east foyer for a reception provided by the Caring Circle of this congregation. The ushers will invite you to exit starting from the rear of the sanctuary. As you wish, feel free to re-enter the sanctuary for conversation: you may want to go out and around, to come in the west door.

And now our service of remembering is over. We say goodbye to Mary and offer yet one more 'thank you' for all she has given us, for being here in this world for over six decades. We say goodbye, but we will always remember.

Some words from ancient scripture may help us go back out into the world:

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace.

The mountains and the hill before you shall burst into song,

And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

My friends, go forward in hope and in peace, remembering always to love one another.

Amen, Shalom, Blessed Be

Postlude: (Sophia and Lisa collaboration)