



A Tribute to My Mom, Bev

by Joel Moline

During the early part of my life, I thought I had a normal mom.

As I grew older, I realized there was nothing ordinary about her.

Not because she did one or two extraordinary things, but because she did thousands of ordinary things with extraordinary love.

Most of you knew her as Bev. To me, she was Mom.

If there is one thing I hope everyone remembers about my mom today, it is this: she had an incredible gift for making every person she met feel important.

Whether you had known her for fifty years or for five minutes, she had a way of making you feel welcome, appreciated and loved.

That wasn't something she turned on when company came over.

It wasn't something she did because she thought she should.

It was simply who she was.

Looking back now, almost every wonderful memory I have begins with her being present in the moment.

Mom was there.

She was there helping with homework.

She was there cheering me on.

She was there encouraging every new interest I had.

When I was in grade school, I wanted to learn to play the guitar. I was too young to enroll in lessons, so Mom signed-up herself. Every week she went to class, came home, and patiently taught me everything she had learned.

As a child, I thought, "That's what moms do."

As an adult, I realized just how extraordinary that really was.

Our home was never just our home. It belonged to everyone.

Neighborhood kids were always welcome.

Friends were always welcome.

When we came home from school, there were often fresh cinnamon rolls, homemade cookies or warm bread waiting for us — and always enough for whoever happened to come through the door with us.

Mom never wanted anyone to feel like a guest.

She wanted everyone to feel like family.

She had a gift for making ordinary days feel special.

On Valentine's Day we had pink milk.

On St. Patrick's Day we had green milk.

She loved setting a beautiful table, lighting candles and creating a home that quietly said, "I'm glad you're here."

Looking back, I realize it wasn't the house that made our home special.

It was Mom.

One of the greatest gifts Mom ever gave our family was the example of the marriage she shared with Dad.

Their story began when Mom was just sixteen years old, working as a roller-skating carhop in south Minneapolis. Dad offered to give her a ride home after work. Mom smiled, thanked him, and politely declined because, as she explained, they had never been formally introduced.

That always makes me smile because it was so typical of her.

She was gracious, kind, and proper, all at the same time.

A mutual friend eventually introduced them, and that simple introduction changed the course of both of their lives.

Not long afterward, Dad left to serve our country during the Korean War.

While he was overseas, they faithfully wrote letters to one another until he returned home.

They married in September of 1954.

Seventy-one years later, they were still holding hands.

Dad always called her “Honey.” Mom called him “Sweetie” or “Sweetheart.”

Those weren’t just nicknames. They were expressions of a love and respect that never faded.

My parents didn’t just tell us what a Christian marriage looked like.

They lived it.

One of my favorite memories happened just a couple summers ago.

The senior community center had organized a pontoon ride on White Bear Lake.

When I picked Mom up, it was raining so hard we could barely see through the windshield. The boat captain called and asked if we wanted to cancel.

Without hesitation Mom smiled and said, “Absolutely not. The sun is going to come out, and we’re going to see a double rainbow.”

When we arrived at the lake, it was still pouring.

The captain asked again if we wanted to cancel.

Mom simply smiled. “No,” she said. “Let’s go.”

Almost immediately, the rain stopped.

The clouds opened. The sun broke through.

And stretching across the sky was a beautiful double rainbow.

Since Mom passed away, that story has taken on an entirely new meaning for me.

Because that’s exactly how she lived.

She always believed there was sunshine beyond the storm.

Not because life had always been easy. It certainly hadn’t.

She believed it because her faith taught her to keep looking toward the light.

Even during her years at Boutwells Landing, she never stopped encouraging people.

She thanked the nurses, aides, companions and staff who cared for her.

She remembered their names, asked about their families, and made each of them feel appreciated.

Even near the end of her life, she was still thinking more about others than herself.

During Mom’s final days in the hospital, I had the privilege of staying with her at night.

One night I had fallen asleep in the recliner beside her bed.

At some point, the blanket slipped from my shoulders.

Mom noticed.

Despite everything she was going through, she pulled herself across the bed, over to me, gently pulled the blanket back up around my shoulders, and tucked it around my neck.

Even then... she was still taking care of her son.

That moment will stay with me for the rest of my life.

People often ask what made my mom so special.

It wasn't one grand accomplishment.

It was thousands of small acts of kindness, repeated every day for more than ninety years.

She showed up.

She encouraged people.

She thanked people.

She welcomed people.

She believed in people.

She lived her faith quietly but faithfully.

And she made everyone around her feel important.

If you want to honor my mom, don't do it only by remembering her.

Honor her by living a little more like she did.

Invite someone into your home.

Encourage a child.

Thank someone who often goes unnoticed.

Spend time with someone who is lonely.

Look for the beauty in a rainy day.

Believe there's a double rainbow waiting beyond the clouds.

These past few months have been the hardest of my life.

For more than sixty years, I always knew Mom was just a phone call away.

Now I miss hearing her voice. I miss our conversations. I miss our lunches and long drives.

I miss having her tell me to stop by if I happened to be "in the neighborhood."

I miss both of my parents more than words can express.

But if I could say just one thing to my mom today, it would simply be this:

Thank you.

Thank you for always showing up.

Thank you for believing in me.

Thank you for every sacrifice I never knew you were making.

Thank you for every prayer.

Thank you for making our home a place where everyone felt welcome.

Thank you for showing me what kindness looks like.

Thank you for loving Dad so faithfully for seventy-one years and showing all of us what a Christian marriage can be.

Most of all, thank you for loving your children so completely that we never once questioned whether we mattered.

You and Dad gave me a life filled with love.

That is the greatest gift I will ever receive.

I love you, Mom.

I'll miss you every day until we're together again.

I can only imagine the joy you felt when you were reunited with dad in Heaven!