



Jean Bruggeman Hays

December 11, 1928 - September 5, 2020

Jean Bruggeman Hays died in hospice in Tinton Falls, NJ, September 5, 2020, with her son by her side for her final two weeks. Born Betty Mable Gilbert in 1928, she was immediately adopted by Pastor Walter and Elsie (Scull) Bruggeman. After spending her early years in Vetnor, NJ, she went to elementary and high school along the Main Line of Philadelphia, PA. She met her future husband, Donald C. Hays, at Grove City College, PA. They raised two sons (Gary and John) in Middletown, NJ. With a Master's degree, she served a generation of children with learning challenges in the Middletown Twp. Public Schools. A woman of compassion and social concern, she and Don were also active in the Order of St. Luke (a prayer ministry). She loved sea scallops, strawberries, peach pie, and drinking a Coke with lots of ice while sitting on the beach.

Her parents and husband predeceased her. She is survived by her sons and five grandchildren: Greta, Caroline, Alex, Amanda, and Caleb. They will miss her affection, stories, candid opinions, and French Toast.

Jean's services will be held at a later date in Illinois. For online condolences, please visit her memorial page at www.bongarzonefuneralhome.com

Tribute Wall

JH

“ In 1963 Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" was on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. You drove us (my brother and I) for the hour-long trip into the city to see this masterpiece. You navigated parking and the sidewalks of that big city. I'm sure you'd have preferred to see much more that day; yet the only thing we did in the museum was see the Mona Lisa. Then you took us out to lunch! Such wisdom, to expose me to the world of art but not to expect me to have to see too much. I learned from you years later that your father, Walter Bruggeman, made similar limited excursions into Philadelphia's art world when you were young.

You took me to an Alexander Calder exposition at New York's Museum of Modern Art when I was in Junior High. Then many years later, I remember you and I enjoying a lecture by political philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff on Thomas Cole's four paintings known as the "Voyage of Life." Wolterstorff's teaching on world-view profoundly shaped my thinking. In the 1990's, you and Dad discovered Andy Smith's beautiful watercolors in Litiz, Pennsylvania.

During the final week of my senior year in college I bought a framed piece at an art show on my college campus. I think few college students consider investing in art, beyond posters. It was because of you. Thank you for nurturing my appreciation for the visual arts.

John Hays - November 14, 2020 at 07:45 PM

JH

“ It was the summer of 1972, I had been a volunteer counselor at a summer camp for person's with disabilities. At the end of the summer you came to pick me up, and drive me home. As you were arriving, one of the campers had found a copperhead snake. You were enthralled and wanted to pick it up. I was aghast - it was poisonous! You talked with many of the gathered campers about how great snakes were. I was also surprised that you liked snakes, this was not something that I had known about you.

John Hays - November 03, 2020 at 05:23 PM

JH

“ When I was young, perhaps 1st or 2nd grade, you took me along when you went to visit the residents at the State Mental Hospital in Marlboro, NJ. I remember sitting on the laps of a number of women. I remember you encouraging me to sing for them. How I loved to sing.

Years later, I realized that those women had probably been sent there because they were deemed mentally unfit. But, when I there with you I do not remember that being an issue. I did not understand mental illness when I was a child; but clearly that did not matter. What mattered is that I could sing for the ladies and I could sit on their laps; I could bring them some measure of joy.

Allowing me to join you in such acts of Christian kindness has shaped my life. Thank you mom.

John Hays - October 10, 2020 at 10:26 PM

JH

“ I think it was the summer before began kindergarten, my mom was part of a group of suburban church women who offered a summer "bible school" program to the children of migrant farm workers who were then laboring in the western part of our state (NJ). Since the program was for children, my mom took me along (none of the other moms took there kids). I was the only white child among the other black kids in my class, this was not something that had any significance to me until.... At some a boy from the other end of the table came to my end; he told the kids sitting by me to move away, and then he took the basket of crayons. I was left alone holding only the crayon in my hand. Devastated and confused, I ran from the class and down the hall to the room where my mom was working. I climbed sobbing into her lap. I do not remember my mom's words, but I do remember the lesson I began to learn -- that boy experienced rejection repeatedly. That lesson, which was a by-product of my mom's wise parenting, has reverberated in my life ever since. Years later when I was a teen, I became a Jesus-lover; His heart for the poor and outcast rang out with all of its radical and compelling truth.

John Hays - September 25, 2020 at 06:15 PM

JH

“ My mom was a smart and accomplished woman who expressed her love of her family and friends with great care and generosity. She cared for those in need (every Christmas she made a financial gift to a charity or person in great need as a "gift to the baby Jesus"). With a master's degree in learning disabilities she served educationally-challenged children, helping them to succeed at school (and equipping their parents and teachers to do so as well). She enjoyed reading, especially mysteries. She took on the challenge of solving daily New York Times crosswords.

She prayed daily and knew that God listens and responds. A few years ago, I introduced her to the writings of Henry Nouwen. During her final two weeks, I had a privilege of reading aloud to her from his writings each day. During one of these readings I noticed that she feel asleep; so I put Nouwen's book down and quietly started a Sudoku. After a about 10 minutes, with her eyes still closed, she said: "Sorry, I was praying!" I was amused and humbled that I had not entered into prayer as she had.

John Hays - September 22, 2020 at 01:23 PM

BH

“ Bongarzone Funeral Home lit a candle in memory of Jean Bruggeman Hays



Bongarzone Funeral Home - September 11, 2020 at 07:01 AM