

# **Tribute to Molly Bell**

## **(1938 - 2007)**

I met Molly a day or two after Bill started dating her. He was a handsome, available, macho marine who had been eschewing women for the Corps, but Molly won him over immediately. He talked about her all the time. When my fiancé, Ruth (now my wife of fifty years), would visit me for an Ohio State event, she would frequently stay with Molly at her family's home in Worthington, so a bond among the four of us soon developed.

During Bill's and my last year in college, we studied every night together at the College of Music Library, and as we walked back to our campus homes after the library closed, we would talk about our plans for marriage and about our future lives with Ruth and Molly. It was an exciting time for all of us. We became so close with Molly and Bill that they were a part of our "Navy" wedding (swords and all) in Findlay, Ohio on June 9, 1957.

While on active duty, I got to see Bill several times as our ship passed by Okinawa, but I didn't see Molly again until we completed active duty in 1960. Molly did visit Ruth in Findlay while I was overseas. She came to cheer Ruth on shortly before Ruth gave birth to our second son, Jay.

During the years when we were raising our families, Ruth and I visited Molly and Bill several times in Charlotte, and always kept in contact by mail. In one of our most famous

visits, Molly taught me how to make a dress while Ruth was confined to bed for several days with an infection. During that two-day period, I made two “shifts” that Ruth used as beach covers at the beach. She never would wear one of those dresses to church! Molly and I had so much fun doing this that it was always a subject discussed when the we all got together.

Over the years, Ruth and I met with Molly and Bill seven or eight more times, as I had some business trips to Charlotte, or as we stopped by on our way to the beach. We watched Molly care for Bill as his health declined. She always seemed so upbeat (in public) while we were there, but in private shared her fears about Bill’s declining health and his bouts with some of his demons. Even while bad things were going on, they always seemed to care very much for one another. Molly was devastated at the time of Bill’s death and she never seemed quite the same to us after that. Part of her spark had been taken away from her.

We always saw Molly as a loving, bubbly, high energy, high maintenance person who wanted to try everything life had to offer. She got short changed in some ways by the many negative things that happened to her along her journey...her unfulfilled pregnancies, her many bouts with cancer and the loss of Bill. She didn’t have an easy life in our eyes.

The one thing she did have, that special thing that every parent longs for, was/is loving children, who both treated her as if she was the most important person in the world. I am not saying she always deserved this treatment, as she could

be difficult, but Molly went to her grave knowing that her children loved her and wanted what was best for her. She never failed to tell us about Linda, Jim, Gwen, Todd and Ashley's accomplishments. I do think she was a bit jealous of Gwen getting to spend so much time with Jim...but what mother-in-law doesn't feel a little bit that way?

Molly was a great friend and Ruth will never forget the time she spent with Linda and her a year ago, and we will never forget the time we spent with Linda and Molly last January. Although she was weak and barely able to go to the show Linda had given her as a Christmas gift, she still had that spunk that made her what she always was...when asked what we might do to help her during our short visit, she said, "Pick up these prescriptions, clean the garage and shampoo the carpet!" and she meant it.

We knew she wasn't kidding and so that is just what we did! We think Molly is probably organizing some groups in heaven as this is being written...and redecorating God's living room...and that God, and Bill, likes what she is doing. On God's mantle, she has placed a small Marine Corps logo right next to the Army one.

October 2007