

A LETTER TO MY MOM

Following is the talk given by my son Barrett at his mother's funeral.

As many of you know, my mother had a great love for literature, especially children's literature. And there was one book that she got years ago that's entitled LOVE YOU FOREVER. It's a story about a mother who sang to her baby son, "I'll love you forever; I'll love you for always; As long as I'm living, my baby you'll be." She continued this throughout his life.

Eventually, however, their roles reversed. The mother got sick, and her son took care of her. Then he went home to his son, held him in his arms and sang, "I'll love you forever; I'll love you for always; As long as I'm living, my baby you'll be." Mom and I read that book countless times--and always cried.

This book was much on my mind as I wrote this letter to my mom after seeing her in the emergency room. I was badly shaken, and there were so many things I wanted to tell her. I read this letter to her the following evening in the hospital.

Dear Mom,

I have so many things I'd like to say to you, but I'm not sure if I can get the words out of my head onto the paper. So this might ramble a little bit.

When Brandi and I walked into the ER, we were taken aback. You and Dad hadn't exactly told us how sick you really were. Seeing you made me realize how short life is and how so many memories come to mind at such times. Memories like.....

"Mommy, rock me in the red rocker." This is probably my first real memory.

Caffeine-free Diet Coke. I didn't know there was anything else to drink.

Putting war paint on Wesley and me and sneaking in crosses so we would be Christian Indians.

Lunch at Pizza Inn. We played games, and you attempted to make me do some homework.

Shaving my head before BMA camp. What a haircut!

Scrapbooks for every year of my life. I still love to look at them, and I'm sure that your grandson Jackson will as well.

The detailed journals you kept. Do you remember that when we were having fights you would pull out the journals and read them to me? Hearing how much love you had for me always seemed to shape me up.

You always took me to soccer and baseball practices and to baseball and Tae Kwon Do as well.

Countless costumes for dress up.

Playing dodge ball in the hall. Playing Pente, Aggravation, Sorry, dominoes, and 42. Trying to teach me to play the piano.

Tricking me into believing that Grandpa was giving me a hoe for Christmas--and it was really a microscope.

Encouraging me to go and do without being afraid of the world.

Standing by the convictions God had given you and Dad without caring whether others agreed.

Producing amazing productions for Christmas, Thanksgiving, Presidents' Day--and anything else than could be used for a learning opportunity.

Crazy birthday parades and banners that found their way into the newspaper.

Never showing different amounts of love to Jenny and me. You loved us both the same.

Giving up a career to stay home and teach me even though you had never even heard of such a thing.

Summer reading programs. Reading to Dad, Jenny and me. Instilling in me a love for literature.

Mom, I regret that I have wasted so many years in not loving and appreciating you and Dad in the way that the two of you deserve. But I want you to know that the things that you tried to instill in me were not wasted. I look forward to instilling them in Jackson. Your legacy will live on. I also want you to know that you and Dad are my heroes. I hope that Brandi and I can be the parents that you have been.

I love you Mom, and I treasure the time that we have left together. And whether that be one more day or twenty years, I want you to remember one thing: I'll love you forever; I'll love you for always; As long as I'm living, my mommy you'll be.

Barrett was able to spend eight more days with his mom. You can listen to his letter on the internet at www.james-mc.com.