



## Joyce Marie Montgomery

September 29, 1936 - September 21, 2018

If you are here, you probably knew the colorful person who was my Mom (she would probably use the word “rapscallion”). While 10 minutes will not be enough time to tell all about my Mom’s 81 years, I found two poems among her papers that she seems to have lived by. I will start with one and end with the other. The first is from Ralph Emerson

“To laugh often and much;  
to win the respect of the intelligent people and the affection of children;  
to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;  
to appreciate beauty;  
to find the beauty in others;  
to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition;  
to know that one life has breathed easier because you lived here.  
This is to have succeeded.”

My Mom lived that poem.

She laughed often and easily. She enjoyed singing (though those around might not). She sought and found reasons to laugh. She loved to tell funny, real stories – things that grandchildren said or did. (get the last Benjamin story here – or tell the story of the solar eclipse watching expedition – told story of Benjamin and Grandma’s dentures). She enjoyed playing cards because of the chance to “cheat” and to talk while playing hand after hand of Nickels.

She had the respect of her co-workers in Children Services, having worked her way up to a Social Worker from a Home-maker position. As a home maker, she taught others how to raise children. She had the experience, having raised 7 children. She for a time was a single mother raising 7 children between the ages of 1 year to 11 (this before being a single mother was an acceptable thing). To see her with her grand children, to see her surrounded by their crafts and drawings was to know that she had the affection of children.

My Mom was a resilient optimist. She did not have an easy life – the death of her mother and sorrow of her father at the loss began her troubles. She overcame the sorrow

of her Mother's death, her failed marriages, her young mother poverty, the death of her first grand child, and the death of Coleman, the love of her life. These tragedies did not make her bitter or cause her to abandon her hopes. She over came the tragedies and carried on.

Here are some examples of my Mom moving pass tragedies. The last time I visited with Mom she told me about a time in her childhood while living with her Dad in Reno Nevada. While he neglected her and Lois; they formed a gang and explored the town. The generosity of a neighbor kept them from being hungry all the time. I believe this helped her internalize the idea that she can make a difference in a child's life.

A few more examples of Mom's perseverance: As her children were growing up, (I must have been 14), she taught her self to drive (many a driver license failure stories were told including the one where she did not even get out of the parking lot before she had failed the test. It is probably apocryphal that the driving test administrators all took sick when they saw her in line for the next attempt). She began college about the same time I did. She went to Linn-Benton Community college to study and better herself. She began work as an Oregon State Home Maker. She eventually worked up to being a case worker for Children Services Division. This is not a job for a pessimist. I believe her belief and life experience enable her to do this difficult work for more than 20 years. After she retired, she found fulfillment in owning her home, some travel, and having family over (almost anything was a reason for a gathering). Family gatherings would include family news, cards, and plenty of food. Having learned to cook for 5 teenage boys, she never really learned to scale back down. The candy dish as never empty. After the gatherings, I never went home without the offer of left-overs, new stories about grand children or great grandchildren, and a smile. The Christmas eve get together brought the family together and was an event she looked forward to every year.

[strike this paragraph? – I did at the memorial]

Her optimism was shown by the men she would talk about – Richard Simons, the exercise guru; Jeff Smith, the frugal gourmet; and Roger Wtaker – singer of "Its a wonderful life." I could sing it for you here, but I have inherited several traits of Mom including her singing voice, but not her bravado. She always kept the poetry of Edgar Guest around – a poet of American optimism.

The beauty she saw in life was in colors – bright and bold colors. A sign by her stove said only cowards cook on low! (Another sign read: You know it is done when the smoke alarm goes off). Anyway, she loved bright colors. She visited Mexico and came back with a love of Kokopelli – apparently a flute playing fertility god (she did have tastes not shared by many, but that did no cause her to re-think her tastes). You can see his images around the room. When she dressed, gray was not her go to color.

I know that she has left the world with others who breath easier because she lived. I have seen the letters from women she helped, from children taken into protective

custody. I have met the people she called her friends.

I will close now with the second poem I found in her papers. It is by Jenny Joseph and it too seems to describe my mom and her life:

When I Am Old.

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
With a red hat that doesn't go, and doesn't suit me,  
And I shall spend my pension  
on brandy and summer gloves  
And satin sandals,  
and say we've no money for butter.

I shall sit down on the pavement when I am tired,  
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells,  
And run my stick along the public railings,  
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.

I shall go out in my slippers in the rain  
And pick the flowers in other people's gardens,  
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat,  
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go,  
Or only bread and pickle for a week,  
And hoard pens and pencils and beer mats  
and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry,  
And pay our rent and not swear in the street,  
And set a good example for the children.

We will have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?

So people who know me  
are not too shocked and surprised,  
When suddenly I am old  
and start to wear purple!

Joyce Marie Montgomery passed away on September 21, 2018 of natural causes at her home in Tangent, Oregon.

Born September 28, 1937 to AJ and Clara Garrigus in Clastkanie, Oregon, she had her biggest loss when her mother died when she was six. She lived with her father and then her mother's relatives

until she graduated  
from high school in Longview, Washington.

She was married to Coleman E. Montgomery for 16 years and remained a widow after his death in 1983.

She worked her way up to being a Social Worker for the State of Oregon in the Children Services Division.

She is survived by her sister Lois Pegg; seven children; 14 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

During her retirement she enjoyed traveling, cooking, friends, and family especially her grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held from 12 noon to 3 p.m. on October 20, 2018 in Jefferson at "The Bridge."

Please share your thoughts and memories for the family at <http://www.demossturdan.com>.

# Events

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**OCT** **Celebration of Life** 12:00PM - 03:00PM

**20**

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Th Bridge

Jefferson, OR, US

# Comments

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“ Judy Bralley sent a virtual gift in memory of Joyce Marie Montgomery



**Judy Bralley** - October 11, 2018 at 03:20 PM

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“ Judy Bralley lit a candle in memory of Joyce Marie Montgomery



**Judy Bralley** - October 11, 2018 at 03:18 PM

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“ Joyce was a good friend to my sister Roselee "Loui". When I returned to Oregon and stayed with Loui for some few months I found Joyce living next door and I had my own chance to get to know her. What a wonderful lady! So smart ... and a little tough. So much to give including her wonderful laugh that she shared often. Then one day I was going out and saw a friend from high school, Rene, outside talking to Joyce - HER MOTHER. Here was Rene that I thought the world of - even envied - in high school and Joyce all fun and wisdom. I'll never forget that moment. Learning that Rene was Joyce's daughter made all the sense in this small world.

I may not have known Joyce when she was cruising and vacationing in Mexico with my sister but I knew and loved her as most people did once they knew her. She was so often in my thoughts and prayers and she will continue to be with me. Joyce found a place in my heart that needed her and there she will remain.

I am filled with sadness for her family and so very sorry for your loss.

Praying Gods Comfort,

Judy Hecht Bralley

**Judy Bralley** - October 11, 2018 at 03:17 PM