

**You who are now gone and yet remain, living forever in each of our hearts and God's eternal Kingdom. We bear witness this day of your unique character.**

**Determined, giving, thoughtful, helpful to the helpless, ever ready to assist, lover of family, friend or foe, mother of mothers and the motherless, passionate, intuitive, resourceful, beyond generous, selfless, one who worked faithfully with her hands until her hands would work no more.**

**Such traits are befitting of one worthy of our gratitude, love, admiration, and so much more than mere words can possibly say!**

**AMEN**

Where was God this morning? What did he do first? While the rest of us were yawning, He was tending the universe. Counting up somebodies hair, tracking them as they fall, answering our very next prayer even before we call. It's a big God we serve but we treat Him way to small. We're gonna have to treat Him like He deserves, if we're gonna serve Him at all.

Selah

So Sis, let us celebrate your life and provide you this tribute. We offer up your favorite flower arrangement, pink roses, one yellow, perfectly centered in the middle of a fresh bouquet. It has been prepared and carefully left nearby, nonetheless beyond your reach.

Having dressed you in black, according to your preference, we your family, friends and all of your many, many children and grandchildren, surround you here and now, both in heaven and earth. In unison, we bequeath you as one solemn assembly, fixed within the inescapable paradox, of joyful sadness.

I begs the question, where was God in all of this? Our answer?  
Everywhere!

True to form, Dale gives God and Mary the credit for the man he became. He freely admits that he would never have been prepared for Mary's final years if she had God and that determined wife of his, led what he referred to as the "transition."

The two of them, God and Mary nearly forced him to develop the skillset needed to dutifully provide the level of loving care Mary would ultimately need.

In his view, he was schooled for that level of care by being involved with the care of so many children, some of which were completely dependent upon full time assistance.

Give that some thought. It makes sense to the believer, to those who understand divine providence and reject the notion of mere coincidence.

A single paragraph of poetry may provide us with some perspective.

gift that mattered, but rather, the heart of the giver. I really believe we bonded at that time and I'll never forget it. Thank you Mary for thinking of me.”

Yes, Mary will be missed. During her prime she was the matriarch of the family, providing many memories of holiday gatherings together, her special trays of baked and prepared treats, such as coconut bars and cranberry fruit salad. We would find ourselves over and over again, packed into her home, nearly shoulder to shoulder passing out gifts and celebrating our annual festivities.

It may seem ironic to some that someone who cared so much for others and invested life caring for the helpless would then become helpless, herself. Why? Where is the God she served in all of this? How could HE let this happen to someone like her? How is it that she would grow old and sick, becoming completely unable to take care of herself for nearly a decade and die at just 74?

It's difficult for some to make sense of that. Dale and I drew our own conclusions and many of you may agree. First, if one looks at life believing that death is the end and fails to consider eternity, the world is in and of itself a very unfair and unjust environment. A surface view of life easily leaves one perplexed.

1. This woman has an undeniable gift for making a dollar out of fifteen cents and 2.
2. This woman is extremely generous with her time and money.

Mary was a role model of a human being who spent her time making sure that the people around her felt like they mattered and I'm glad to have known her. “

Duetta continues in a similar vein...

“Several years ago Mary and I were bidding on the same item in a Thrift store display case. The items were Barnham and Baily, Clown Dolls. When the auction ended I had lost and was extremely disappointed. I had no idea who had one them since the bidding was private. When I went to Mary's for a get together I noticed the clowns. I mentioned that I had bid on them as well and didn't know who won them. I was really surprised to see them in her home. I never mentioned them again.

Come Christmas time we usually all received similar items as Mary liked to shop in bulk. So all the sister in laws got pretty much the same thing except in different colors. Well this time I did not, I opened my gift and lo and behold, it was the clowns. I was so surprised and happy all at the same time. It was not the

Among other things, those who knew Mary well recall her as resourceful. How is it that the Porths could afford to do all that they did? After all they were never wealthy, when it comes to material things. They lived well, doing so required resourcefulness.

Dale and I discussed a period that we agreed to call the "Coupon era". I was well aware of it but never realized the extent to which she learned to take full advantage of the opportunity she saw in coupons.

Dale recalls many, many trips to the grocery store with several children in tow and a purse full of double coupons. Somehow she would leave the store with armfuls of groceries and more money than she had entered the store with. Don't ask me how, but it was a regular family practice. The store actually paid her to shop.

Angela, my daughter-in law adds...

"I remember her at Trinity's baby shower. She gave me a trunk full of baby items. Clothes, baby food, diapers and many needed accessories and I remember thinking two things specifically.

Stacy's wedding. I couldn't believe how well behaved they were. With 14 extra people in the house one would expect pandemonium. But even at meal time they were so well behaved and helped each other, we hardly knew they were there. That's a tribute to her love, caring and organization.

We had wonderful visits whether it was when our children were young, weddings, or vacations where we just caught up on life. I'll always remember Mary's generosity and love. We enjoyed making matching dresses, (that I still have), going antique shopping, always making a visit to See's candy, Kings Island Amusement Park or preparing for a party. She knew how to do for others. It was always giving of herself in preparing only the best for her family and guests.

She felt a calling to use her life for God as early as when she was 13 or 14 when we went to the Salvation Army church. She was training in the church to be a soldier and got to go to their convention in New York. This was a big deal and I was so impressed by what I thought was such a privilege. And she got to see the Empire State Building. WOW I thought this was special. We barely got her to the train station on time because the brakes were going out on the car. She brought gifts home and she had a tiny camera no bigger than an egg. This was the most amazing thing I had ever seen. Remember cameras were quite large then."

the penchant she had to provide protection to her children. She would see two more children die later in life and this would underscore the need to keep all her children guarded and safely under her wings.

Even myself and my siblings, were Mothered by Mary when we needed mothering. I distinctively remember her caring for me personally as a small child, as I'm sure Rick does. For a while our Mom was unable to attend to us and Mary stepped right in. She had the Mother role covered and covered well, even as a preteen. Jo Ann, our sister will attest to that.

She and Dale were destined to become perfect fit. When a child came into their home, their goal became to keep them for as long as necessary or possible. Any child was granted an endless opportunity to be theirs. She didn't want them shifting around from house to house, victims of the system.

Jo Ann our Sister shared some of her thoughts...

"Some of the things I remember most is the love she had for family. "Aunt Mary and Uncle Dale" as our Children affectionately knew them, came back to Ohio to see us almost every 2 years. We looked forward to it so much. It was the highlight of our summer. Even when her family had grown and they had foster children, All 14 of the family came back for



was anything, she was a Mother and those babies needed a mother, moreover parents, and ultimately they would get them. Dale and Mary.

That passionate drive to Mother the motherless birthed a commitment to children unlike any I've ever witnessed. Over one hundred Children would ultimately pass through the Porth home, not necessarily Aids babies, but all types of children who needed parenting, even those physically and mentally challenged were not unwelcome as their family burgeoned into the clan it has become.

Mary had serious case of the Mother bear syndrome. You didn't want get in between her and one of her cubs. Even doctors and social workers were not above experiencing her wrath. I am their mother! She would exclaim, if anyone dared to challenge her authority. The passion she had for her children was unmistakably evident. It didn't matter if they were both natural, adopted and foster children, all types fit perfectly into the nest that the Porths would provide.

Early in life, during her first pregnancy, she lost a pair of twins, and shortly thereafter, a mentally challenged son was born, only to be hit and killed when he stepped out from between two parked cars. Those experiences, no doubt contributed to

When they finally recognized what had happened, they were both startled and quickly corrected the error of their way. Though they did get off course for those few moments, both of them knew, in the overall scheme of things, they were right on track.

When I asked Dale to give me an adjective to describe Mary, he said “determined”. He followed up with a few comments that I think you’ll find memorable. “When she made up her mind about something, she was determined. It was going to happen!”

At times Dale did express reluctance, but we all know how supportive he was.

“ She was the engine” Dale said with certainty “ I was like a trailer, just being towed along behind her. If we were a train, she was the engine and I was the caboose”

Dale’s reluctance was never stronger than in 1987 when Mary spotted an advertisement for caregivers that were needed for what were being referred to as “Aids babies.” Dale could see those wheels turning behind those beautiful greenish hazel, eyes. He knew that Mary was as maternal as any woman. If she

Those same tears would return repeatedly as we sat together outside Panera's restaurant this past Sunday. He did his best to choke them back, wiping his eyes repeatedly as he shared intimate details about their life together.

All too soon, the Safeway training ended and they went their separate ways, only to find themselves assigned to the same store. Hmmm, there's that same girl again, he thought to himself.

However after a few weeks, Dale was transferred. Even the store manager where they both briefly worked together, could detect the spark of romance that was developing and set up a lunch between the two of them, on Dale's last day. Dale chuckled about that and expressed gratitude for that manager as he described what happened. That lunch meeting set the stage for future encounters.

As the infatuation between the two of them grew, they would take long drives together and talk. On one such occasion Dale recalls being so lost in the conversation that he wound up driving on the wrong side of the freeway. For a while, neither of them could figure out why everyone was driving the wrong direction.

And so, their life together ends, as far as this world goes. But where did that loving relationship begin?

Dale met Mary at a training for Safeway Grocery store in Oakland CA in 1963. His attraction to her was instant. He recalls two words that described her. Very attractive. And so she was, as pictures throughout her life repeatedly reflect. Then and there, even though no one this side of heaven, knew - they became, Mary and Dale.

Dale noticed her struggling a bit with some of training material and he took that opportunity, to come along side and help. Ultimately they became helpmates to one another and lifelong partners. That seemingly simple twist of fate set in motion an endearing relationship which resulted in nearly 52 years of married life.

One of Dale's recent goals, as her life ebbed away over the last 8 years, was to achieve their 50th anniversary. To put in his words "I really wanted that to happen, she gave me that, plus a year and 9 months and that was enough." Tears welled up in his eyes, his voice faltered as he tried to regain his composure.

Later Dale mentioned, "She was always careful to look her best, her hair and makeup had to be just so. That really mattered a lot to her, that's why I put so much effort into it".

Dale knew how much that mattered to her, so he made sure it happened along with her weekly hair appointments. Hair and makeup, were two tasks, both kind and considerate. Combine them with the innumerable daily responsibilities he would ultimately assume on Mary's behalf, and you have an unmistakable demonstration of a consistently heroic effort, to care for her every need.

### Possible personal thanks

You will notice that Mary is dressed in black for both viewing and burial. Dale was slightly concerned with what others would think about that. Was that an appropriate color for the deceased? He questioned his own judgment but decided that it was the right choice. Something mattered more, a lot more than what anyone would think. It was what Mary would have wanted. He reasoned "She always liked, black. Black dresses, black high heels with pointed toes - that was her favorite outfit. I did it for her" He said. He was always concerned with her wishes and that wasn't about to stop now.

## Eulogy – Mary Porth

The phone rang. It was our nephew, Dale and Mary's son, Howard. "If you want to see Mom before she passes, you'd better hurry"! He was frantic, you could hear his voice tremble. "You'd better get here now!" he nearly demanded. I hung up.

Duetta drove and hurry we did. Unfortunately we were greeted with disappointment as we entered Escondido. Texts were sent back and forth as we traveled, until one final text arrived containing words we did not want to hear. She's gone.

Jo Ann, our sister was fortunate to be talking to her long distance, as she breathed her last breath. We weren't so fortunate.

When we entered her bedroom, Lani was assisting her lifeless body, holding a pillow under her chin. Dale insisted that she was kept looking as natural as possible. He had personally applied fresh make up, one final time as it became evident she was dying. Nothing unusual, he had done so daily for the past several years, since she was unable to do it herself. She needed fulltime assistance, and though others helped, he was the mainstay of that assistance. As she grew more and more helpless, Dale became more and more helpful.