

Thoughts of Theo

Growing up in a close, loving family of seven brought its own adventures and fun.

When Theo was born in Atlanta, I was almost three years old. I remember that little girl following along behind me as I walked in the back yard to see the cow, or up the street a short distance to see our grandparents.

We shared a big event with the rest of the family when Macmillan Publishing Company transferred Dad from Atlanta to Clinton, Mississippi to sell textbooks. Theo had not started to school - I was in 2nd grade. Dad had gone ahead to find a place for us to live, and arranged to meet us at a halfway point. Mother drove our 1928 Chevy with 5 children and our dog Snooks. I'm sure Mother was glad to reach that halfway point!

Our big, two story "plantation-style" house in Clinton offered many places for exploring and having fun - and we did just that! We did fun antics such as hiding behind the couch when Mary had a date. Or, when we were asked to pick out a cup of pecans, we would fill a cup halfway full of paper, then top it off with with pecans. I think I can truthfully say that Theo came up with her share of the ideas! We have spent many happy hours since then recalling those fun times. After ten years in Mississippi, we moved back to Atlanta, and Theo and I attended Young Harris at the same time (she at Young Harris academy, and I in the college), still enjoying interesting adventures together.

As we grew older, through marriage and parenthood, we continued to share good times as often as we could. We even had four children each, all nearly the same ages. The entire Jenkins family stayed close, managing to get together at our parents' home in Atlanta for Christmas and other occasions. But even in that close family, Theo and I shared a special bond.

When Theo was in her late 40s, she suffered a severe stroke. This left her "down," but not "out." Although paralyzed on her right side, she worked hard to live a normal life, using techniques such as writing with her left hand. Through

trips to Warm Springs and other rehabilitation, Theo learned additional skills, and even painted many pictures with her left hand. Her memory remained very good and, as I mentioned, we had lots of fun recalling many of our escapades.

For me, the most important thing about Theo was her positive attitude. People who called her were always amazed that she, who had been through so much, could make them feel so good just by hearing her voice, "Hey, honey."

I could not write these thoughts about Theo without mentioning the sweet, thoughtful husband who loved and supported Theo for 60 years. Rudy cared for her better than anyone could have imagined, and always made her feel cherished.

One memory that will always remain in my mind is my conversation with Theo during her last brief hospital stay. I had called to check on her last Sunday morning. Her daughter, Yvonne, told me what the doctors had said, and then told me that Theo was singing "Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer," and wanted to talk to me. As we talked, she continued to sing, and I joined in with her. When we finally stopped, I commented that she could always sing better than I could. Naturally, she agreed!

Recently I read some advice for dealing with a loss, "Don't think about what you have lost, but what you have had." I'm trying to do just that right now, because I have had a wonderful sister for 77 years!

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