

JOYCE ELAINE SOMHEIL ZAMBENINI. Even her name sounds melodic and genteel.

She has been called Jo, Joy, Joyce, honey, mom, mamma, mother, grandma, daughter, sister, aunt, friend, confidant.

But when we think of her, we think of grace. Webster's defines grace as simple elegance, the demonstration of courteous goodwill, or an attractively polite manner of behaving. In short, she was a true lady. But she was a lady of substance and she knew stuff and could kick people's behinds at Wheel of Fortune and Scrabble!

What I remember about Joyce when I met her as her teen-aged son's teen-aged girlfriend was that she set out to do things thoroughly and well. She took seriously her role as an Air Force wife - and this deserves a special note of gratitude for the support and time she poured into Bob's military career. She took seriously her love for Bob, love and concern for her boys, daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and her love for her own mother and family. Over the years, she demonstrated caring and acceptance to her many friends who sometimes, like her family, tested her limits.

Another thing about her that impressed me was her dedication to the study of the scriptures. She was serious and again - she *knew* things. She once told me that she did it for her boys but she didn't think it had really impacted them. I know, unequivocally, that was untrue because my late husband John, her oldest son, read his Bible every day of the 31 years that we were married as long as he was physically capable. I *know* this was because of Joyce's example and *his* Bible reading was an example to *our* children, Joyce's grandchildren. Well done, mom!

Over the years I witnessed her careful sewing and alterations of her clothing, her incredible needlepoint work that she spent countless hours creating and many of us have been blessed to receive, her home-keeping and home-making that created a welcoming environment for all who entered and the memorabilia she kept neatly organized and that we have enjoyed looking at. We found newspaper announcements of her mother's appointment to a club president in Brazil, Indiana and one announcing a surgery Joyce had on her back as a teenager. It listed her doctor, when her procedure was, her parents and how she was doing! So much for HIPPA in the 40's and 50's! Our family treasures numerous items that are carefully labeled with notes on their history and importance. She was amazing.

As her family, it is easy for us to glance past her educational and professional achievements, which were numerous, because that wasn't who she was to us. She was wife, mom, grandma. She was grace personified.

We can't overlook the many physical challenges she endured with grace and determination throughout her life. But rather than focus on those, we can rejoice - and I like that word - "RE-JOYCE" - that all those challenges were just a blink in time and now she is whole, pain free and making heaven a brighter place. Because again, she knows stuff. She knew and trusted her Heavenly Father here on earth and she is now praising him in the heavenly realms. Until we meet again, we love and miss you, mom.