

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA LINK

On November 1, 2003 (the Feast of All Saints and All Souls), the Law School family lost one of its dearest members. Barbara Ann Link, wife of **Dean Emeritus David T. Link '58, '61 J.D.**, died peacefully at her home in South Bend, surrounded by her loving family, after a courageous fight against ovarian cancer.

Barbara was born on September 8, 1937, in Sandusky, Ohio. On July 12, 1958, she married Dave Link, her high school sweetheart. Their 45-year marriage has been a lifelong testament to friendship, devotion, and faith, and an inspiration to friends and family alike. She was a loving and devoted mother to her four children—David, Mary, Maureen, and Teran.

After the birth of her fourth child, Barbara resumed her education and was one of the first female graduates of the University of Notre Dame, receiving her degree in anthropology *summa cum laude* in 1975.

Barbara lived an amazing life full of faith and service to the church community. She was very active in her parish—Little Flower, in South Bend—and served the University and Law School communities as well. She was credited with being the driving force behind her husband Dave's work, especially at the South Bend Center for the Homeless.

Here, we pay tribute to this amazing woman by sharing some thoughts and reflections from her family.



◇◇ **W**hen I was told I would have the opportunity to write something to honor my mom, I was thrilled. Finally, I'd be able to put my feelings and memories into words. That was when I stalled. How could I possibly verbalize how amazing Barbara Link was? I don't have my brother's gift for reasonable thought and I certainly don't have my dad's gift for speaking with powerful words. I realize that I may not be the one that will best describe this wonderful woman. However, lacking those above gifts is not the problem. It is impossible to fully describe my mom with words.

You could only know my mom by being in her presence. You didn't even have to speak to her. Her personality was so warm, loving, calm, and beautiful that merely being in the same room with her left you blessed. She blessed everyone she came in

The following are excerpts from the eulogy given by Barbara Link's son, David C. Link '81, '86 J.D.

When considering what to say today, three things dominated my thoughts about Mom. The first was "celebration." Celebration, because this world and each of us that she has touched is better because of her. I think it is important not to let any of the grief we feel mask the wondrous gift that God provided to us every day for 66 years. And when we think of my Mom, truly think of who she was, it is impossible for those thoughts to be anything but happy and the gift renewed.

Second, I thought of "goodness"—because Mom was simply a very good person. She exemplified goodness in friendship and in charity, and her goodness was an inspiration. Over the past few days, as people have called or visited, I have been struck by the number of extraordinary friendships my Mom made. They were extraordinary because they were built on the strongest of things: faith, trust, admiration and, above all, very sincere love. It is wonderful to see that the simple goodness of a modest woman has become greatness through the love of her friends.

She had goodness in her charity. She gave of herself: not out of duty or obligation, but because that was her nature and her heart. I have never known anyone who approached issues with such sincerity or individuals with such compassion. The lesson for us in her charity is shown by the fact that so many that she cared for became her friends—and cared for her right back in her time of struggles. And she gave quietly. My Dad tells me that she contributed to over 300 charities last year. But the most remarkable works of charity were those she gave with her time, her hands, and her heart.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Mom's goodness to me personally was the inspiration she provided. When asked to describe my heroes, I have been blessed to be able to say, with all candor and sincerity, that I have never had to look farther than my mother and my father for heroes. When I look for shining examples of success, I look to my parents first, for they have helped me to define success beyond riches and position. When I look for inspiration in my marriage, I also don't have to look any farther than my parents, who were high school sweethearts whose love only grew stronger as my mother's

contact with. I know she never realized what a gift she was to all that knew her or even those that didn't. As a kid, I would serve meals at the Hope Rescue Mission with my mom. Once we finished serving, we would make our plates and sit with some of the homeless and talk, pray, and sing. She would take me with her to teach adults to read. I'd help as she spent hours selling UNICEF cards. I would ride along as she drove senior citizens to vote, buy groceries, or get haircuts. I didn't know the meaning of waste or garage sales—things either were recycled or given away to those who needed it more. She was truly selfless, considerate, and compassionate. All of this may begin to describe how she lived her life, but none of it could explain to someone what it felt like to be hugged by her or have her squeeze your hand or to be on the receiving end of her smile.

She lived to make others happy and now, even in death, she continues to make people happy. She touched us in ways that will never fade. Not a day goes by that I don't think about how I can live by her example. Not a day goes by that I don't feel her with me as I hold my sweet baby. Not a day goes by that I don't hear her voice in my head telling me she loves me. I see her in my dad, my sisters and brother, my nieces and nephews, and my son. She continues to live in all of us. She taught me to appreciate all their different gifts and to find my own, and although we all possess very different gifts, we were all given one in common—her love. For those of you who knew her, you received it too."

— Teran Link Trauernicht

***The following poem was distributed at Barbara's funeral.
Her husband, Dave, felt it captured Barbara perfectly.***

For the Love of the World

by Charlotte Tall Mountain

For the love of a tree, she went out on a limb.
 For love of the sea, she rocked the boat.
 For love of the earth, she dug deeper.
 For love of community, she mended fences.
 For love of the Spirit, she nurtured her soul.
 For love of a good time, she sowed seeds of happiness.
 For love of the Goddess, she drew down the moon.
 For the love of nature, she made compost.
 For the love of a good meal, she gave thanks.
 For love of family, she reconciled differences.
 For the love of creativity, she entertained new possibilities.
 For the love of her enemies, she suspended judgment.
 For the love of herself, she acknowledged her worth.
And the world was richer for her.

struggles became greater. As a parent, I continue to be amazed by the trust and courage Mom and Dad gave to my sisters and me while we were growing up. Without Mom, I would never have understood the courage that loves takes.

Mom's inspiration was strongest, however, in her faith. She had the rare gift of believing in the teachings of her faith so deeply that she had the strength to live by them. In the last week, our family has been given a gift few families get. We were given time together so that my mother was able to tell each of us that she was ready for Heaven and we were able to tell her that we were happy for her. And she was happy. I spoke to her about her faith and she was able to tell me of the comfort it gave her—the comfort she had from knowing, and believing more confidently than most of us will ever believe, that this week for her was not the end of a journey, but truly the beginning of a new and glorious one. Of all her inspirations, I hope this is the one I can be brave enough to take to heart.

Finally, as I thought about Mom, I thought about family and friends. As I look at my father and my sisters, sons, nieces, and nephews, I think to myself, "Mom, you did pretty well." Over the past three days, so many of my Mom's friends have said such kind things. I have been dazzled by the impact Mom had on the people around her, on her church, and on her community. When my sisters and I were trying to find readings for today that helped to share how we felt about my Mom, Teran and I talked about the story of Jesus and the loaves and fishes and I thought how Mom was able in her life to take just a little bit of love and share it with those around her. And that love multiplied and multiplied until we had all had our fill.

We loved her and will miss her. But we will always have the inspiration of her goodness and the strength of her family and friends to carry us on. And because of these gifts, although none of us wanted to gather here today, today really is a celebration. Thank you, Mom, and thanks to all of you who have been a part of her life.