

Eulogy for Merriam Weglarz by Doug Weglarz

November 23, 2020

Good morning everyone. For those that don't know me, my name is Doug Weglarz. I am Merriam's son, along with my younger brother Greg.

On behalf of my dad and brother, thank you for joining us to celebrate Merriam's life today.

My mom was born and raised in Chicago with her sister, Mildred. She married Ed in 1963 and they moved several times in Illinois and Wisconsin. In 1972, Ed and Merriam packed up their two young boys and landed in Livonia.

They didn't realize it at the time, but they hit the jackpot by moving to Burton Hollow and attending St. Aidan. The people Ed and Merriam met in the neighborhood and at church have been life-long friends. It all started with the next-door neighbors, Bob and Pat Kemp. Pat became my mom's closest friend and Lisa, Pat's daughter, has been a life-long friend of mine. Mom was friendly with all of her neighbors. For example, when I came home last week and opened the pantry, I found a box of dog biscuits. I wondered, "Why does Mom have dog treats in the pantry?" We haven't had a dog since the 90's, they can't possibly be that old. I didn't think she was letting dad think they were

stale cookies. Turns out, Mom had them for the neighbor dog that lives behind their house.

I know she was proud of her husband and her children; but her favorite role was “Proud Grandma”. Maggie, Caraline, Joey, and Lucy could do no wrong. If they had a performance or an event, Grandma wanted to be there to cheer them on!

Mom was an excellent seamstress. She made her own wedding dress, and at least two others that I am aware of for family members. We were reminded this week that many years ago at a friend’s wedding, the bride’s train had somehow ripped on the way to the reception. Mom ran out and bought a sewing kit at the drug store and made the repair so the bride could dance the night away.

As I mentioned, having grandchildren was very important to mom, but having **GRANDDAUGHTERS** (no disrespect JOEY) allowed her to sew frilly dresses, elaborate Halloween costumes, and even intricate outfits for the American Girl dolls!

Most recently as part of her sewing guild she made 80 masks and 40 gowns for Angela Hospice.

It has been comforting to hear the many stories of how a special item that mom created has become a cherished keepsake, from a wedding money bag to a table runner and everything in between.

One of her favorite vacation spots was the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island - mom and dad were fortunate to be able to travel to Mackinac annually and stay at the Grand Hotel. No trip to Mackinac Island would be complete without bringing home fudge - there is some in the freezer if you need a treat.

Back at home, the Burton Hollow Swim Club, was her oasis. She would always be up for a game of bridge, using magnetic cards of course, or attending the water aerobics classes. She spent most summer days at the pool.

In the 1980s, Merriam ran the Mobil station at Schoolcraft and Farmington. As you can imagine, she ran a very tight ship! Greg and I had the pleasure of working for mom. Of course, we didn't get the cushy shifts. If I remember correctly, Greg worked many early Sunday mornings and I worked a lot of 3rd shifts - weekends, holidays, you name it. She also employed many of our teenaged friends who needed part-time jobs.

As many of you know, we are an auto racing family. Mom traveled to races with us for many years, and when an opportunity opened up to manage the registration office for the Detroit Grand Prix, she jumped in with both feet. Then she and Ed took the show on the road! She managed the registration office for many racing events held across North America including Cleveland, Denver, Des Moines, Grand Rapids, Miami, Vancouver, San Jose, Baltimore, Houston, Las Vegas, Chicago, and Monterrey, Mexico. Through this work, Mom made many friends and met some VIPs including Paul Newman, Joe Montana, and the Royal Family of Monaco.

At one of races, the band Motley Crue was issued VIP passes - this time Merriam was not star struck - she had no idea what Motley Crue was. The lead singer Vince Neil was racing in the support series at the time and he purchased some extra lanyards. When he gave mom \$20 to pay for them, he told her to keep the change to buy an album. We're pretty sure she bought snacks for her team instead!

Auto racing is a tight knit family - honestly I have met more friendly people in auto racing than anywhere else! When race day falls on a Sunday, religious services, including a mass, are held on the grounds of the track. This allows the drivers, their crews, and race officials to fulfill their Sunday obligation without having to leave the track. Mom

befriended the traveling priest, Fr. Phil, and would assist him when their schedules lined up. She often served as an extraordinary minister for the mass.

Every year at the Detroit Grand Prix, mass would be held early Sunday morning on Belle Isle. Dad and the rest of the volunteers knew that Merriam would be heading to mass and they had to run the show without her for a few hours. My responsibility was to ensure she got to the island in time for mass. After mass we would take a walk around the track to see what was going on and check in on the volunteers on the island. In the quiet of Sunday morning, this might be the only time mom would be on Belle Isle that weekend. Those few minutes on the island with her were the few times she and I got to spend alone together in the last few years. I will always cherish them.

As you depart from here today, know that we are overjoyed by the outpouring of love and support for my mom and dad. Please keep them in your prayers.

In the words of Winnie the Pooh

“How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”