

Frances Lucille Hardison Eulogy

Delivered by Brad Hardison, son

Thank you all for coming. I'm start my talk about my Mom at the point I feel is the most important in her life. The long love story of our Mom and Dad started when they were 17...they met at Southgate high school in LA. Mom's Dad immediately accepted my Dad thinking his last name of Hardison was Norwegian. I don't think Mom ever tried to correct him. Both went to junior college and were married right before Dad started UC Berkley. After moving, Mom worked in San Francisco as a clerk while Dad went to school and earned money on the weekends by doing yard work. Dad graduated from Berkley on a Friday and moved to Modesto the following Monday to start his job with California Chemical. Soon after, they started their family. Martin in '51, Me in '53 and Steven in '58. Mom lived a life surrounded by testosterone, first growing up with two younger brothers, Russ and Chuck, and then being blessed with 3 "perfect" boys.

After the Steven was born, and having been told she shouldn't have more kids, Mom resigned to the fact that her world was not going to be "frilly". The first clue might have been when Dad bought her a sleeping bag and hiking boots. Dad and Mom spent a number of anniversaries up in the high country on family hiking trips. The rule was, before we could go fishing (the only reason we were there), we had to set up her camp and kitchen, she would take care of the rest. I know she loved it up there, being able to read her romance novels and be with us, knowing that her boys were doing what they loved. We did the best to make their anniversaries special, once even packing in a squashed Sara lee cake.

Mom was the consummate 50/60's era homemaker. Through our younger years, she managed to keep us from killing ourselves even as we dug "we could have been buried alive" forts, played army and baseball *outside* all day, *remember when kids could do that?* We often had the mandatory afternoon nap so she could sleep knowing where we were. As I said at their 50th wedding anniversary, we grew up in the best environment where all problems seemed to be solved like a 30 minute sit-com. Ah to be a blissfully ignorant kid again. Mom did special things like bringing cupcakes to school for our birthdays. All the 4th grade girls in my class said "your mom is so pretty!". I somehow managed to take credit for that. Through our elementary school years, Mom kept track of multiple activities, whether it was for school, my clarinet practice, or Scouts. Mom bravely took on three stints as a Cub Scout den mother for us. Should have won a badge for that. When we were in high school, Mom was always interested in our activities and studies, I don't remember her ever missing any of our school or sporting events. She was there for Friday night football and would drive two hours and sit through an all day track meet in 90 degree weather to watch me run. No matter how busy or varied our schedules were, dinner was ready for us when we arrived home (even if it was Chicken Delight delivery) and she enjoyed hearing about our day. She was always there for us. I know she was proud of us.

Then came Japan. In January of 1976 Dad was transferred to Japan with Chevron International and Mom started an entirely new life. While dad traveled and worked, Mom established herself at the American Club, learning to play Mahjong and becoming a fixture due to her eight year tenure (most ex-pats stayed about 2 years). Mom accompanied Dad on adventures all over the Far East. She occasionally traveled alone which brings up a great story. My Mom was returning from South Korea after renewing her visa and was detained by the Japanese version of TSA. You can imagine where this is going. Upon seeing her "internationally stamp filled" passport and the beautiful jewelry that she always wore, they assumed that my 50 year old mother was a "working girl". (Those girls in fourth grade were right, she was pretty.) Now I have seen my mother upset, even quite mad, but I can't imagine how she was while being detained for being a "hooker" by what she termed "stupid officials"(I cleaned that up a bit). What I would give for video of that. Even in Japan, Mom couldn't get away from "hiking with the boys"....my brother Steve and I visited in the summer of 76 and they planned an excursion for all of us to climb Mount Fuji. Mom was a trooper and although she didn't make it to the top, she did survive. *At least it wasn't on an anniversary.* I think Mom loved living in Japan for three main reasons. Access to great jewelry , the six week summer vacation trips back home with stopovers in Hawaii, but most of all, she was seeing the world with her "Roy".

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Mom's first foray into being an instant grandparent was when Steve married Cheri. More testosterone joined the family in the form of Tyler and George, two little tow-headed kids that Mom accepted as her own. Four years later, she was blessed with two more instant grandchildren when Daria and I got married. Steven, another boy, and Darla, a little granddaughter. Finally a little "frilly" in her life. Mom and Dad had returned from Japan in '84 and she loved welcoming all the kids into her home in Fresno for Christmas ...she loved a full house. Darla benefitted greatly as Mom could finally scratch her itch of buying something for a girl. On Mom and Dad's 39th anniversary, my wife Daria gave birth to Karen. Mom now had the opportunity to spoil a grandchild from *birth*. You have never seen more of the color pink, stuffed animals, and fancy dresses. Nothing was off limits, and Karen grew to know that. Once her Grandma Zanetta was shopping with Karen, who was six at the time. Karen asked for an pricy miniature tea set. When Grandma Z said "no", Karen answered, "Don't worry, my other grandma will get it for me". Yes, Karen had Mom wrapped around her finger.

To close the circle that started in 1951, Dad and Mom moved back to Modesto in 2000. Steve and I were already here and Marty and Doreen moved shortly thereafter from Fresno. Yes, all of her boys were back together in Modesto with the added bonus of grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, Tyler's daughter Natalie and Darla's kids Luke and Lexi. The next years were filled with family and travel. They didn't slow down with more adventures to Norway, to see her Dad's birthplace, England, New Zealand and one final trip to Hawaii in 2011. In 2001 Daria and I started having Christmas Eve and Christmas Day here at our home, relieving Mom and my Mother-in-law of any responsibilities after their 50 years of hosting. That was tough on both of them the first year, had to make a rule, "No Moms in the kitchen". After that year Mom loved the two day party with no responsibilities...we have lots of great memories. We are so glad that they moved here.

Mom taught us what family was all about... whether having a BBQ, Sunday dinners, celebrating holidays and birthdays, or just having a sandwich after returning from a golf game, she relished in being with her "boys" and families. But her favorite "boy" of all was always her "Roy". Dad and Mom built a beautiful life together and when it came time for honoring the vow "of in sickness and in health", my Dad took that to heart and become her care giver. He was tough. Watching her diet (she cheated a lot), administering her pills and tracking her vitals. Mom often complained, but with all the griping, she knew Dad was helping her, and Dad showed unwavering patience. Dad was by her side through dialysis, during and after her kidney transplant and finally, towards the end when she only intermittently recognized him. This celebration of life is not only to remember my Mom but also to honor my Dad for sharing his life and love for Mom with us. Mom would have loved this party and whether you are family or friend, we thank you for being a part of it.