

From Becky

Dear Uncle Butch and Family,

This message has turned out to be much harder to write than I expected. My thoughts had been turning to Nana many times the couple weeks before her passing, but of course I kept procrastinating on reaching out. It had been quite some time since I'd spoken to her on the phone and I sincerely regret my hesitation to listen to my instincts, drop everything, and make an important phone call.

I trust and pray that Nana has found peace and joyful reunion with Gramps, Grandmother Marion, and other loved ones that have passed to the next world.

I feel truly fortunate that at my last visit with her I was able to introduce her to Avery, her great-great-granddaughter. Wow, that's hard to fathom.

What an incredible woman. I remember the stories of her youth, of the hard hand (to use a card playing analogy) that she was dealt with in her early years. But she, despite numerous adversities, persevered mightily and raised two of the most charming and winning children I have had the pleasure of knowing.

I remember many trips to Maine as well. Emily and I especially would eagerly hang on to her lovely bits of worldly, practical, and often earthy wisdom. I remember one hot summer day when she enthusiastically blurted out to Emily and I, "If I had your young, skinny bodies I'd strip own and run around naked!" I think at the time we, in our modest youthful innocence, were perfectly amused and horrified simultaneously. But now I find myself saying the exact same thing to Avery - except in this case Avery takes me up on it and I have to then make her put on her clothes again before someone calls child services.

I never seem to have any time to garden these days, but when I do I never fail to think of Nana. Now, when I put my hands in the earth, I hope she will be with me, guiding me, since, although I inherited her love of nature, I certainly didn't inherit her skill.

I'm sure she appreciated the photos of Avery's growing up over the years. I wish I'd had the resources to make more than that one short visit. But it was very comforting to see her enjoying her home in Edmonton, and the very obvious care and attention that Uncle Butch and Aunt Aileen lavished on her.

I spoke also to Niko on the phone recently. Niko also sends his sympathies. He was also saddened to hear of her passing, but has fond memories of the road trip Nana and Gramps took us on in the Rockies.

I've attached one of my favorite pictures of Nana and Gramps in the kitchen from the Kittery home. This is how I remember her the most. Relaxed and happy, maybe a little irreverent, maybe a little loud, maybe a little quick with her tongue. But I tell you all - I wouldn't have had her any other way. I've inherited all the bravery I have from this strong, indomitable, creative and loving woman. I imagine she's causing all sorts of fun, good-natured trouble, and rooting out all the card-playing cheaters in her new spiritual home. Go get 'em, Nana.

Love,
Becky