

From Emily

Dearest Uncle Butch & Aunt Aileen,

We hope this message finds you both surrounded by love in what must be a very emotional time. I understand the celebration of Nana's life is tomorrow and wanted to send a few more thoughts. Forgive my sending it at the 11th hour (literally! :). Feel free to pick and choose any of the following to share with others and know that we are there in spirit. Thank you so much for planning this!

Nana. What an amazing woman. My mother's mother's mother. A woman whose laughter rings in my ears. What a joy to have been her great-granddaughter. I credit her with filling me with a love of life, a sense of adventure, a deep appreciation for all flora and fauna, and a creative, can-do attitude that occasionally leads me to dig up plants and bring them home.

One of the most memorable experiences I had growing up was when my older sister and I spent a whole week with Nana and Gramps. It was 1984 and I can still taste Nana's cooking, hear her and Gramps commenting on the summer Olympics, feel the cool grass between my toes as we wandered through her garden, and taste the smell of salt water as we passed an afternoon on York Beach engaged in one of Nana's favorite pastimes: people watching. What a slice of her life I was introduced to that summer. I was so impressed by how she, and Gramps too, lived life to the fullest. She knew how to work hard and then enjoy the fruits of one's labor. She was eternally productive, courageous, and honest. During that week in 1984 and too-brief annual visits thereafter, Nana instilled in me these and so many other qualities.

As an adult I will always remember her warmth as I crossed over the threshold into motherhood. Her compassion for the very long, hard labor I had with my first baby meant so much to me; apparently she had experienced similarly. Fast-forward to this past year; what touched me most was how clearly I heard in her voice her heartfelt love for my two boys—her great-great grandsons, who unfortunately never got to meet her in person. She had shown such sincere love to my husband Scott, when we spent several days with her, Uncle Butch, & Aunt Aileen on a trip to Edmonton in 2000. Her love extended to my boys in a way that has really touched me deeply.

When I think about her soul passing to the next world, my heart is cheered knowing that she is finally reunited with her beloved Gramps. I'm sure the last eight years were not easy without him by her side and know she was ready to move on to experience the next great adventure of Life. May she now feel all our love and prayers encircle her and Gramps as we remember and celebrate her beautiful life on this earthly plane and her lasting contributions to our lives.

The following prayer from the Baha'i Writings is one that we have shared in our home for Nana's soul as she begins life in the heavenly garden of the next realm of existence:

O Lord, O Thou Whose mercy hath encompassed all, Whose forgiveness is transcendent, Whose bounty is sublime, Whose pardon and generosity are all-embracing, and the lights of Whose forgiveness are diffused throughout the world! O Lord of Glory! I entreat Thee, fervently and tearfully, to cast upon Thy handmaiden who hath ascended unto Thee the glances of the eye of Thy mercy. Robe her in the mantle of Thy grace, bright with the ornaments of the celestial Paradise, and, sheltering her beneath the tree of Thy oneness, illumine her face with the lights of Thy mercy and compassion.

Bestow upon Thy heavenly handmaiden, O God, the holy fragrances born of the spirit of Thy forgiveness. Cause her to dwell in a blissful abode, heal her griefs with the balm of Thy reunion, and, in accordance with Thy will, grant her admission to Thy holy Paradise. Let the angels of Thy loving-kindness descend successively upon her, and shelter her beneath Thy blessed Tree. Thou art, verily, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous, the All-Bountiful.

Much love and gratitude,

Emily