



Mary Ellen Swaim

FEB 16, 1947 - FEB 22, 2017



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Obituary for Mary Ellen Swaim

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Mary was born in Prineville, Oregon, the second of four children born to Howard Finch Swaim and Celia Mary Lytle Swaim. Mary's father died suddenly in 1958. When Celia married Raymond W. Doty in 1961, the family moved to The Dalles, Oregon and Mary gained four step brothers and sisters.

She graduated from The Dalles High School in 1965, attended George Fox College and Portland State University. Most of her career was in the insurance business in bookkeeping and office management in the Portland area. She also had a licensed Adult Foster Home for years in Oregon City with Donna Crawford.

Survivors include Donna J. Crawford, friend; Philip Dean Swaim (Sheila), brother, Mosier, Or; Jeremy Samuel Swaim, nephew, Montana; step-siblings Denice Henshaw (Keith), Portland; Raymond Curtis Doty, Oregon City; Estlie Emery, Washington, and many nieces, nephews and friends. She was preceded in death by her mother, father, step-father, two brothers, and a step-sister.

Memorial Service:

March 11, 11am

Oregon City Evangelical Church

1024 Linn Av



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Oregon City, OR

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Oregon City Evangelical Church or the Hope 360 Resource Center (110 Warner Milne Rd, Oregon City, OR 97045) in Mary's name.

Mary's Life Story

Mary was born in Prineville, Oregon on February 16, 1947, the second of 4 children born to Howard Finch Swaim and Celia Mary Lytle Swaim. Our father came out west in the Civilian Conservation Corp) and our mother was a descendent of pioneers who walked the Oregon Trail.

Mary had 3 brothers: Sam, Tom and Phil. Our family settled in Bend following Howard Swaim's return from WWII. When Mary was 11 years old her father died suddenly of a heart attack.

Three years later her mother married Ray Doty and with Ray's 4 children: Estlie, Sherry, Curt and Denice, the family grew to 10. On Labor Day 1961 we moved to a large Victorian house overlooking downtown The Dalles and began school the next day.

During the next 4 years, Mary added to her ever growing collection of lifelong friends. She was very active in high school where she sang in the choir, was in a girls' trio, and was treasurer of her class. Her love for Christ grew through her involvement with the Calvary Baptist Church.

In 1965 she graduated from The Dalles high school. That summer she worked on Wasco Butte fire lookout outside of Mosier. I stayed up with her in the tower for a week or so that summer. Mary called in a fire from a lightning strike as the two of us balanced on a glass insulated stool made to accommodate one person as lightning struck all around. She recently told her Monday night Growth Group that this was her all-time favorite job!

That fall, she began college at George Fox with plans to become a nurse. She was involved in choir and it was here that she was given the nickname "Mary Sunshine" by her dorm sisters. While at Fox, she added more lifelong friends.

Sadly, that June Mary suffered another great loss in her life when our brother Tom drowned in the ocean 3 days after his high school graduation. She moved home for the summer to be with her mother, and worked in the concession stand at the drive in theater and as a maid in a small motel.



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Mary later moved to downtown Portland. She worked at Rhodes Department Store as a cashier and hostess in the coffee shop, and also at Lippman Wolf Department Store. She then began her career in the insurance business. She was employed by Mutual Benefit Life Ins. for more than 20 years in bookkeeping, payroll and office management. She later worked for Sterling Bank and several other companies in similar positions. Mary rarely had to look for employment because her reputation and personal skills resulted in companies seeking her out.

During Mary's time in Portland she took guitar classes taught by - guess who?? Donna Crawford!! In 1982 team Mary and Donna established an adult foster home in Oregon City for as many as 5 residents with developmental and/or physical disabilities.

Mary's church family, and their Monday night Bible study group, was of utmost importance. She was a member of the church choir for over 30 years, and was honored last year as Choir Member of the Year.

She loved to sing and knew all the verses to all the old hymns. Also, she loved to surprise us with songs for every occasion, like the "One Legged Chicken," "The Brown Cow that gave Chocolate Milk," and the "Sneaky Snake."

An early memory for me was with our brother Sam at his piano recitals. He would accompany Mary, Tom and I as we sang such great hits as "Frosty the Snowman," "The Easter Parade," and "He's Got The Whole World In His Hands." Mary was 8 and I was 4.

Now for some other fun stuff about the "essence of Mary" that some of you here today might relate to:

At the age of 2, it was obvious Mary had a strong will. One Sunday morning after her mother placed her in the church nursery, where she hadn't wanted to go, Mary proceeded to eat her dress. She never had to go to the nursery again!

Being the baby of the family, she made sure I used the crayon in my right hand, not the hand I was comfortable in using.

Whenever Mary had occasion to get to Bend, she liked to go by her childhood home to see if the Chicken-Dirty tree was still standing. This was the tree in the backyard that the chickens would



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roost in at night and that she and her brothers climbed and played in by day, racing up to the top roost. She would also reminisce about Herkimer, her pet guard goose and some of his antics. Herkimer liked to attack feet, so our mother had to wear galoshes while hanging out the laundry.

During Mary's high school years, she could be seen driving several friends around in a '51 red Chevy panel truck, with a spare tire for the shotgun seat and folding chairs in the back for additional passengers.

Sometimes Mary had more confidence in her friends than she should have had. She convinced one friend who had NEVER cut anyone's hair that she could and should cut Mary's long, blond hair. It resulted in an incredibly short and irregular new style!

While Mary had a somewhat sweet and innocent reputation, there was a side of her that delighted in tomfoolery! In college, according to some of her dorm sisters, Mary was noted for coming up with prank ideas, then would gleefully sit back and watch her recruits become the pranksters. She wasn't going to get caught!

At home, Mary bonded with naughty and difficult pets! She loved her little dog Jessie, and Tigre Rose the cat.

Mary had a unique talent that she shared upon occasion. She would extend her tongue, reach up and touch it to her little button nose. This was the same tongue that was notorious for licking plates clean, even in public places! One of her college friends was recently wondering if she was able to get all the Monday night group members doing the same?!

In summary, Mary was a list maker. So here is a list of some of the things Mary loved most:

Jesus Christ

Family

Forever Friends

Hospitality



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Serving People in a variety of ways

Taking people to lunch

Giving away tickets to the Singing Christmas Tree

Running the kitchen for Vacation Bible School

Singing

Sending cards

Playing games

Flowers (if she didn't have to get her hands dirty producing them!)

Children, especially nieces and nephews

Organizing gatherings

Traveling

Laughing

Reading

Disneyland

Color

LIFE!

Most of all, Mary loved the Lord. She was humble, kind, generous, and loving. She went out of her way to help others and gave of herself completely. Her sense of humor, wisdom and joy



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touched everyone she met. Her smile would light up the room!

READ BY: Mary's brother Phil



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BA

Bertie Adrian posted:

Mary will always be one of the dearest people I have known. I so much look forward to seeing her again in Heaven where we will share eternal JOY.

April 16 at 5:00 PM

TF

The Elton Family posted:

My family and I would like to express our deepest sympathy over the loss of Mary. May you find comfort in your loving memories and the warmth of family and friends. A scripture that has uplifted many who have experienced such a loss, is found at Revelation 21:4. There it describes a time when death and pain will be gone forever. We will even see our loved ones again who we have lost in death (John 5:28 & 29). It is our hope that these words bring you a measure of comfort during this difficult time as well. Once again, please accept our condolences as you deal with your loss.

February 27 at 5:00 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Mary by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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