

Eulogy for Annette Tallman

Passed away December 19, 1998

I will begin the eulogy for Annette Tallman by sharing with you what many consider the most beautiful blessing in the Talmud.

When Rabbi Nachman and Rabbi Itzchak were about to part, Rabbi Nachman asked Rabbi Itzchak to bless him. Rabbi Itzchak replied: "Let me tell you a parable. To what may this be compared? To a man who was traveling in the desert. He was hungry, tired and thirsty, when suddenly he came upon a tree whose fruits were sweet, its shade pleasant, and a stream of water was flowing beneath it. The man ate of the tree's fruits, drank of the water, and sat in the tree's shade. When he was about to continue his journey, he turned to the tree and said: Tree, O Tree, with what shall I bless you? Shall I say to you may your fruits be sweet? They are already sweet. That your shade be pleasant? It is already pleasant. That a stream of water flow by you? A stream of water already flows by you.

Therefore this is my blessing, "May it be God's will that all the shoots planted from you be just like you."

"So it is with you," Rabbi Itzchak said to Rabbi Nachman. "With what shall I bless you? Shall I wish you Torah learning? You already have learning. Wealth? You already have wealth. Children? You already have children.

"Therefore, this is my blessing: May it be God's will that your offspring will be like you."

After spending time with Annette's family yesterday, and hearing of the love and devotion she gave to them and the reverence they have for her, I know that she too has received this blessing.

To her children she was more than a mother, she was a best friend. There was a bond that existed between mother and daughter, and mother and sons, that was closer than in most families today. It was a bond that Annette experienced growing up in Winnipeg with her own parents. Parents who gave her the best they could including a Jewish school education, and the support to continue studies in Chicago that led to a University degree. They also instilled in her a work ethic that saw her rise to important and responsible positions with the Attorney-General's department in Manitoba.

In 1958, shortly after her marriage to Allan, she moved to Edmonton where she not only devoted herself to the family business, but was also a full-time mother to her three children, David, Craig and Gayle. They all remember how hard their mother pushed them as they began their education. All three of them completed Talmud Torah, something very important to Annette. They remember with fondness how they could never put anything over on their mother. If they tried to keep her from finding out about some bad behavior or a problem with a grade, she would also tell them that "A little birdie told her something" and proceeded to do what was necessary to solve the situation. She always encouraged her children to do better because she wanted them to have every opportunity that she had and more.

The Tallman's were a close family that experienced life together. They went on family vacations throughout North America, including visits to every wild west ghost town from here to Phoenix. This closeness allowed Annette to guide her children in positive directions as she always gave them advice, but by giving it with love, it was remembered and accepted.

She was a woman that you could talk to, and you could share your thoughts and ideas with because you know she listened and she cared. She was the kind of a mother that her children's friends went to for advice and help and she welcomed them all as if they were part of her family.

Annette did not have a large circle of friends, but the friends she had were very close and special to her. Her long time mah jong partners will especially miss her on Monday nights.

But the story of Annette's life really revolves around her children. She loved them deeply and they knew it. Even more important - they loved her deeply and she knew it. It was Annette who kept the traditions of lighting the Shabbat candles and of gathering together as a family for meals on every Jewish holiday, alive for her family. While she wasn't afraid to give advice or tell them how she felt, she was also a true Jewish mother who would do anything for her family. She was an incredible cook, she was a referee, she was a best friend. She took pride in her son's business accomplishments and in Gayle's work for the Jewish community especially in the area of Holocaust Education.

She spoke on the phone with David every day, and just recently moved into a new home that Gayle and Craig bought just a few blocks from David and his family. She loved flowers and this summer bought rose bushes for her new home that will bloom for the first time this spring.

Annette worked hard at everything she did. She didn't know how to say no and always pushed herself to the limit. Ultimately this may have contributed to her sudden and untimely passing. She gave her love and she received love, even at the end when she was comforted in Gayle's arms after she collapsed and was soon surrounded by family at the hospital.

The memories her family have of her will be a blessing. She is remembered today by her father Sam Kass and her brother Allan and sister-in-law Brenda, as well as nephews, cousins and friends from Winnipeg. In Edmonton she is mourned by her husband Allan, her son David and his wife Barb and their children, John and Shane, and her son Craig and her daughter Gayle. She will also be missed by her close friend of 30 years Helena Wiber of Vancouver.

Her life will be remembered in so many ways; in the compassion she showed to friends, the special laugh that brought joy to so many, in her flowers that will bloom this spring.

And we will remember her through her greatest blessing to all of us; her children who have inherited so much of their mothers passion for devotion to family and friends. We are assured that Annette's legacy will flourish for many years to come.

I conclude with a Tribute to Mothers written by David L. Weatherford, that Annette's children have asked me to read which expresses so beautifully their appreciation for their mother.