

Eulogy - Remembering Mom by Susann Glenn

Hello everyone. And welcome. I am Susann Glenn, the very proud daughter-in-law of Mariglyn Glenn. On behalf of our entire family, thank you all for being here today. And, before I say anything else, I should probably explain why we just listened to Roy Orbison. Mom grew up in Wink, Texas, with Roy. She loved telling stories about school assemblies where he would get up and sing. She always said they gave him a standing ovation, not because they loved every song, but because if they kept applauding, he'd sing another one.

And if he sang another one... then they didn't have to go back to class.

That was very much a Mariglyn story.

She had this wonderful way of finding the humor in everyday life, and she loved sharing those little stories that made people smile.

And that's really what I'd like to do today.

I'd like to share a few stories about the woman I was blessed to call my mother-in-law.

The wonderful thing about a room like this is that every one of us knew a different side of her.

Some of you knew the teacher.

Some knew the volunteer.

Some knew the leader.

Some knew the mentor.
Some of you knew the woman cheering loudly in the bleachers.

I had the privilege of knowing her as my family, and of calling her mom.

So today, I'd like to share a few memories, not because they tell the whole story of her life, but because together they paint a picture of the woman I loved.

When I became part of this family, I came with a few strings attached.

Two of them, actually.

Those strings are known as Parker and Noel.

For some, that might be seen as baggage. But not mom.

Mariglyn saw blessings.

She never cared about what was behind us.

She only saw what was ahead of us.

From the very beginning, she made us feel like we belonged.

I realize she spent most of her life doing exactly that.

She had an extraordinary gift for making people feel like they belonged.

When she was talking with you, you honestly felt like you were the only person in the room.

She wasn't thinking about what was next on her calendar or looking over your shoulder to see who had just walked in.

For those few moments, you had all of her attention.

She made you feel completely seen.

Completely valued.

Completely loved.

I was lucky enough to experience that over and over again. For example;

She would leave me little notes, sometimes tucked into a birthday card, sometimes on my desk after visiting me at work, sometimes for no special occasion at all.

They almost always told me how proud she was of me.

But there was one thing she wrote over and over that touched me every single time.

She would tell me that she knew my own Momma would be proud of me.

Those words meant more than I can ever explain.

She knew exactly what my heart needed to hear.

I know now, those notes weren't really about me.

They were another way she was saying...

"You belong here."

"You're loved here."

"You're family."

That's who Mariglyn was.

She believed in people.

She had an incredible way of seeing potential where others saw ordinary.

She encouraged more than she corrected.

She celebrated more than she criticized.

She had confidence and certainty that you could do more than you thought you could.

I know that's what made her such an extraordinary teacher.

And that's because long before she ever stepped into a classroom, someone had done the same for her.

Her high school debate coach recognized something special in a young girl, all the way from Wink, Texas, nurtured her love of learning, and helped her discover gifts she may not have fully seen in herself.

Mom never forgot that.

She spent the rest of her life doing for others what someone had once done for her.

Whether it was a student, a neighbor, a friend, one of her grandchildren, or someone she had just met, she had a remarkable way of leaving people more confident, more curious, and more hopeful than she found them.

She had a way of turning ordinary moments into lasting memories.

One of my favorites started with a shopping bag from Macy's.

After raising three boys, she didn't make it a secret that she was thrilled to finally have a daughter and a granddaughter to shop with.

And boy... did we shop... sorry, Dad.

One of the very first words Noel learned to read involved a Macy's shopping bag.

Mom would hold it up and ask, "Noel, what does it say?"

Without missing a beat, Noel would answer, "It says...presents."

Not "Macy's." "Presents."

That pretty much tells you everything you need to know about Grandma.

She found joy in giving.

Christmas at her house wasn't just Christmas.

It was what we affectionately called "Out of Control Christmas."

There were presents everywhere, and I do mean EVERYWHERE. Sometimes the numbering system was off, so she had to go buy more.

Matching pajamas for the grandkids.

Christmas music playing from the moment you walked through the door.

Her homemade wassail simmering on the stove.

Laughter filling every room.

She had a special way of making every person in that house feel like Christmas had been planned just for them.

But that wasn't something she saved for Christmas.

She did that every day. It was just her way, it was just who she was.

One of the greatest blessings Ron and I ever experienced was raising our family just next door to Mariglyn and Stephen for more than twenty years.

Now, I'll go ahead and say out loud what many of you are probably thinking.

How do a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law live next door to each other for more than twenty years?

Especially when they're both strong, independent women.

That sounds like the beginning of a sitcom, right? Maybe some days it was.

But really, for us, it was the greatest gift of our lives.

Mom made sure that our part of Encino Ct. felt like the safest place in the world.

She was gracious.

She respected boundaries.

She loved having her grandchildren, and more recently, her great-grandson, just a few steps away.

She was always creating little moments for them.

The phone would ring, and they knew exactly who it was.

"Grandma wants us to come over."

Sometimes it was to order books together because Grandma believed books could open up entire worlds.

Sometimes, and especially for the granddaughter, it was to browse Amazon together. Stephen always joked that Mariglyn single-handedly kept Amazon in business.

But, she wasn't just helping them pick out books or clothes. She was spending time with them.

She was listening to them. Laughing with them.

Making each one feel special.

Music was another gift she wanted to pass on.

She also insisted that every one of the grandchildren learn on a real piano—not a keyboard. Parker, Noel, Elizabeth, and Catherine all learned to play, and music became part of who they are. Claire and Charlotte now have the piano she learned on as a little girl.

That was Mom's special way.

Books became memories.

Shopping became conversations.

Piano lessons became a lifelong love of music.

She never needed a special occasion to make someone feel special.

She believed the most meaningful gifts weren't things at all.

They were experiences.

They were traditions.

They were the moments that became family stories.

That's why she was always creating opportunities to be together.

Grandma and Grandpa also loved taking the grandchildren on adventures.

One trip took them to Fiesta Texas.

Now, I don't know if you've ever been there, but there are some serious roller coasters.

Grandma rode every single one of them with Parker.

Every. Single. One.

And probably more than once.

That was Mom.

She didn't stand on the sidelines.

She jumped in.

She didn't watch life pass her by.

She climbed in.

Whether it was a roller coaster, a new adventure with Stephen, or one of life's most difficult seasons, she met it with courage, faith, and quiet strength.

And that's one of the things I admired most about the life she and Stephen built together.

One of my favorite stories comes from their early years together.

When Stephen was in graduate school at Rice, they would get on the motorcycle; did you hear that? A MOTORCYCLE. They'd pack a picnic lunch and ride around Houston.

Often, they'd end up alongside the Southwest Freeway to eat lunch together, enjoying the beautiful scenery of Houston traffic.

Who does that? The Southwest Freeway?

Well, they did.

That's the kind of joy they found together.

They didn't need extravagant plans.

They just loved being together. They only needed each other.

Through every season of life, they were true partners, raising a family, serving others, celebrating, grieving, but always together, always choosing one another.

The beautiful thing about a life like Mariglyn's is that no one person can tell the whole story.

I know that every person in this room could stand up and tell a different story.

A former student.

A fellow teacher.

A Houston Symphony friend.

A church friend.

A Clear Creek Wildcat football player.

A neighbor.

One of her grandchildren.

One of the many lives she quietly encouraged.

Each story would be different.

But I think they would all end the same way.

Because somehow, after spending time with Mariglyn, you always left feeling a little more like yourself.

You felt encouraged.

You felt loved.

You felt like you belonged.

That's an extraordinary legacy.

And now I want to say this directly to mom.

Mom...

Thank you for opening your heart to me from the very beginning.

Thank you for spending the rest of your life reminding me that I belonged.

Thank you for believing in all of us.

Thank you for celebrating our victories.

Thank you for making ordinary days feel special.

Thank you for every handwritten note...

Every shopping trip...

Every holiday...

Every book...

Every piano lesson...

Every roller coaster...

Every quiet reminder that we were loved.

These stories are only a few threads in the beautiful tapestry of your life.

Every person here is holding another thread.

Together they tell the story of a woman who made every one of us feel like we mattered.

A woman who made us feel like we belonged.

We love you, Mom.

Thank you.