
LAMENTATIONS

Issue 112

middle

May, 2007

As most of you know, May is the toughest month of the year for me and to so many of you too. It starts with Mother's Day... the one Sunday of the year that I do not attend church. I had a terrible experience on the first Mother's Day, so I observe that day in my own quiet way without having to watch others celebrating this special day set aside to honor those who are mothers. Until just a few years ago, I would say that I was a mother, but now I realize that "I am a mother"...but a childless mother.

Mother's Day is followed by graduation at our son's high school. As you know, Young Jim was killed on Honor's Day, the day before his high school graduation. We now give scholarships in his memory on Honor's Day. This year we will be giving 13 to students who plan to attend the University of the Cumberland (formerly Cumberland College). Each student is given a medallion with Jim's name, birth and angel dates, the student's name, and the year it is given. They are to wear the medallion at their high school graduation and then to their college graduation. These medallions are presented to the students by a former recipient. When they graduate from Cumberland, they receive a crystal horse with Jim's name and their names on it and the year they graduate. As of this month, we have given 72 scholarships.

At the baccalaureate this year, we will place 18 orangish-red roses and 16 white roses in the church. The orangish-red roses represent the years of his life and the white roses represent the number of years since his death.

May 20 is young Jim's death date. Young Jim was buried May 23rd, the day before our wedding anniversary. It has been 16 years since his death, and I can tell you that I still miss him so much, but I have found joy in my heart and can celebrate his life because he was such a great kid and I wish you could have known him.

JUST A MOM? (Author unknown)

A woman, renewing her driver's license at the County Clerk's office was asked by the woman recorder to state her occupation.

She hesitated, uncertain how to classify herself.

"What I mean is," explained the recorder, "do you have a job or are you just a.....?"

"Of course I have a job," snapped the woman. "I'm a Mom."

"We don't list 'Mom' as an occupation, 'housewife' covers it," said the recorder emphatically.

I forgot all about her story until one day I found myself in the same situation, this time at our own Town Hall.

The Clerk was obviously a career woman, poised, efficient and possessed of a high sounding title like, "Official Interrogator" or "Town Registrar."

"What is your occupation?" she probed.

What made me say it? I do not know. The words simply popped out. "I'm a Research Associate in the field of Child Development and Human Relations."

The clerk paused, ball-point pen frozen in midair and looked up as though she had not heard right. I repeated the title slowly emphasizing the most significant words.

Then I stared with wonder as my pronouncement was written, in bold, black ink on the official questionnaire.

"Might I ask," said the clerk with new interest, "just what you do in your field?"

Coolly, without any trace of fluster in my voice, I heard myself reply, "I have a continuing program of research, (what mother doesn't) in the laboratory and in the field, (normally I would have said indoors and out). I'm working for my Masters, (first the Lord and then the whole family) and already have four credits (all daughters). Of course, the job is one of the most demanding in the humanities, (any mother care to disagree?) and I often work 14 hours a day, (24 is more like it).

But the job is more challenging than most run-of-the-mill careers and the rewards are more of a satisfaction rather than just money."

There was an increasing note of respect in the clerk's voice as she completed the form, stood up and personally ushered me to the door.

As I drove into our driveway, buoyed up by my glamorous new career, I was greeted by my lab assistants -- ages 13, 7, and 3. Upstairs I could hear our new experimental model, (a 6 month old baby) in the child

development program, testing out a new vocal pattern. I felt I had scored a beat on bureaucracy! And I had gone on the official records as someone more distinguished and indispensable to mankind than "just another Mom." Motherhood!

What a glorious career! Especially when there's a title on the door. Does this make grandmothers "Senior Research associates in the field of Child Development and Human Relations" and great grandmothers "Executive Senior Research Associates?" I think so!!! I also think it makes Aunts "Associate Research Assistants."

Grief Grafts

Gene & Donna Loughridge's daughter, Kristen Teran (12-12-82), completed suicide, 12-28-05.

Donna wrote Rosemary Smith to get information about the "Space Between Breaths" documentary premiere. This was her statement to Rosemary:

I am still at the space between breaths over the loss of my daughter. I would very much like to see this film.

I wrote Donna to see if she had received Rosemary's grief packet:

Dinah,

I just received Rosemary's package today. Her note to me described exactly how I feel right now. I really don't want to go on living. I just want to be able to hug Kristen again. It touched my heart that Rosemary and other parents have put so much of their love for their children into this quest to help others through their grief. You can see my daughter Kristen on her memorial website: (I hope you will read about this beautiful young lady.)

<http://kristen-teran.memory-of.com/about.aspx>

None of us are in the same place with our grief. After I received this email from Donna I told her that I was almost 16 years into my grief and that is the reason we see our loss in such a different way:

The last time I saw Kristen was Christmas morning 2005. She had spent Christmas Eve night with us. I hugged her and told her I loved her. She was getting ready to go to work. I talked to her by phone a few hours before she died. She never hinted that she was depressed. She did not seem depressed on Christmas day. She purchased a shotgun at a local pawn shop the afternoon of December 28th and killed herself on the balcony of her apartment after a fight with her boyfriend.

I despise this world we live in. I'm just not where you are yet in my grief journey.

Blessings,

Donna Loughridge

I explained to Donna that counseling, reading about grief, and talking with other bereaved parents had helped me more than anything else:

I have found reading about grief, the loss of a daughter, and that loss through suicide has helped me. I have to take it in manageable doses because I am easily depressed. Counseling and support groups have not helped. Maybe because it's still too raw. I went to two Heartbeat sessions and found it was much worse for me to hear all the gut-wrenching stories about others losing their loved ones to suicide. I may try a local chapter of TCF. After reading some of their materials, it may be a better fit for me to share with others who have lost their children.

Donna explained the difference in losses:

You are right about the difference between loss of a parent and loss of a child. I lost my father in 2000, my mother in 2002, my brother in 2004 and my daughter in 2005. Nothing prepared me for the loss of my beautiful daughter. I will never be the same.

Kristen's symbol would be a cat. Her initials were KAT and she used to dress like a cat on Halloween. She loved our four cats. Butterflies are on Kristen's website because she is now released from the cares of this world and her spirit flies in Heaven.

I appreciate you sending cards to people on their children's angel dates. There are three people at my work who lost loved ones to suicide. I

gave a card and inspirational poem to one who lost her daughter Karen. No one can truly share unless he/she has walked that sad path.

Certainly you can add Kristen to the "Birth and Angel Dates" and "Fellow Travelers" websites. I want Kristen's life to be remembered for her unique self. Someday I hope I can focus on that and not how she died.

I have many wonderful memories of Kristen when she was growing up. It was only when she became a teenager that she started to become a very unhappy person. Kristen was very private, so if I ever crossed the line to ask a personal question, I was always rebuffed.

You may include Kristen's information in your newsletter. I noticed another POS member in your website. She lost her daughter to suicide. I've never talked to her on POS, but I visited her daughter's memorial website. What a joy her daughter must be to her. I have not placed information on Kristen's website about her suicide because I don't want to trigger copy-cat suicides. Also I want Kristen to be remembered for the funny, caring, independent spirit she had, not for how she died.

Suicide and mental illness are very misunderstood, indicative of a society that truly doesn't comprehend that mental illness is a disease like cancer. Hopefully, some day there will be a cure. It's quite devastating for the entire family.

*Blessings,
Donna*

Kristen's symbol is a cat.

**Don & Dona Robertson's son, David Haizlip (9-21-75),
completed suicide, 3-26-00.**

Dear Dinah,

It was a pleasant gift to find your sweet remembrance note in my mail when I returned home Thursday from my "annual running away" trip to Key West that I have taken every year during the time surrounding Davey's Memorial Date. I love the sentiments that the card shares.

Thank you again for all your kindnesses. I do so hope I can make it to one of J.I.M.'s Conferences soon. This year I have conflicts unfortunately, but please keep me advised.

Love,

*Dona Robertson
Mother of David (09-21-75 / 03-26-00)
In the presence of an absence
It only hurts when I breathe
My heart only breaks when it beats*

I think of Davey fishing in the mountains or in a canoe.

Davey's symbols are a man fishing in a canoe with mountains in the background.

Don & Sandy Drake's son, Eric (1-22-81), completed suicide, 2-3-05.

Dear Dinah,

I'm sorry it has taken me so long to thank you for remembering us on Eric's birthday, January 22nd and his "angel date" as you have so appropriately named (Feb. 3rd). From November through February, I feel like I'm stuck in a deep freezer. Just getting through the events in those two and a half months is all I can manage. My letter-writing is non-existent.

I love the cards you create as the pictures so remind me of Eric. Anything that has to do with the sky, sunrise/sunset or the environment is dealing with his geography major/meteorology emphasis. At one time Eric had even considered going back to college to pursue a Meteorology degree.

I am looking forward to J.I.M.'s Conference. There is no way to express what this Conference (May 2005) did for my well-being. I honestly don't know how I would have survived! To this day, I still draw on the strength I saw exhibited through you and all the members on the panel discussion and in the sessions I attended. I know I have to make a choice to move on, but many days my mind and heart do not cooperate.

I do try to share my experience from J.I.M.'s Conference with others who have unfortunately shared the same kind of loss.

I ordered 6 tickets to Rosemary's Documentary- all except one for me will go to those who have since experienced the loss of their sons; some to accidental deaths, others to suicides.

Don and I continue to approach our accepting Eric's death in our own way. I give him his space - I have mine.

Also, due to the fact we are pursuing a medical malpractice suit is another thing that drives us some days and other days it's crushing.

A bittersweet turn of events is that one of our "expert" witnesses is a doctor whom we have found is recognized world-wide in the field of psychiatry. We're ending up with the "best" - a place where we once thought if we got Eric to Parthenon Pavilion in Nashville, TN, then he would receive the care and treatment that would get him through this depression. I had always heard this was the "place" to go if you had any problem dealing with the mind.

So, ending up where we tried so hard to begin is, on the one hand, heart-breaking, but, on the other hand, just what we need to "hopefully" prove medical malpractice.

I didn't mean to go into all this, but Don and I freely share what happened with Eric while under the care of a "doctor" at Parthenon. Don and I tried to stay on top of things during this time, but we just didn't know how - we didn't know the questions to ask. Eric was even released while being on suicide watch in the hospital. We didn't even know he was on suicide watch until a month after his death. So, any information we can share to help another parent in this type of situation - we do - we talk! Something took hold of Eric in October, 2004, and by February 3, 2005, it had consumed him to the point that he took his own life. From reading his last letter to us, we knew he didn't want to go through with this. There were no previous problems or anything identified in his past or in our family history that can be seen as a role in creating what happened to him after graduating from Western Kentucky University in May, 2004.

Again, thank you for all your energy in helping all of us on this journey we would rather not be on.

*Love,
Sandy Drake*

Eric's symbols are a smile and a piano.

Marvin & Jean Lynn's son, Ben Snoddy (2-21-68), died from Sepsis, 3-2-02.

Jean wrote this poem to Ben:

*If I could see you one more time
it wouldn't be enough
I long to hear your voice and ruffle your hair like I used to do.
And just one more of your practical
jokes wouldn't fill our lives. I miss you as much today as I did yesterday
and I am sure I will miss you as much tomorrow
You are always in my heart and prayers*

Mom

Ben loved elephants!!!

Ben's website is: www.geocities.com/jaylyn9/Ben.html

Ben's symbol is an elephant.

John & Gail Minger's son, Michael (6-24-79), died in an arson fire in his college dorm at Murray State University, 9-18-98.

Since Michael's death, Gail has worked tirelessly, alerting the public that arson is a serious concern on college campuses. She has eloquently illustrated that if colleges abide by the law there are safeguards in place which can avoid senseless tragedies. Gail has single-handedly convinced Kentucky legislators to implement legislation to enforce sanctions that will make it harder for colleges to hide crime and to avoid being negligent in responding to hazardous situations. Gail was awarded the 1999-2000 Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Award. This award was established in 1994, and is presented each year by Howard & Connie Clery to honor schools and individuals that have done extraordinary things to make college and university students safer. The award is named in memory of the Clerys' daughter Jeanne who was murdered on campus in 1986. Recipients are

selected each year by Howard and Connie Clery and awarded by Security On Campus, Inc.

On March 28, 2000 the then, Kentucky Governor, Paul Patton (D), flanked by members of the Minger family and other supporters, signed [House Bill 322](#), the Michael Minger Act into law. Gail is now Chair of Governor Ernie Fletcher's (R) Task Force For Campus Safety.

For more information about this Law you can click on this website:
<http://www.securityoncampus.org/schools/mingeract/index.html>

Michael was music major at Murray State University and a 1997 graduate of Niceville High School. While at Niceville High School, he was a member of the Latin Club, the student council, and Bible study club and excelled in school music programs. Michael had an exceptional voice, and his voice earned him a spot singing in the Pensacola Symphony and earlier a place in the American Boy Choir. Dr. Bradley Almquist, director of choral activities at the university said, "He adored opera and loved to sing and aspired to be an anchor on the campus television station and eventually become a sportscaster." The Rev. Carolyn West, vicar of St. John's Episcopal Church near the campus, said: "Michael was a faithful member, always friendly, and had a wonderful excitement about life. He will be greatly missed from our church family."

Michael's symbol is music.

Dave & Melisa Fossier's daughter, Natalie (3-4-96), was killed when a tree limb fell on her, 2-13-07.

I had sent the Fossiers a card when I heard of Natalie's death. Melisa's grief sounds familiar to all of us:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you for the card. I am looking forward to meeting you at the documentary premiere and J.I.M.'s Conference.

I'm having a hard time; it's been seven weeks since we lost our Natalie. Oh boy, do I miss her. I am lost, torn-up and trying to figure which direction I need to head.

I know I am never going to be the same person and I know I will never fully get over her not being with me. I also realize that I have another son, and two beautiful granddaughters, a daughter-in-law and my husband, along with his parents that are the most loving people I know. It's not fair for them to see me lose myself even more. They are all worried about me because I cry a lot. I can't help it, I'm so sad. I love them all very much also. My mind is preoccupied with Natalie.

I am sending a couple of photos of her and I'll tell you a little about her also. Natalie Paige Fossier was born May 4, 1997. She was the perfect child-ask anyone that knew her. She loved nature and the outdoors. She was a straight A student in school. Her pastime was reading. She loved family and holidays. She enjoyed eating vegetables, even when other kids didn't even try them, she never turned away a healthy meal. She was an animal lover, mostly dogs. She had a dog of her own named Angel. Angel somehow escaped the accident. I don't know how because the sled Natalie had made out of a box was smashed. Angel was okay.

Natalie was a fourth grader; shy and very well mannered. I always said she had an old soul.

David and I are raising Angel now.

*Thanks,
Melisa*

Natalie's symbol is a butterfly.

Ralph & Carol Renfro's son, Matt (3-26-77), was killed in an auto accident, 11-24-00.

Carol sent an Easter card with this note:

Dinah,

Thank you so much for remembering Matt. You are a special person to think of so many people. Bless your heart. I (or we) like the card you sent on Matt's angel date last year. We often look at it and talk about the

clouds. I tell Ralph that Matt is up there pushing the clouds around. I'm sure your Jim is there helping shape them too.

We hope you and your husband are doing okay. We have to, don't we?

*Sincerely,
Carol*

I shared with Carol that I love to look at the clouds and see all kinds of funny things in them. Now I know why, our children are having a good time. Not too long ago, I know you aren't going to believe this, but I saw a Pegasus in the clouds. One wing was bent, but that would be Young Jim. He is not perfect, but he gives me a boost like that when I need it the most. What do you see in the clouds? They are amazing to watch.

Matt's symbol is a football with #90.

Esther Fitch's son, Matt (3-26-77), was killed in an auto accident, 11-24-00.

Esther sent this note, again reminding me of how important it is for us to contact each other on our children's birth and angel dates:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for the card you sent me. When I opened the card and the birds fell out, I cried. (David's symbols are birds) It was like the birds fluttered and the words were being spoken from my son's own mouth.

It was an especially hard day for me but when I received your card, I felt it was an answer to what I was asking all day and that was, "David, my son, where are you?"

I had been so depressed, but felt such joy after that, thanks to you. Also, I had not seen any birds for about four days and thought, "Am I not going to see them anymore?" I asked, "Have you left me, David, because I'll never leave you?" I was feeling so down. After opening your card and crying that flood of tears and then feeling so lifted and at peace, lo and behold, when I went outside, birds suddenly came from all directions and circled over me.

It made me realize God was working behind the scenes all along and through you, He showed me this. I needed to be reminded.

From the bottom of my heart, I again thank you. God bless you always.

Love,

Esther

P.S. It also gives me such comfort to know David will be remembered on his birthday, October 20th. What a caring group of people The Compassionate Friends are.

David's symbols are birds.

Don & Kathy Bell's son, Michael (4-9-82), was killed in an auto accident, 9-19-99.

Kathy received a telephone call we would all love to receive on our child's birth and/or angel date:

Thank you Dinah for all you do. Michael would be 25 today. The last birthday he celebrated on earth was his 17th in 1999. I got a call tonight from the mother of one of his friends. His friend, with teary eyes, reminded his mother that it was Michael's birthday. (Tomorrow is his father's birthday so it's easy to remember.) He was going to a restaurant to meet another friend and told his mother that they meet every year on Michael's birthday to reminisce. This is the first time he had told her so she called me. This was a sweet call on his birthday. Your email, even though you didn't know Michael, is just as sweet to my heart.

Kathy Bell

Michael's symbol is a ray of sunshine.

Lizanne O'Toole & Louis McIntyre's daughter, Fallon McIntyre (3-3-02), died from brain and spinal cancer, 6-21-04.

Lizanne sent me a preview copy of a song written for Fallon and the following letter:

Hi Dinah,

Lisa Lynne Mathis wrote a song entitled "The Greatest Embrace" based on conversations that I had with another girlfriend regarding Fallon. The song is Fallon talking to me. Fallon's song is #10 on the album, **Hancock Place**.

I just know this song is going to be a huge success and will resonate with many. The song, hopefully, will inspire hope in those who have none... I know that when I pass, I will receive the biggest and best hug ever from Fallon (The Greatest Embrace) and I so look forward to that day, but I must wait because I have not been "called" to leave just yet.

I'd love to hear your view and assessment. She has a beautiful voice and I plan to do much with the song. (I have already begun a book.)

Thank you for taking the time to listen. I think her whole album is a homerun, but I am a tad bit biased.

Your fellow traveler,

Lizanne

I emailed Lizanne to ask for permission to use her letter and this was her response:

Dinah,

I apologize for my late response to your e-mail regarding "The Greatest Embrace" - I just knew you'd "get" it and feel it :)

The CD is now officially out and I will be sending you a REAL copy :) as soon as I get over to her town (Irvington, NY) and get a few. Lisa was so excited with your response (as was I) and said you can absolutely put it on your site and let other parents hear her healing words/sound. I just know it will resonate with so many. Thanks for taking the time to listen and respond. The links to her sites are below. I prefer the second site but everyone is different.

Lisa's official sites are:

www.myspace.com/lisalynnemathis

Lisa Lynne Mathis Site <http://www.rte54.com/mylee/lisalynnemathis>

(When you click on this site, go to the bottom of the page and click on "Go directly to the Lisa Lynne Mathis Site." Then click on "Music & Lyrics." You can read about how she wrote the song, "The Greatest Embrace" for

Fallon and also read the lyrics that Lizanne wrote. Then click on “Launch the Music Player” and you can hear Lisa’s singing “*The Greatest Embrace.*”

Lisa Lynne Mathis

New album: **Hancock Place** available April, 2007

I also wanted to ask you if it is too late to possibly attend J.I.M.’S Conference. I’d so love to meet you in person and meet the Smiths... I am going to really try to be there. I just feel I should be there - Let me know.

I am so thankful for you and your site. There are no words to describe how helpful this online site was for me. I am one who tends to prefer to suffer in silence and what better medium than my computer and the Lamentations website.

I must run, chaos is erupting at my house. As Walt Disney said “...Keep moving forward.”

Big Hug,

Lizanne (Fallon's mom)

PS - The trailer for “Space Between Breaths” was excellent!

Fallon’s symbols are bubbles and the sun.

Jeff & Mary Treadway’s son, Robbie (8-19-71), was killed in an auto accident after being served too much alcohol, 12-14-05.

Mary sent this email about the documentary and what she needs to do after Robbie’s death that will save other’s lives:

Dear Dinah,

I am so looking forward to the documentary and J.I.M.’s conference. I have permission from Rosemary’s office to mention it in an interview I will be doing after the council meeting next week. It looks as though the council will do the ordinance; they are working out the details with their attorney and will vote next Tuesday. I will let you know how it goes. I told my grief counselor at Hospice about the documentary and conference as well. I look forward to meeting you and thank you for this wonderful web site that has been such an outlet for me in this journey. You have done a wonderful job and it gives me hope.

*May God Bless,
Mary Treadway*

I asked Mary what the interview and the council meeting was about:

Dear Dinah,

Just back from grief counseling today at Hospice of the Bluegrass they, are great. I am doing an interview after the city council meeting for ordinance to have all servers trained by the Dept. of alcohol beverage control due to Robbie's death. I will be interviewed by the local paper there and am going to tell them how the book, Children of the Dome, and your newsletters have helped me in my grief. Mt. Sterling is a small town and there are young people that die there often. Two died just last week in an automobile wreck. Last winter a young girl was killed by her step-father and set on fire. I don't know the people, but they can know that there is a book that will help them hearing other stories and we may not think so but we do go on and live. One year and four months ago I was one of those people. My life is never to be the same, but there is some reason I am here.

I am just one small voice in the world, but we now have 22 counties that have the ordinance, Mt. Sterling will be 23. I talked to the mayor in Whitley County last week because they are going to vote on serving alcohol by the drink. I told him if you take this responsibility on, then you had better educate the ones doing the serving. If Robbie had not been in a bar and allowed to drink then drive after being intoxicated, he would be alive today. I know you are busy see you May 31 and June 1.

When Robbie died I tried to donate his organs and they could not take them. I just wanted part of him to live on and help someone else, but they politely said he had been without oxygen too long. I think it was because of the alcohol in his system.

*Mary Treadway
Robbie Joseph's Mom*

Robbie's symbol is a baseball.

Rick & Sheila Allen's son, Whitney (10-1-86), died in an auto accident 3-4-05, and their daughter, Timi, died from cancer, 3-9-93.

Sheila wrote:

Hi Dinah,

I'm sorry it has taken me so long to get pictures to you but some things are so hard to do, it seems to make it more final that my babies are gone.

I've enclosed an article we put in our local paper last March along with their pictures. I've chosen a cat for Timi's symbol and a basketball for Whitney. Timi loved to dress-up her cat in baby clothes and Whitney loved basketball so much.

I can't believe it's been fourteen years since Timi went to heaven and two since Whitney's accident. This time of the year is really hard. One of the doctors I work for told me today if I needed some time off in March that would be fine. Both the doctors are good Christian men and the two ladies I work with are Christians also. They have all helped me so much and I never fail to tell them how much I appreciate them.

Rick and I are anxious to see Rosemary's documentary and to meet you and Rosemary.

Thank you so much for your continued support and all your emails.

*Love and prayers,
Shelia*

In Memoriam

Jeana Timithea Alison Allen,

Phillip Whitney Christian Allen

June 17, 1983 – March 9, 1993

October 1, 1986 – March 4, 2005

***For He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.
Psalm 91:11***

When Timi and Whitney were born, we never dreamed what the future held. It never entered our minds that Timi wouldn't live to be a teenager nor Whitney to be out of his teens. They were both such beautiful babies, both had angelic faces framed with long black hair. Timi was born on Friday, June 17, 1983, at 3:26 am, and Whitney was born on Wednesday, October 1, 1986, at 8:18 am. I remember it was raining both days.

Timi was so thrilled to have a baby brother: she wanted to help do everything. Life was good until our world was turned upside down when Timi was diagnosed with cancer. We didn't ask why this happened to us, we just took one day at a time and with God given strength and courage we made it through 18 chemotherapies and 31 radiation treatments and everything else that goes with this dreaded disease. The hospital became our home away from home. Timi took everything in stride, that's the thing about kids, they deal with the situation at hand and don't worry about the next one. Whitney was so good during this time. He was 3 when Timi started treatments, I don't remember him ever complaining about staying away from us so much, of course he enjoyed staying with mamaw and papaw or Uncle Larry and Aunt Joyce. I don't know what we would have done without them. Whitney tried to help when he could. When I changed the dressing on her Hickman, Whitney would sit on the bed and hold her hand. He was 4 at the time. When Timi felt like it, she and Whitney would play school. She taught him to count to 100 and say his alphabet. He always wanted to sit in on Timi's lessons when her homebound teacher, Mrs. Anna Gail Gevedon would come. Mrs. Gevedon never seemed to mind the extra pupil. She is a wonderful lady.

After Timi finished her treatments in June 1991, the Dream Factory sent all of us to Disney World. Cousin Nina got to go too. What a time we had, we felt free at last. While we were there Newsweek Magazine was doing a story on Disney's 20 year anniversary and they picked Timi and another cancer survivor to be in their magazine. They did a huge article and had several pictures of the girls in their article. We couldn't believe it...our little girl in Newsweek. In December the same year, Timi and two other cancer survivors were grand marshals in the Christmas parade at town. When we returned home Timi said, "it's a good thing I had cancer or I wouldn't have gotten to do all this," Children always see the good in everything.

Things were back to normal again until Timi's cancer came back in January 1993. Timi, Rick and I were sitting in the van after we left the doctor's office crying and Timi said, "God wouldn't put this on us if we couldn't handle it." Out of the mouth of babes. She lived two months. Timi went to heaven March 9, 1993, three years from the day of her first chemotherapy. Life as we knew it was changed forever.

Whitney had to grow up fast during Timi's illness. He was a good child, always willing to help. I don't remember him ever refusing to do anything we asked him to do. We never had to tell him to do his homework or study for tests, and he always had good grades. He loved basketball so much, he started playing Junior Pro in 1993, he was 7. He played two years,

then broke his arm and had to have surgery. He had to miss that year of ball but he didn't complain. He didn't even cry when he broke his arm. The next few years he played Junior Pro, 7th & 8th grade at the middle school, and the last three years of high school. His senior year the team went to state, everyone was so proud.

Thanks to Parker Banks, Whitney got to go on the vacation of a lifetime the summer between his junior and senior year of high school. They flew from Cincinnati to Los Angeles and from there to Honolulu, then to Sidney, Australia, New Zealand, and Nadi Fiji. They were gone for two weeks. For us it seemed forever even though he called every night. That was Whitney not wanting us to worry.

I know Whitney wasn't perfect but to us he was close, always thinking of others before himself, very dedicated to his friends. I think every weekend there was always an extra boy or two or three at our house and Rick and I loved having them over.

Then he found sweet little Ashley. We had stopped at the famous Wendy's at Grayson, we always stopped there after games in that direction, and I remember watching her and thinking I wish Whitney would start dating her, and of course I had to tell him so when we got home. The next thing I knew they were dating. Thank you Ashley for making him so happy. You'll always be part of our family. We love you. I wish he could be here for you now. Thanks for Charlie, we love him so much. The little critter is part of the family now.

Whitney graduated in 2004 with a four-year presidential scholarship to Morehead State. He started college in August. He would get frustrated when he didn't find a job as soon as he thought he should. I told him not to worry, when God wanted him to find a job he would. He started work at Kroger's in November. He kept good grades, found time for his girlfriend, Ashley, and worked. He called every night to tell us he loved us. How we miss those calls.

The last ballgame Whitney played in was to help raise money for a friend who was going through a hard time. He loved helping people.

Whitney was our life after Timi went to heaven. He was such a joy, the best son any parent could ask for. We miss him more than words could ever say. At times we still catch ourselves checking the caller ID to see if he is calling, or listening for him to come up the drive in that black Monte he loved. Then we see that Monte sitting lonely in our driveway and we know it's true he's not coming back. Our hearts have been broken beyond repair and we still ask why both our angels. We probably will never know why in this lifetime, but when we all get together in heaven it won't matter.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18.

Ralphie you'll never know how much you have helped us. Thank you and we love you very much. Kevin and Zach thank you guys too, we love ya. Doug and Lisa, words can't express how you have helped us. Wayne and Della, you've been wonderful. You will all be rewarded. Thanks to everyone that has helped in anyway since that never-ending night of March 4, 2005, especially all the prayers.

***No farewell words were spoken
No time to say goodbye
You were gone before we knew it
And only God knows why***

Rick and Shelia Allen

Whitney's symbol is a basketball and Timi's symbol is a cat.

**Leann Butler's son, Scott (3-10-78), died from AT,
7-16-04.**

Leann wrote about the documentary, the conference and her:
Dinah,

I am so anxious for the conference on the 1st and viewing the documentary. I miss talking to others who have lost children. Seems that I have nothing in common anymore with people other than those that I meet at X-mas (Service for the Christmas Box Angel) and at the conference. I know that I must get myself out of this line of thinking and try to move forward – seems it gets harder instead of easier.

Scotts mom – Leann Butler

I sent back this email:

I am exactly like you are. The longer it is since Young Jim's death, the less I want to be with people who haven't lost a child, and the more I want to be with those who have lost a child. It must be "normal" since I hear that from so many. Some of the reasons are that people get tired of hearing about our loss, about our child, and hearing the same memories of our child, because we don't have any new ones.

Scott's symbol is an eagle.

Nat & Terri Ragland's son, Patrick (4-14-87), completed suicide, 5-23-01.

I had sent the Raglands an email on Patrick's birthday. Terri expressed what birth and angel dates do to each of us:

Thank you - no matter how far down the road we get - special days still take your breath away.

God's peace.

Thanks again for remembering.

Terri Ragland

Dot Kegg's daughters, Beth Carpenter (2-4-52), died from breast cancer, 3-14-98 and Karen Day-Myers (2-1-54) died from breast cancer, 3-26-93.

Dot wrote about her daughters:

Dear Dinah,

I want to thank you for your kindness and always being there for each of us on our anniversaries of my Beth and Karen.

I was with my sister in Florida for the cold months. My daughters' birthdays were February 1 & 4 and they passed Mar. 14 & 26.

Days come and go...I was 83 in November. I have Cathie, the oldest daughter, and Ellen, my youngest that live here in Westfield.

My husband George made his passing from an accident in '91. We had a wonderful 45 years.

I'm working most of the time in "Dot's Playhouse." I can talk to lots of people and listen to them too, which helps.

Receiving your cards is such a pleasure. You're special.

Beth was an O.B. Nurse Practitioner and Karen was a D.C. (Chiropractor); both, strong girls.

Thank you so very much.

Love,

Dot

Beth and Karen's symbol is a butterfly.

Joe & Ann Kechter's son, Matt (2-19-83) was murdered in the Columbine killings 4-20-99.

The following article was written by Kevin Vaughn for the Rocky Mountain News, Denver, CO. Be sure to read it, Mr. Vaughn even talks about the documentary:

http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/local/article/0,1299,DRMN_15_5495037,00.html

Matt's symbols are a hawk, a door and an eagle.

Mary Kate Gach's daughter, Stephanie (9-25-71) was murdered 10-9-92.

I had sent an email to Mary Kate telling her about the remembrance service we had here in memory of those murdered in Columbine and Virginia Tech. Mary Kate's response:

*Thank you for the note. Next week (April 22-28) is national **Crime Victims' Rights Week**, which is set aside each year during the 4th week in April. There will be gatherings and candlelight vigils across the country for*

all victims of crime. Sadly, there are more victims each day, each week, each year. Our nation is sick and wounded.

Stephanie's symbol is a brown bunny.

Eddie & Sue Tutt's daughter, Julie Howell (3-3-64) died of a brain hemorrhage, 1-9-03.

April 20th I received this email from their son, Stephen:

Hi everyone,

This is Stephen, Sue's son. Mom was in Hawaii with my Aunt Judy and they were involved in a car accident. They were t-boned on mom's side of the car. Judy was treated for injuries (don't have details) and was released from the ER. My Mom was air-vacted to Oahu because they had a trauma center. She suffered lacerations to her head and a brain contusion (Internal brain bleeding), she lacerated her spleen, and suffered 7 broken ribs, one of which punctured her lung, collapsing it. They put a chest tube in to keep her lung inflated. She was in stable condition in ICU for a few days. Her second CAT scan looked good so they moved her into a regular room in the Queens Medical Center in Oahu, Hawaii. She is in room 943. She is doing great but in a tremendous amount of pain. Leslie is flying down and the plan, as of now, is the doctors will let her fly back with Leslie this coming Wednesday. Then doctors here will remove her chest tube here in the states.

I'll let you all know more as I know

I received this email, April 24th:

Hi everyone,

Here is the latest update on my mom. She has had a couple of setbacks with her tubing and medicine, but overall is still doing very, very well. She is going to be fine except for a very painful next couple of months. She and Leslie are flying out tonight for Louisville. It is about a 14 hour flight. They will then be taking her directly to King's Daughter's in Frankfort. Should be there by noon tomorrow. We don't know how long she is expected to stay there, but best guess would be until Saturday, or until the chest tube can be removed, which could be sooner, could be longer. I just don't know. They will be putting a hospital bed in their house as she will still be limited and have to rest quite a bit afterwards. With that in mind, she

probably won't be able to accept visitors for at least a few days or so, maybe even a week. From what I have gathered, the trip home in itself will be very taxing on her, on top of the painful injuries.

I'm sorry it took so long to respond to some of your inquiries. I wanted to make sure I had the right info before I sent it. It was literally changing from hour to hour. I cannot express the gratitude our family has for the outpouring of love and prayers from all of you. Mom is a pretty lucky woman to have so many people who care.

*All the best,
Stephen*

I know Sue would love to hear from you. Her mailing address is:
Sue Tutt, 69 Clover Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601.

Julie's symbols are a rainbow & a rooster.

**Dr. Dan Moran and Dr. Katie Bright's son, Benjamin (5-17-80)
was killed in an auto accident, 5-23-98.**

Katie and a colleague sent out a questionnaire to survey bereaved parents about their interaction with doctors if their child was in the hospital at the time of their death. Many of you received them and 100 + of you sent them back, however, some of you haven't. They are sending a postcard to remind those of you who didn't.

As many of you know, Dr. Katie Bright is doing a survey of bereaved parents to learn about their experiences with physicians. Many of you have already completed the survey (thank you so much!), but she would like to give others a second opportunity to do so. Kentucky parents who did not respond to the first mailing should receive a postcard in the mail asking them to consider completing the survey. Please think about helping with this project. The postcard will tell you to call UK at 859-323-6211, extension 303 to request a copy of the questionnaire if you no longer have one. (I know many out-of-state parents are interested in the project, but at this time she can only include Kentucky parents. The researchers hope to be able to expand the study in the future.)

Katie said she would be happy to hear from out-of-state parents informally if they want to contact her. Her work email is kbright@uky.edu

Katherine L. Bright, M.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Pediatrics
University of Kentucky

Benjamin's symbols are a star and musical notes.

James & Terri Flowers' son, Curtis Jon (10-3-72) died as the result of a car/train accident, 4-12-97.

It is so important that we stay in contact with each other:

Dinah,

I always appreciate the time you take to remember us. It is such a pleasure after this time to have a friend to keep in touch with. Good friends through this are hard to have.

*Much love,
James & Terri*

Curtis' symbols are a fish, a rooster, theatre, and old cars.



I just performed Liposuction; I sucked the chocolate right out of its wrapper.

My email address is: dinah@ucumberlands.edu

The website's address is <http://www.ucumberlands.edu/lamentations/>