
LAMENTATIONS

Issue 113

middle

June, 2007

The Grief of Fathers Strength

In the early days of my grief, a tear would well up in my eyes, a lump would form in my throat, but you would not know—I would hide it, and I am strong.

In the middle days of my grief, I would look ahead and see that wall that I had attempted to go around as an ever-present reminder of a wall yet unscaled. Yet I did not attempt to scale it for the strong will survive—And I am strong.

In the later days of my grief, I learned to climb over that wall step by step—Remembering, crying, grieving, and the tears flowed steadily as I painstakingly went over. The way was long, but I did make it—For I am strong.

Near the resolution of my grief, a tear will well up in my eyes, a lump will form in my throat, but I will let that tear fall—and you will see it.

Through it you will see that I still hurt and I care—For I am strong.

--Terry Jago, TCF Regina, Canada

If you're feeling low, don't despair, the sun has a sinking spell every night, but it comes back up every morning.

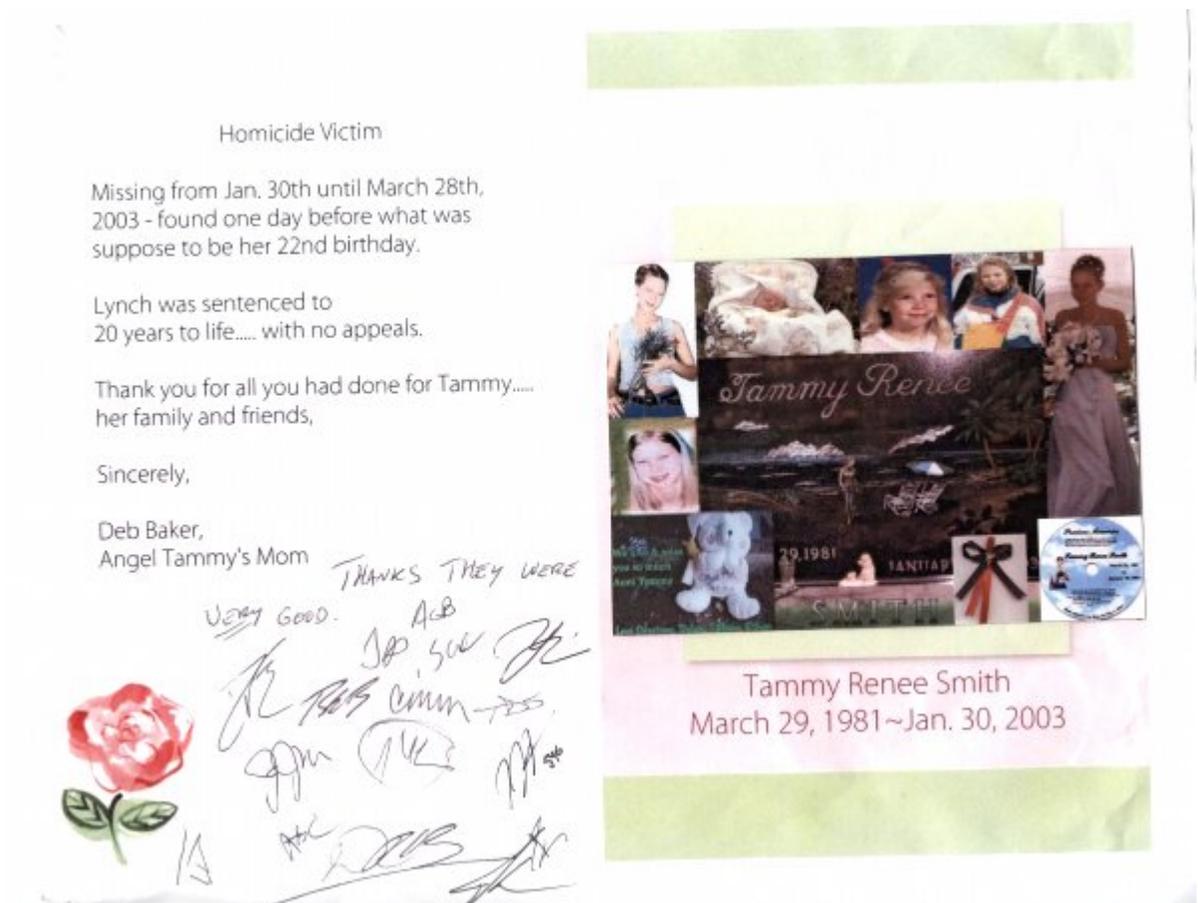
--Anonymous

Grief Grafts

Deb Baker's daughter, Tammy Smith (3-29-81), was murdered, 1-30-03.

Deb has a wonderful way, each year, of thanking those who arrested and prosecuted Tammy's murderer:

Each year I take a memory box full of baked goods to JC's, State Troopers, Sheriff's Department, and the District Attorney's Office/Supreme Court on January 30th..... All done in Memory of Tammy.



This is put on the lid of the plastic tub and delivered to each place on January 30th...the one above is where several state troopers initialed their names and returned to me along with the plastic tub.

To observe the day Tammy's body was found, the family went to the cemetery, wrote messages to her on green balloons and released them.

Tammy's symbols are a rose and dolphin.

Betsey Libby's son, Dale Belyea (7-17-84) died in an auto accident, 8-7-95. Her daughter, Roselee Belyea (8-17-82), died in an auto accident 4-11-04.

I received this note from Betsey:

Dear Dinah,

I want to thank you for thinking of me in my time of need. I feel so lonely. I'm not one for getting out to meet new people, so I have no friends that I can talk to and nearly all my family members are all in heaven. My Roselee, my best friend (only friend) is no longer here to talk to or to be able to go out and have fun with. She was my world.

Since I wrote you last, I have moved. I can't thank you enough for your kindness and thoughtful way. I haven't been feeling all that well. I found out that I have to have a hysterectomy and I have endometriosis and was also diagnosed with liver disease and started treatment almost 2 weeks ago. It's like going through chemotherapy and I feel like I have the flu all the time and run a high fever. There are a lot of side-effects to this medication. I have to take 5 pills daily plus a shot I give myself once a week. The shot is what really makes me sick. My doctor says it gets worse. I have a 40% chance that it will be cured and the treatment is for 1 year.

Since I don't get out to meet people, I really enjoy writing and if you know of anyone that would like to write, would you please give them my address. With all the moving, I've lost all the addresses of friends that I once used to write to when I lost Dale back in 1995.

Thank you again and God bless you,

Your friend, Betsey

I emailed Betsey to ask her if I could tell her story and she responded:

*Hi Dinah, Thank you for writing. Yes, it would be Ok for you to use my letter in your newsletter. I Loved the angels and snowman etc...IT WAS GREAT!! THANK YOU for your thoughtfulness. My address is 10 Grace Street Place, Rockland, ME 04841. You can also use my email address, dalero5@msn.com but I don't have many days that I'm well enough to get on, but it would be nice when I do, to have a letter from someone. I spend a lot of time in bed and do write and love to receive letters. I haven't received any in a few years now. I will be looking forward to hearing from others.
Love,
Your friend Betsey*

Dale's symbols are a boy angel, fish and stars. Roselee's symbols are a snowman, an angel and a rainbow.

Monique Podgorski's daughter, Jennifer (10-31-70), was killed in a horseback riding accident, 4-15-91.

I wrote Monique to ask her if she had written about Jennifer. Monique wrote:

Dear Dinah,

I want to thank you for remembering my daughter, Jennifer. It is a good feeling to know that someone else is remembering her. Every year I mean to write and thank you, but I always forget, please forgive me, I'm not taking your caring for granted, it touches my heart!

To answer your question, no I haven't written anything much about my daughter's life; she was a precious gift given to me by God. I loved her, nurtured her, and took good care of her, but God had other plans for her and I thank God for every minute she was here with us. I feel at peace knowing that I will see her again someday.

Thank you again Dinah.

*Love,
Monique*

Jennifer's symbols are butterflies and horses.

Melanie Woolum's son, Dustin Ellis (2-21-85) died in a house fire, 3-17-01.

This is Dustin's story:

During my pregnancy with Dustin, I had some scares, but on the 21st of February in the year 1985, my baby boy Dustin made his way into the world, weighing in at 7 lbs. and 11-1/2 ozs. He was the second of two children, his sister Tasha was my first-born and having no sisters of my own she became my real life baby doll and my sister. I was 18 when I had Tasha, but 22 when I gave birth to Dustin, and a lot wiser I guess, because so much fear came to me. I was scared for him, for both of my children. Dustin was such a sweet baby, so precious. Always compassionate, from the time he could walk and talk. He was in and out of hospital his first years until age 5 with allergies that he soon outgrew. Dustin was the type of person that would help others.

I remember when he was 5 years old, we were having some birthday cake and he was trying to get someone to wipe cake from a little 3-year-old girl. When no one did, he got up from the table and very gently wiped the cake off himself. He took time for others from the time he was born. He had a temper but never really got mad, only frustrated. He wanted everyone to like him and he liked everyone. Dustin was a Mommy's boy for such a long time; I guess until age 15 when he became more independent. He wasn't a mean child, but I guess that I was protective of him in more ways than I was with my daughter. I love both of my children with all of my heart, but Dustin held a special place in Mommy's heart... Maybe because he was the baby and was so sick as a young child.

At age 15, Dustin told me he was going to live with his father. I told him to go on; I thought that after a week he would come back, then another week passed, then another... his father took me to court and with Dustin being 15, the court let him choose to live permanently with his father, although I knew that he would come home eventually. Dustin would bargain with me about curfews and other things... how I wish that I had given in. He moved in with his father in March of 2000. He had been there close to a year. His father got custody of Dustin in August of 2000. Then in 7 months, tragedy struck...

Thank you for taking the time to meet my son. I didn't lose my son in a car accident, or to an illness. My son was a healthy strong 16 year old boy. His life on earth ended when his father's house caught fire; his father left the house, but my son was in bed sleeping. I last saw Dustin on March 13, 2001 healthy and full of life...

I hope you will visit Dustin's website and look at the pictures, and many other things about his life: <http://www.dustinellis.com/>

Dustin's symbols are rainbows, sailboats and lighthouses.

Karla Scott's son, David Rison (8-20-83) died in an auto accident, 1-8-00.

David was the firstborn of my three children. He was born on August 20th, the hottest day of the year in 1983. He died on January 8th, 2000 at seven minutes till one a.m. He was 16 years old and a junior at Henry Clay High School.

I received the "dreaded" 4:30 a.m. ringing of the door bell. When I looked out the peep hole, I saw a large man in a police uniform and a smaller person I thought was David. Obviously, I wish it had been David with that police officer. When I opened the front door, the smaller man handed me his business card and said he was from the Coroner's office. They told me that my son had died instantly in a car accident on Old Richmond Road. When I heard that, my mind went completely blank. No crying, no screaming, my brain went into tunnel vision, very blurry and everything was surreal.

After the two men left, I laid back down in my bed, it was about 6:00 a.m. I knew I had to call people and let them know what happened to David, but, I didn't want to; maybe this was a terrible nightmare. If I don't call anyone, then no one will know. My mind just could not accept this dreadful news. Some time later I noticed the crucifix of Jesus on my bedroom wall, the Blessed Virgin Mary's son. She had lost her son, too. I started praying to her and I know she gave me the strength to go on that morning.

David's good friend, Troy, was driving that night. There were skid marks on that little country road, so they knew Troy had been speeding. Troy's silver Acura hit a utility pole on David's side of the car and killed him. Then the car crashed through a plank fence, flipped over twice, and landed upsidedown in two pieces. Troy was alive but in terrible condition, he died two hours later at the UK Medical Center. Both boys had their seat belts on and there was no use of drugs or alcohol. Inexperience and speed killed our boys.

David and Troy were laid out at the same funeral home at the same time. It made it simpler because they had so many friends in common. They are buried across the street from each other, David at Calvary Cemetery and Troy at Lexington Cemetery. Friends Together Forever!

I was very fortunate to learn lots of things about David after he died. His friends and their parents came for visits and told me countless stories. I received so many cards and notes from people I didn't know telling me kind things about David. The most special letter I received was from one of David's friends from Northern KY. I was so touched by the letter and all of the funny stories about my son. I wrote back and told him it was like finding a "buried treasure." What a treat it was for me!

David had a great sense of humor and was a practical joker, yet he had a tender and compassionate heart. He loved his grandparents, his mom and dad, his brother, his sister and our cat, Muffin. (His symbol). He loved the Beastie Boys, ICP, Ale 8 One, chicken fingers from McDonald's and Penn Station Subs and a very special cheerleader at Henry Clay. Last but not least, he loved cars, in fact he could tell you the name of any sports car on the road.

It is hard to believe that he has been gone 7 years, but as you said it does get better. I have been very fortunate to have supportive friends and family members and my faith in God. Three of my favorite bereaved moms and I meet once a month for dinner. We love to share stories about our children.

David's symbol is a cat.

**Larry & Gwen Elrod's son, Scott (5-7-82) died from cancer,
4-4-00.**

We have all been so saddened by the tragedy at Virginia Tech. This is one mother's thoughts:

Dinah,

Thanks for remembering us, it still really sucks that Scott is not here, he would be 25 now. His girlfriend got married a few weeks ago. Her Dad told Larry at the wedding that Kimberly should be marrying Scott. It is still so not right that our sons are not here. If we could only figure out why, not that it would make any difference but would help some. I want to see how handsome Scott is and how tall he is. My heart is still so broken and always will be. It will never be okay that he died and I will always be mad about it, but I have made peace with it. I found out recently that one of his friends from St. Jude has relapsed. He is from Cawood, KY. My older son Brian works at St. Jude and saw Ryan and his mother in the hospital. Scott and his girlfriend were the first two people Ryan met, he was 15 and played baseball, football and basketball. He had bone cancer and has been in remission for 5 years. Each time one of our St. Jude friends dies or relapses, I get mad all over again. Ryan's prognosis is not good. It has spread to his pancreas and lungs. I just don't see any sense about this disease and why kids have to die for any reason. The VA Tech incident only makes me even more angry. Our sons would have never killed 32 people, why didn't this strange young adult get cancer or die in a car wreck. I know that sounds so ugly, but sometimes that is how I really feel. Hope you and Jim are good. Love the poem, hope to see you again. Thanks again for remembering us.

Gwen Elrod

Scott's symbol is the #20 on his baseball uniform.

Keith & Janie Wilson's son, Keith (2-22-78) died from Acute Myeloid Leukemia, 5-19-98.

I asked Janie if they had selected a symbol for Keith and this was her response:

Keith's symbols would be "an archer " and " bowling pins." He was an avid hunter with his dad and brother. They mainly went hunting with bow

& arrow, and Keith bowled from the time he was 6 years old until he became sick at age 19.

Keith's symbols are an archer and bowling pins.

Diane Ferrigno's daughter, Venessa Gonzalez (7-29-77) died in an auto accident, 2-24-01.

It is so important that we remember each other on Mother's Day and Father's Day, especially those of us who have lost our only or all of our children. Diane describes the feelings of many of us:

Dinah:

I am having a really bad day. First I lost my job and it's been two weeks and I am looking like crazy (for a job).

Second, "Mothers Day" is tomorrow and, I live with a very good friend who is like my sister. Her two kids live in NY and we now live in Florida.

My friend always gets recognized every year by one of her friends (who also knows me and knows what happened with my daughter) with a beautiful vase of flowers.

Of course, the door bell rings and who answers it, ME and the man says, "these flowers must be for you" and I immediately say "NO, they are for my friend Marsha."

So I give them to her and of course, they are for her and from her friend.

Now what gets me really upset is that people think because you lost a child, they think you are no longer a mother anymore!!!!!!!!!!!!

At least send a damn card....Acknowledge, HELLO I live here too and YES I AM A MOTHER.

I never get anything from anybody. Bad enough it is Mother's Day and I hate it, but what gets me more depressed is that no one even acknowledges me any more.

I say maybe the first two years, after Venessa passed, I used to get flowers and cards; after that I was forgotten.

Sorry, but I had to vent and I have no one to vent to because no one understands.

(You are wrong, the sad thing is, too many of us understand exactly what you are saying, and we agree.)

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY

Diane

Venessa's symbol is Tweety Bird.

Rebecca Woloch's son, Jesse Higginbotham (3-10-90) died in an auto accident, 3-19-07.

Rebecca is a newly bereaved mother:

Jesse is my only son. To say that he's my world would be an understatement. I used to joke with him that I was going to move to college with him. The prospect of him leaving for college was such a difficult concept for me.

I have been in touch with the group "Compassionate Friends" and am hoping to find the strength to attend their next meeting. Jesse's father and I remained close after our divorce many years ago and he's been a source of great support. We are both trying to walk this horrid road together.

Please add Jesse to your site. He was born on March 10, 1990. He left us on April 19, 2007. He was so into technology that a computer or laptop would have to be one of his symbols; another would be the Linux penguin - Linux is an open source program he did most of his work on.

We have a website for the technology trust we set up in Jesse's honor and to continue his name. It is www.jessehigginbotham.com and if you include that, it would be great. He was a techie's tech and we formed this non-profit so we can help bring technology to kids who otherwise wouldn't have it, and to contribute to the continuation of some of the work Jesse was so passionate about. This is the one thing that I can do to carry on his legacy. I have every intention of finding my land legs again and learning to crawl just because of this project.

I spoke with a wonderful woman this weekend who lost her teenage son just under a year ago. She told me to expect this; the compulsion to

move, coupled with the need to sit still. She assured me it's a part of the process.

Jesse's friends keep reminding me that they never saw him without a smile, and that his enthusiasm was so contagious. I'm having a hard time seeing past my tears right now but hopefully soon the memories that flood over me will also make me smile.

Thank you for everything, I look forward to meeting you.

Rebecca

When you look at Jesse's website you are going to be amazed. He was a brilliant young man who wanted to help others. I hope you will visit his website: www.jessehigginbotham.com

Jesse's symbols are a laptop computer and the Linux penguin.

Brandi Koenig's son, Ashe Marlowe (1-27-99) died from an inoperable brain tumor, 4-23-03.

Dinah,

I received your card in the mail on Ashe's Angel day. Thank you so much. The poem on it is the song my best friend sang at his funeral. When I read it, I felt as if Ashe had reached down from Heaven and given me a hug. I have thought of a symbol: angels. Ashe said he saw them. :)

I emailed Brandi to ask if I could use her email and to ask about Ashe seeing the angels. This was her response:

When Ashe was dying, he was paralyzed at the end, before he slipped into a coma. He told my step dad, then the rest of us, that he saw angels. He would look at a point in the room that was just air, and tell us that. He said they were colorful. :) We tried so hard not to lead him in anyway, so our questions were incredibly vague. It definitely comforted me, though.

Ashe's symbol is angels.

Don & Charlene Hale's son, Michael (6-17-71) died from non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, 2-4-97.

Sorry to be so long responding to your card on the anniversary of Michael's death. We always appreciate your cards so much. No one except someone "who has been there" can fully know what it means to have someone thinking of you on those birthday and anniversary dates.

To answer your question: No, I have not written about Michael's life. I have made lots of notes, written down thoughts, etc.

He was a wonderful young man, tall, dark, handsome, and most important of all, a good Christian. He was a Physical Therapist who loved his job and working with people, witnessing to them as he worked. He had only been working in his career for about 5-6 months when he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

We miss his beautiful smile, his great sense of humor (he was full of life and was fun-loving), his kind heart (he was so thoughtful and compassionate of other people, especially elderly people – he loved his grandmother dearly, his only surviving grandparent). He had lots and lots of friends, many of whom we still keep in contact with.

Our family and friends still work with a Relay for Life team (ACS) named "Michael's Mission."

Thank you for asking about him. As you know, we love to tell people about his life.

Michael's symbols are a collie, rainbow, and medical symbol for physical therapy.

Cheryl Walker-Sheppard's daughter, Mandy Walker (4-28-81) died from complications from Cystic Fibrosis, 5-15-03.

Cheryl sent this email:

Dear Dinah,

It's been four years since we lost Mandy and each year, you send me a card on her birthday. I haven't been ready to respond to you until now. This time of year is really hard for me - Mandy's birthday 4/28 (she would have been 26), Mother's Day and then the day we lost her 5/15. The pain seems like we lost her only yesterday, but it feels like a lifetime since I have seen her.

I'm attaching a poem that I wrote a couple of years ago. I'm not a writer by any means. God put these words on paper for me.

I want to thank you for your continued support even though you have not heard from me. Just knowing Mandy is still thought about brings a bit of joy to my heart.

MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY

WHEN YOU WERE BORN, YOU WERE SUCH A TINY THING
LITTLE DID I KNOW YOU'D SOMEDAY GROW WINGS.

THE DOCTORS SAID YOU HAD BUT HALF A CHANCE
LITTLE DID I KNOW ONE DAY YOU'D FIND ROMANCE.

MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY WITH WINGS SO PURE
GOD ON YOUR SIDE, YOU'VE MUCH TO ENDURE.

YOU GREW SO FAST, YOU BECAME A WOMAN.
MY SELFISH WAYS AS A MOTHER,
I DIDN'T WANT TO LET GO AND LET YOU FLUTTER.

MY HEART ACHED, BUT I WAS PROUD
YOU'D BECOME THE DAUGHTER I'D INITIALLY WOWED!
SO FULL OF LIFE, LOVE, AND REAL FORGIVENESS
PERHAPS TOO MUCH INDEPENDENCE.

I THANK GOD EACH AND EVERY DAY
BECAUSE HE CHOSE ME TO BE YOUR MOTHER.
I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT WOULD BE SUCH AN HONOR.

MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY WITH WINGS SO PURE
GOD BROUGHT YOU HOME FOR ANOTHER VENTURE.

THE DAY I LOST YOU - I WASN'T PREPARED
FOR THE JOURNEY AHEAD WAS ONE WHICH MADE ME SCARED.

FOR IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR MY FAITH IN GOD, YOU SEE
MY LIFE MIGHT BE OVER, I'D NO LONGER BE.

MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY WITH WINGS SO PURE
YOU'VE BECOME ANOTHER ONE OF GOD'S BEAUTIFUL CREATURES.

I LONG TO SEE YOU ONCE AGAIN
THIS TIME TO SPEND ETERNITY - TIL THE END.

LITTLE DID I KNOW WHEN YOU WERE BORN
SOMEDAY I'D SEE YOU IN YOUR TRUE FORM.
FOR YOU SEE, A BUTTERFLY IS ONE OF GOD'S MYSTIFYING CREATURES
AND WITH EACH ONE THAT I SEE, I SEE YOUR FEATURES.

MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY WITH WINGS SO PURE
UNTIL GOD CALLS ME HOME
I ASK THAT YOU CONTINUE TO USE YOUR WINGS
SO I CAN SEE YOU THROUGH MY EYES
COS YOU SEE MY BABY, YOU'RE NOW A BUTTERFLY.

FLY FREE MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY
FOR I WILL ALWAYS SEE YOU THROUGH MY EYES.

MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY
YOU MAKE ME SO PROUD
I'M THE LUCKIEST MOTHER GOD HAS EVER ALLOWED.

MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY WITH WINGS SO PURE
YOU'RE IN GOD'S HEAVEN NOW, THIS I AM SURE.

WRITTEN BY CHERYL A. WALKER-SHEPPARD
IN MEMORY OF AMANDA "Mandy" NICOLE WALKER
APRIL 28, 1981 - MAY 15, 2003

MY BABY, MY BUTTERFLY
NOVEMBER 27, 2005

Mandy's symbol is butterflies.

Linda Terry's son, Daniel Hukle, Jr. (12-16-78) died from cancer, 3-26-03.

Linda tells about her bravery:

My son was a volunteer firefighter, which he loved. He started as a cadet when he was only fourteen, and was still active at his time of passing. He was very active in his church which he loved. He left a wife and a daughter. I have two other daughters and, another son. My oldest daughter and your son Jim, have the same birthday. Her name is Katie and her birthday is July 26, 1987. The night my son passed I had been telling him all that day to keep hanging in there, to keep fighting. Then for some

reason, something told me that I was wrong, that I needed to let him go. So I went to his bed side, and I swear I did the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. I told him that if he was tired of fighting, and holding on, and being sick and if he wanted to go home and be with Jesus, that we all loved him, and we were there with him, and it was ok, he could go. Then in a matter of about three seconds his heart stopped and he was gone.

After seven weeks of standing vigil by his hospital bed my life felt as if it was gone with him. I just could not believe this was happening and, still there are days I look for him to come in the door. Since my son has passed, every time I go outside there is always a white butterfly around me. I go to his grave and there is a white butterfly always. People see this and it just amazes them. He knew that I loved butterflies. He would buy me things with butterflies all the time. So maybe a symbol for him could be a butterfly. His daughter's name is Kayla Jo Hukle.

We all called him Junior. All of his friends called him Daniel. He was in the hospital for stem cell transplant. They have to go through a round of aggressive chemo first. He just did not make it. He had Lymphoma. We found out in June 2002, and he passed April 26, 2003. My son was six foot four and weighed 260. He was my Bubba, he was my first born. He was a good boy, never gave me a minute of trouble. Thank you so much for what you do for parents who have lost children.

God Bless You, Linda

Daniel's symbol is a white butterfly.

Keith and Becky LaVey's son, Jay Crim (5-23-74) died in his sleep, 1-17-79. Daughter, Cyndy Crim-Reynolds (6-12-80) died of a rare blood disorder, 8-15-06. Son, Nate (10-21-82) died 1-20-07.

I wrote Becky to ask how she and the family were and her response:

Dinah,

I'm doing pretty well considering. I still am doing much better, than I was the first year Jay died. That is what I am still comparing everything to. Jay is still my frame of reference. He has taught me so much about grief!

However, God is the one who is giving me the strength I need. Praise the Lord!

The kids (Andrew and Mindy) are doing okay. As expected they still get upset and continue to miss Mommy and Uncle Nate. Andrew and Mindy both did well in school this year, and both had great nurturing teachers. I think the 4 babies, Cyndy's 2 and Nathan's 2 are too young to fully comprehend it all. They are all well physically, Glory to God!

I hope you will continue to remember this family in your prayers.

Jays's symbols are a boxer dog, fish and roses. Cyndy's symbols are a lightning bolt and angels. Nate's symbols are a right hand and a guitar.

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

I was honored to talk about Young Jim with TCF chapter in Frankfort and Sue was there still recuperating from her terrible accident in Hawaii:

I sure hope this documentary becomes one we can purchase and use in grief support groups and maybe even churches. I can't wait to see it. You and Rosemary have been so wonderful and instrumental in getting grief support out there and bringing it to the forefront where people will talk about child loss. Eddie and I were talking just a couple of days ago. When my sister died in 1974 (she was 40 and died of breast cancer), parents weren't talking about it. In fact, neither one of us remembers my parents grieving - I'm sure they did. They were very sad and cried at the funeral, but there was little more that I remember. I was in my early 30's so I was certainly old enough to remember. Maybe there are many around us who know the pain too well who need the newly bereaved as much as we need them. Maybe I was just too occupied with my own life and 4 little children to pay much attention to those who know the pain too well and need us as much as we need them.

Love you. Hope to see you on the 31st and next day. I was so glad we went to the meeting the other night. I had to take a little extra joy juice when I got home, but it was worth it to be with you guys.

Sue Tutt

Julie's symbols are a rooster and a rainbow.

Guinever Van Campen's daughter, Abby (2-26-03) was hit by an auto, 3-22-05.

Guinever's website: <http://grievingwithguinever.wordpress.com> has so many wonderful stories and help for all of us who are grieving. This is one of the stories:

Two years ago, my sons brought a caterpillar into the house. We watched it grow bigger, spin its chrysalid and then emerge as a big swallowtail a couple weeks later which we then released into our yard.

Later in the summer, they found two more caterpillars and we raised those as well, but they never came out of their cocoons. I did some research and was hopeful that they were hibernating so I kept them in the [habitat](#) hanging in my dining room through the Fall and Winter.

Then on the Tuesday after Palm Sunday, my 5 year old told me that he saw a butterfly. I had just ordered some larva a few weeks earlier so we had 4 cocoons, but I knew their scheduled hatching was still several days away.

I had to remind myself that it wouldn't be outside of God's ability to let a butterfly come out a little early to make me smile. I was having a bad day because I was reliving the morning that Abby had died.

It was the Tuesday between Palm Sunday and Easter. Although the first anniversary of my daughter's death had already come and gone a couple weeks earlier, it seemed like the anniversary all over again because this was the day she had died on the Christian calendar. So yes, I thought that maybe our Lord of grace had intervened in this butterfly's life cycle just for me.

But I also did not forget my other 2 cocoons that had been hanging silent since October. Could one of those have really lived all this time, only to come out now—on this of all days? I went with my son to see the butterfly. Yes, the swallowtail had emerged from its 2 seasons of dormancy. What a wonderful Lord we have to remind me of His presence in such a beautiful way.

This surprise swallowtail was my kiss of grace for Passion Week. A few days later, the other butterflies hatched on Saturday and Easter.

Abby's symbol is butterflies.

Betsy Crum's son, Gary Rodgers, II (1-11-67) died from cancer, 1-14-91.

Dear Dinah

Thank you for writing all these years. I just couldn't write back though I read and appreciated all your letters. My sons name was James Gary Rodgers II. We always called him Gary. He was born on Jan. 11, 1967 and died on Jan. 14, 1991. He went to heaven three days after his birthday.

His best friend had given him a print of a large white dove flying in the blue and white clouds. When he was very sick he said it looked like heaven. His symbol is the white dove. He had cancer of the spine and was very sick for about 2 years before he passed away. He was a beautiful person and had beautiful red, red hair. Thank you again for writing all this time.

*Sincerely,
Betsy Crum*

Gary's symbol is a white dove.

My husband and I will be traveling quite a bit this summer. If you are too, I have some great traveling advice:

Chocolate is a good travel food...you will find it anywhere worth going!



My email address is: dinah@ucumberland.edu
The website's address is <http://www.ucumberland.edu/lamentations/>