Virginia Melchin



NOVEMBER 26, 2016

Today, we gather together to honor and celebrate the life of my grandma, Virginia Melchin. She passed away on November 26 at 11:52 pm surrounded by family and holding hands with her children.

I can only imagine, how wonderful the reception was as she finally passed through the veil to be greeted by my Grandpa, her parents and siblings. She is not in pain, nor does her disease restrict her anymore, but she is free. It is this reason that we come together to celebrate and rejoice rather than mourn her temporary absence. **I know there will come a day when we will be reunited, never to be separated again.** As Paul taught, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” I love my grandma and look forward to a joyful reunion.

Today, I want to give an overview of my Grandma’s life and character and also to give insight as to what it was like for me to be her granddaughter. Ginny’s life was not easy. She endured more privately than most would ever know, but through it all, she was faithful, obedient and patient.

HER LIFE & CHARACTER

Virginia Melchin also known as mom, grandma, Ginny and Grandma Jimmy, was born in 1937 to her mother and father William and Emma Dow. She was raised in Southern Alberta on a farm just outside of Cardston and she was the 14th of 15th children. Growing up in the 40s in a small town with limited access to any

technology, Ginny developed a strong love for her animals, specifically horses. This love for horses would extend throughout her entire life and would be a common bond between her and my grandpa Barry. For years, one of their favorite activities together was to ride their horses side by side along the sandy beach in Tsawassen.

As a child, Ginny was full of life and would often be found hiding from her parents hoping to avoid her list of chores, so she could continue to play with her friends. Her best friend Bobby Tolly and her would spend great amounts of time riding their horses around Bobby's family farm. Ginny loved to socialize and was an extremely extroverted person throughout her life.

At 16, she left home and moved to Calgary where she lived at the YWCA and attended secretarial school. Upon finishing school, she worked at Woodward's in Calgary splitting time between the credit department and making hairpieces. She continued to work at Woodward's until she married and began to raise a family.

Grandma Ginny married Barry Melchin on January 24, 1964, and together they raised 4 children, Mike, Shelly, Susan and Ryan. Grandpa's career moved them from Calgary to Vancouver and all around the Lower Mainland with a brief stint in California before settling in the Surrey.

Though she was sweet, Ginny was known to rule the home with an iron fist. There was never the threat of "Wait till your dad gets home" because Ginny was the threat! Yet she still let her 14-year old son Ryan take the car out on his own so long as he 'wasn't going far', and Grandma always fun with her children from playing games to acting out scenes from their favorite movies such as The Pink Panther. More than anything else, Grandma wanted her children to know the teachings of Jesus Christ and to be active in the church. She did everything she could to ensure they were taught the right way.

One of my Grandma's biggest struggles as a parent was getting her kids out of bed. Whether it was for church, seminary, or school, there was always a battle, but she was determined to win those battles at any cost! For example, one morning after several soft attempts to get Ryan out of his bed for school, Ginny took a more drastic approach. Ryan had a classic 80s waterbed so Ginny took a pair of scissors and pretended to be stabbing the bed. Not realizing she was merely faking it, Ryan got up pretty quickly. Ginny won that round.

On another occasion, her oldest son, Mike wouldn't get up so Ginny grabbed a spray bottle and began to spray his face thinking this would do the trick. What she didn't realize was that not only did it get him up, but he chased her across the house until he grabbed the spray bottle from her and poured the rest of the water on her head. Call that one a draw….

Lastly, knowing how much it bothered his mom to be late for school, Ryan pre-recorded himself singing and humming while shaving in the bathroom. One day before he snuck out of the house for school, he put the stereo in the bathroom, turned up the volume and shut the door. Not knowing that Ryan had left for school already Ginny began knocking on the door telling him to hurry up or he'd be late. Thinking he was ignoring her, she became more insistent until she barged into the bathroom to find the stereo on repeat. These battles never ceased until the day her kids moved out.

Ginny loved to have fun. Every year, my Great-Grandma Mona would make homemade chocolates and send them out to each family. And each year, when the boxes of chocolates arrived, Ginny and Shelly would take a box and hide in one of the bedrooms stuffing their faces giggling the whole time. Ginny enjoyed the simple pleasures in life.

As an early morning seminary teacher, she would periodically take the kids out for spiritual field trips, which included horseback riding, McDonalds breakfast, and

pizza parties. As a new teacher, she heard the stories of a particularly difficult student named, Dave Terry. Her first order of business was neutralizing the threat to her peace, so she made him a deal. He could sit by her daughter, Susan so long as he was quiet. That year, he was an exemplary student making almost no noise.

Ginny loved to throw parties and events at their home and was the first to RSVP at an event they were invited to. To Ginny, life was not about reading books in a quiet room; it was about socializing and spending time with the people you enjoy most.

Over the course of my Grandpa's career, he travelled for work on a regular basis. Grandma loved to go with him on as many trips as she could. In Grandpa's last years, he was constantly on the road driving from city to city. Ginny would go with him on each trip, and would read books to him as they drove. On longer trips, she would start a new book at the beginning and read cover to cover by the time they returned home.

After my Grandpa Barry suddenly passed away in 2001, Ginny felt she needed to learn charity and so her focus became serving the Lord and her family in a more meaningful way. It would've been easy to complain or be angry about her difficult situation, but she wouldn't. She was left alone in difficult financial circumstances. Too old to start over in life, but young enough to have lots of energy to give, so she got to work. In 2004, Grandma accepted the call to serve a full-time mission in the New York, New York mission where she'd spend 18 months devoted to the Lord in the Family History Center in Queens.

Towards the end of her mission, Ginny was asked to extend 6 months by her mission president. At the time, funds were tight and our bishop asked if the family could help support her during this extension. The family came together and made preparations to help cover the cost of her mission. Not wanting to put the burden on her family and not knowing fully how she would cover the cost of the mission, Ginny accepted the extension. Unbeknownst to us, years earlier a man had

borrowed a substantial amount of money from my Grandpa and had never paid him back. Within a matter of days of accepting the extension, a sizeable check was found in her mailbox for the full amount that this man had borrowed decades earlier. **Ginny had a love for the Lord and faith that he would prepare a way for her to serve.**

For nearly ten years after her mission, Ginny would serve at the Bishop's Storehouse every Monday, volunteer at the Salvation Army on Tuesdays, attend the temple on Fridays, and as often as needed, she'd be found on her hands and knees weeding the temple grounds. She always had a litany of jokes written in her personal planner just incase you needed a laugh, however the only funny part was how bad those jokes were. To the end of her life, Ginny always made sure she was well put together and presentable. She was never one to leave the house without doing her makeup, her hair and ensuring she was wearing a well-coordinated outfit. Even in her last days, there was no excuse for her to not look her best. She was thoughtful, kind, and obedient. As she spent her final days in a care home where often the others are difficult, Ginny's care aids regularly commented on how nice, willing and sweet she was. While she had many significant struggles in her life, she never lost her testimony nor did she give up hope that things would improve. **She lived her life that death might be a reward.**

MY GRANDMA

All things aside, for many years, Grandma Ginny was one of my best friends. As a young girl, I would sleep over at her house and we'd talk for hours. The earliest memory I have in my life is being at her home holding her cats with her beside me. **I always felt important when I was with my grandma**. When I received my learner's license no one was willing to drive with me for fear of a horrific crash. Mom went as far as to say she was scared for her life when I was in the driver's

seat. Not Ginny… Ginny would pick me up and let me drive for hours and hours. She was the only person who'd let me drive. Coincidentally, she was the only person who paid less attention than me while we were in the car.

One time, my parents went away to Hawaii for a week and left me with Ginny. Her first decision was call my school to let them know I wouldn't be attending that week. Rather than mess around with unimportant things like seminary and school, Ginny and I spent the week driving together stopping at most of the various Wendy's locations from Surrey to Chilliwack.

The time I spent with my grandma growing up was a key component of my personal development. I learned first hand how to carry yourself with dignity and how to treat those around you. Grandma had a way of tuning out the noise around you and focusing on what really mattered.

After Dave and I were married, we would often have family home evening in Grandma's apartment. The lesson often consisted of a scripture or story, followed by an hour of old Johnny Carson episodes and way too much chocolate. For someone so small, Ginny had an endless supply of cakes, brownies and candy.

Ginny and I were a team. I loved her dearly. Though she is gone now, she will always be my grandma, and one day we will be reunited for eternity. She lived a life on earth that merited eternal life in the life to come, and provided an example to me of selfless service and positivity to the very end.

You are invited to leave a personal message of condolence for the family.

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