



Memories of Bonnie

Edward Crown Center for the Humanities, Loyola University Chicago

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My Cousin Bonnie

We were sitting on the deck of the house we rented overlooking Lake Michigan for a week every summer when Bonnie began talking about the time she taught “Romeo and Juliet” to one of her classes at Clemente High. The students, all of them girls, I think, were excited about the passion and the richness of the language—“Hark, ‘tis the East and Juliet is the sun” not being the sort of I-love-yous they were used to hearing through their earphones—when suddenly they realized how the story was going to end.

“Aww, no!!!” one of the girls in the class cried out. “You mean, she *die*!???”

Great peals of laughter rang out over the dunes as Bonnie told us the story. We laughed with her for a long while, then reached for the bottle of wine and went over to the railing to watch the sun set into the lake.

Everywhere Bonnie went, laughter was not far behind, struggling to catch up. I would be suspicious of anyone who knew Bonnie, or came within her presence even for a moment, who did not share a laugh with her or walk away with a smile. I hereby grant a special exemption to the students of Clemente High School to whom she was the fearsome Dean of Discipline, the lady who roamed the halls telling them to get in their classrooms “right now!”, who put them on suspension if they did not immediately obey and who dressed up like a witch on Halloween.

The laughter has been silenced now, Bonnie’s and our own, as we enter what Tennessee Williams called Dragon Country. This is, Williams explained, “the country of pain, an uninhabitable country which is inhabited.”

I am grateful to Bonnie’s family and friends, and to the students and faculty of Clemente High, who took the time to write these words of remembrance, and I ask them to forgive me for editing some of them down to a more manageable length. I am also thankful to Eric Zorn, whose Chicago Tribune blog served as an online meeting place for so many of Bonnie’s friends in the days following her death, for allowing me to reprint a number of the messages that first appeared there. Thanks also to Walter McCormack, the president of Dupli-Graphic, and the rest of Peter Postl’s friends and fellow workers at the firm where Bonnie’s beloved brother is a valued employee, for printing this booklet. And thank you to Peter for supplying the pictures.

Bonnie was born two months to the day before I was. Take away those two months, which I doubt she remembered very well, and I now realize that I knew and loved her all her life. It is difficult for me to believe that I will not know and love her all of mine.

Ron Rapoport

Friends and Neighbors

I met Bonnie during the first month of her life, though I don't remember the day—I was only 20 months old. My parents, Isobel and Sam Katz, were close friends of the Postls. During our childhood, our families spent a lot of time together. There were Sundays at the forest preserves, the dunes, weekends at state parks, family dinners and birthday parties. One summer, our families shared a house for six weeks in Miami and I remember at least three summers when Bonnie's father and my mother were counselors at the same children's camp. Bonnie and I were campers. We were in the same cabin; we learned to swim and ride horses together. We spent hours drawing pictures, coloring in coloring books, and making up stories for each other. I thought we would both be authors.

As adults we kept in touch via letters, phone calls and ultimately e-mail. Not often enough, I would get to Chicago. Fortunately we had such a visit this past summer. When I arrived home after my visit with Bonnie, I was diagnosed with a very early stage of breast cancer. A few days before my surgery, I received a small box from Bonnie. In it was a pink and gold necklace with matching earrings. In the center of the necklace is the "breast cancer bow," gold with pink stones. I put it on the day I came home from surgery and have worn it every day since. I told her it was partly responsible for my fast recovery. I might never take it off. Bonnie was the "sister" that I wanted, often asked for and my parents never gave me.

JoAnn Katz Morris

I first saw Bonnie and admired her from afar when she came to Sullivan High School. There is a picture of her in the 1958 "Sullivan Sentinel," our school's yearbook, in which she is perched on a ladder decorating the holiday tree in the school's center lobby. Bonnie and I became friends when I started my teaching career at Lake View High School in February 1965. She was charming, funny, sophisticated, talented and a great teacher. Her explication of literary texts was fabulous.

One of my funniest memories concerns the time I took the Chicago Public Schools Teachers' examination to become a certified Spanish teacher in 1965. I received a letter from the Board of Examiners telling me that I did well on the exam and was advised to report to the Board of Education's Central Office for my oral interview. I was nervous because this was a "make or break" event in my career.

Bonnie surprised me when she entered the waiting area to sit and chat with me to figuratively "hold my hand." We talked about the process and what I should expect to happen during the interview: it would be taped and all those around the table would ask me a question. All the while, a gentleman from the interview panel sat there and listened to us. As we sat there she said, "Don't worry you will knock them dead; just be sure to show them a little leg." I became unglued when the man stood up and announced that he would be accompanying me into the interview room.

Later when Bonnie and I talked about it, I related my fears that I would be considered unfit. She said: "If you didn't make it you can always get a job as a stripper." Her great sense of humor always made hard things easier to address.

Arlene R. Crandall

Love of mothers, babies, children, camp stories, arguing politics, Chicago, literature, theater, Millennium park, Shakespeare, Art Institute, massages, old time music and dancing, talking, the bookies, IMing, iPod, the beach, bike path, movies, spending way too much on Mario Tricoci, shoes, sharing clothes and good food, wine, chocolate, stories of youth.

Stories of our children, staying up all night and breaking up, talking about the black hole and big bang, solving the world's problems in one evening, discussing God, sharing struggles, supporting each other, trying not to judge or give advice, but doing so anyway, disagreeing, but knowing that we would still be friends, always. Sometimes when I was with Bonnie I would feel like I did when I was a kid, with not a care in the world. I keep thinking about that big smile of hers. Peace to Bonnie and all who read this.

Kolleen Blume

I remember giving Bonnie the website to the Scooby-Doo game. She emailed back and said she had a lot of fun and "I bet your smarty-pants mother could figure it out." I will miss her.

Maggie Blume (age 10)

I would like to remember the time that an adult had corrected my eating habits. Bonnie told me to say something that I can't repeat!!!

Peter Blume (age 13)

I remember when Bonnie told me not to care what people think when you are dancing and just do what you want. She told me it was OK to look stupid because it doesn't matter as long as you're having fun.

Brendan Blume (age 18)

My husband and I and our two young children lived directly upstairs. Bonnie was a beautiful neighbor and friend. Her life was full of music and cheer and love of life. She cherished children and sparkled with delight at life's small, splendid moments, like the time she delivered a Halloween mug filled with candy to each of my kids that first autumn she lived in the building. I used to joke with Bonnie about the noise my children's running feet must have made on her ceiling. "I'm sure we woke you up this morning," I would say, and she would always smile the most heartfelt smile in return. "I love it," she said. Our love and support is now focused on Rhys, who also graced our building with his good nature and, of course, phenomenal fiddling. Our hopes and prayers are with him.

Judy Krizmanic

I miss Bonnie and her bright smile. I am fortunate in that I believe a bit of Bonnie is in me. I first met Bonnie while purchasing her earrings at Valpo. After letting her decorate me for several years, I gave in to her encouragement to begin beading myself. What a blessing she offered me. The color, the decoration and the creative expression bring great energy to

my life. We shared the excitement of going to bead shows and buying excessive amounts of beads—all necessary, of course. We shared the delight of new design ideas and unusual bead shapes and color combinations.

Only since I moved here a year ago did I discover that she is also a musician and we had the great pleasure of sharing several fun jams this year. I didn't know Bonnie well, but I am so glad that we were able to share our beading creative energies and that she shared her enthusiasm with me so generously. Colorful and sparkling wishes, Bonnie.

Lisa Joy Ornstein

I knew Bonnie when I became a new contra dancer in Chicago in 2000. Rhys is a well-known and beloved legend. He has given so much to the folk dance community and scores of people are wondering how we can now give back to him. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his dear family.

Sally Bown

Bonnie's love of literature, which was shown in the research and thought she put into book club meetings, was only surpassed by her absolute love of life. The generosity shown to us in her home and on "Bonnie's Beach" was made heartwarming and unforgettable because of her sincerity and true joy in sharing. She brought us together, she opened our hearts and minds, and she has left a deep impression on our souls. A great life—and a great loss.

Karen Nimrouzi

I remember Bonnie running down a dirt path with my daughter. Bonnie was laughing, running barefoot, almost flying down that path. May she rest in peace.

Liz Goetz

Bonnie and I were childhood friends. Here's part of an email she sent in 1998: "The big life accomplishment is my lovely boy Rhys, 25 years old. We raised him in the old-time music network, attending barn dances, jamming with musicians. Now I feel sort of like Mick Jagger's mom. Rhys is a hot old-time fiddler, much in demand. We share the same social life, rather a unique situation. The running came long after my parents died; I was never much of an athlete, but I think it was hidden in my genes so, in my late forties when I started, I found out I was a natural. When I run I feel my mom smiling down on me."

Elizabeth

Bonnie was a true and staunch friend, and totally genuine. Children realized instantly that she really was interested in them and loved her for not treating them like fools or bores. Her observations were succinct, humorous, and enjoyable: listening to her recount the day's incidents on the job was always fun. I admired her ability to highlight rudeness and smack it down with dispatch, leaving no room for foolishness or retorts. Bonnie was sharp, she was funny and generous, she was a thoroughly lovely person. I still keep thinking I'll see her next

week, or will be planning for Clifftop '06 with her in a few months. I'll miss her forever, and love her for the same amount of time.

Chloris Noelke-Olson

Two months ago, Bonnie and I had our annual four or five wonderful days of playing with beads and catching up in my studio in the West Virginia hills. She was like a sister to me. I miss her every day. Reading over years of e-mails, I see how fully Bonnie lived, her pleasure in so many areas, her sense of fun. She loved her work and did it well, teaching kids that their actions have consequences. ("Off to relax after a hard day of parents threatening to sue me and kids telling me to ---- myself. I'm so weird, I still like this job.")

She loved art, in galleries, fairs, museums. Each year she brought me a new beading technique. She biked, swam, loved camping, ran marathons. ("It still takes a lot of willpower to run in the dark and cold after a full day's work, but once I force myself out of the house, I feel ever so smug." 2001: "Victory! This year 5:29:27. I'm happy. I've reached my goal. I don't need to go any faster. I'm sooooo pleased.") She sat, read, and walked by the lake. ("Winter is here in full force, but... the trees are bare and I have an unobstructed view of the waves...my beloved beach. I'm so lucky to live in the location of my dreams.")

She loved travel, especially to see Rhys ("walked and walked and sucked in the excitement of the city, saw Carmen, art galleries, Met Museum of Art... And, of course, my favorite activity, ate and ate and ate. Rhys, again, was the ultimate host.") Rhys was the light of her life.

She had so much heart. John and I are both struck by the positive view and zest for life that made Bonnie's last years rich ones. I watched Bonnie grow from someone who didn't think very highly of herself to a really blossomed woman. I saw her come into her prime in her 50s and 60s, and celebrated it with her. I'm grateful for all the joys, laughter, inspirations, even sadness, that we shared over the decades.

Shoshanna Schwimmer

I remember Bonnie in the last two years of high school at Sullivan. Her boyfriend (who was crazy about her); her excitement about so many things, and her energy; dinners at her house with her parents and Peter as a young boy. Bonnie at our music club meetings with "the gang." I didn't see her again until about two and a half years ago when we started seeing quite a bit of each other: dinners or walks every two months or so. I will miss her a lot.

Judy Rhinestine

Every time I have ever thought about Bonnie, it has always been her smile which has dominated my thoughts; a smile revealing a vibrant perspective on life; a smile taking in the spark in her eyes, reflecting life's joys and pleasures, life's possibilities; a smile that never reflected half-empty when half-full was an option.

Eloise Clark

My last conversation with Bonnie was under some pine trees, sitting at a picnic table at a music and dance camp. My daughter is sometimes a reluctant musician, and I wanted to ask her how she had raised what everyone believed was the perfect old-time music kid. She laughed it off, of course, saying she hadn't pushed him much at all and mostly followed Rhys' interests wherever they went. Chirps and all the Chicago musicians, she said, had nurtured his talents and desires and deserved all the credit.

John Bealle

I remember the Jones family coming to many "Breaking up Thanksgiving" parties through the years in many locations around the Illinois/Michigan area. Bonnie always had a happy look about her as she either visited with old friends or took a spin on the dance floor with one of the many folks who gathered at this annual event. Even though I did not know her well, she always had a kind word for me. I think Rhys inherited some of those traits.

Tom T. Ball

Our daughter Alison took me to a Chicago Barn Dance in October of 1980 and I was hooked. Bonnie was a sterling character. She was a peach! Now, she dances with angels.

Marion Newport Biagi

Bonnie got us into barn dancing, was a good friend, and a good banjo player. She also helped Pat and me get the Moony Hollow all night dance going. We'll miss her.

Pat Walke and Mike Mumm

Bonnie and I met in our freshman year at Senn High School. After she transferred to Sullivan, I was included in her new circle of friends at the new school. I was also a tag-along with the Postls on their camping trip to Turkey Run State Park in Indiana. Bonnie and I would have loved to sleep late, snuggled into warm sleeping bags, but her father Bill used to let the air out of our air mattresses to get us up and active each morning. For three summers during our high school years, we went to summer camp together at Camp Winona in Wisconsin.

It was at Camp Winona that Bonnie learned about Grinnell College and soon we were taking the Rock Island train as freshmen to that idyllic college campus nestled in the corn fields of Iowa. When Bonnie was living in Guadalajara, Mexico, our daughter Margie visited the family and took care of Rhys when he was just a tot. Then a year later, my husband and I visited the family and got to see the city through the eyes of those living right there.

Over the years Bonnie and I shared reading lists and travel notes. We enjoyed the same activities and learned from each other. Part of my youth has gone with Bonnie's untimely death. I send my love now to Rhys and his new family with the hope that he can cherish all the good that his mother brought into the world and gave to him.

Nancy LeVant

As the über-nurturer of the Chicago Barn Dance scene while I was there in the mid-nineteen-eighties, Bonnie paid me the ultimate compliment when months after the fact she relayed how my insistence on turning a turkey carcass into soup following a pot-luck, had translated into a week's worth of solo sustenance for poor young, stomach-addled Rhys. To have been able to reciprocate her love by helping her family, even in such a small way as this, meant a lot to me. It was typical of Bonnie that she made sure I learned of it. Her special way of relaying "put-ups" is one of the memories of Bonnie I will always treasure.

Sara Roos

My predominant memory of Bonnie is of holding our book group at her home, all nestled around her couch sipping wine with our little wine glass markers, gazing out at the lake, eating the food she had made that was perfectly interwoven with the novel, talking about all things important and unimportant, all with a perfect sense of contentment. I will miss this beyond measure.

Dierdre O'Day

Bonnie was nothing if not indefatigable. She ran the New York marathon one day and the next she was traipsing all over Manhattan, up and down subway stairs and in and out of the city sights...what a spirit of adventure!

Val Mindel

I remember her dancing, laughing; always with a smile and a nod for anyone. I remember her sharing of thoughts and opinions with graciousness and honesty. We met on the dance floor so many times in those fluid, flowing lines for six years, and though I had not seen her for many more years due to changes in my own life, her spirit and sparkle will remain in my heart and my memory always. It is a great and deep sadness to know that she is gone and that we will never pass by again while the music plays on.

Diane Pronites

Memories of Bonnie are all memories of laughter. When I think of Bonnie, I see and hear her laughing, chuckling, chortling, making a wisecrack, or telling a story that makes other people laugh. Those are precious memories for me, since I can't yet understand that I will never get another chance to hear her laughter.

Annie Grieshop

So many memories. The banjo. The beads. Sitting around and talking at Battleground. Bonnie meeting Rhys at Mooney Hollow for the dance weekend. Rhys would be coming from Grinnell. Walking out to the end of the pier from the apartment on Pratt. Helping her put up last-minute decorations for the wedding shower—a wonderful "girl time." Bonnie's enjoyment of working at the school. Her wonderful smile. I have a picture of Bonnie smiling fit to bust as she walked down the aisle with Rhys at his wedding. I remember that she wasn't

sure if he wanted her to walk with him and was so happy that he did.

Lynn Garren

Memories of Bonnie:

1) Bonnie at 15 at Camp Winona. By the sheer force of her personality the camp's favorite song in 1955 was the Bosco song:

I love Bosco,
It's the drink for me.
Chocolate-flavored Bosco,
Tried to poison me."

2) Bonnie at Clemente, 50 years later. Watching her wheeling and dealing with her sometimes truant, late-arriving, defiant adolescent charges, meting out consequences for kids who may have never had that experience. She was fair and very firm.

3) Bonnie, thinking this may be her last year at Clemente: Planning to buy a silver Airstream RV and travel around the US, visiting friends all over the country.

Judith Erickson

Bonnie was kind and generous and she loved books, running, jewelry making, her beloved beach and Rhys and Christina. She was so proud of her son and his wife. I will never forget our first book club meeting where she arrived with lots of post-it notes to mark the interesting parts of the book. She was the English major. She was also the mother hen to all of us. We had many heartfelt talks within our group. I will miss her and the friendship we developed. I have earrings she made for me which I will treasure always.

Eva Sandberg

One thing I remember about Bonnie was discussing her life in Guadalajara, Mexico. I could understand the difficulties that Bonnie had in keeping Rhys safe from the bad water, the polluted air and the crazy traffic. She clearly did a great job of it! Of course, I remember her beads. We shared a fascination with them and discussed sources of beads, ideas of what to make with them.

Bonnie and I discussed the pros and cons of teaching versus working in education administration. She understood how awful grading papers was, and was very happy with her decision to go into administration. She told me of one strategy that she had to get the boys to wear the required white shirts. When a boy was brought to her office with a shirt that didn't meet the requirements, she would pull a button-down white shirt out of her closet. It met the requirements for the school, but she had intentionally kept it wadded up, so it would be quite wrinkled when she pulled it out. Apparently, the boys just hated wearing wrinkled clothes. She told them that if they wore their own uniform shirts, the shirts could be ironed to their specifications. However, every time they came to school with an incorrect shirt, she would provide them with a wrinkled uniform shirt that they'd have to wear for the rest of the day. She had few repeat offenders with that strategy.

She was always such a warm person. After I moved from Chicago, I saw her only once or twice a year, but she always was happy to see me, remembered what we had discussed last

time, asked me how things had been since then and continued the conversation. When I was speaking with her, she gave me her full attention, which made me feel special. She had great insights and made me think of things differently from before. I will miss her caring and understanding.

Lisa Miotto

In her inimitable fashion, Bonnie brought her sparkling display of tasteful home-made earrings to an old-time music weekend in the woods. I looked for a pair that spoke to me. “Bonnie, if you had these same dangly bead earrings in black and white instead of blue and white I’d buy them in a second. They’re so lovely. But black and white are more my colors.”

Two weeks later at a barn dance, with her usual smile as big as Ohio, Bonnie walks up to me with a tiny little zip-lock bag. Inside are the almost identical graceful elegant earrings that I had been eyeing—only they were now in black and white.

“Oh Bonnie, you sweetheart,” I said, opening my purse to grab my wallet. Her expansive smile widened as she held up her hand to block the payment. “They’re yours, Barbie. Enjoy.”

Barbara Silverman

Bonnie will remain one of our best memories of Chicago and the States, we always will remember going to the beach with her. We very much enjoyed her hospitality during our stay in Chicago.

Françoise et Philippe Coulaux—Nice, France

I remember being in awe when Bonnie talked about her marathon training; I remember her grumbling about having to take a pill for osteoporosis in spite of all that running. I remember her delicious cooking. We stayed up late talking and sometimes grousing about the dance community. I loved hearing about her adventures at school and her sheer delight in bringing structure and order to the chaos of young lives. I loved seeing her face light up when she talked about Rhys. I loved seeing how she gave him space to grow into whoever he wanted to be and how proud she was of him.

When Bonnie turned 60, Rhys treated her to the works at a day spa. She got a manicure, facial, and new hairstyle. It was such a wonderful gift from a son to a mother—a day of pampering and an opportunity to see herself in a new light. Bonnie went from a hippy mom to a glamorous woman, and I could tell she loved the transformation. We giggled about discovering the mysteries of “product” and highlights. She kept it up too, and I loved seeing the new Bonnie.

Bonnie also liked to make jewelry, and we all encouraged her in it. Lots of people make jewelry, but Bonnie quickly developed her own style, to the extent that most dancers could spot someone wearing “Bonnie’s Beads.” We always told her she wasn’t charging enough for them, but she said she just wanted to make enough money to afford to buy more beads.

Once, I spent a long time looking over her trays for something to buy and eventually picked out a pair of earrings. Bonnie cried out, “Oh, I made those for you! I thought about you the whole time I was making them, but then I was afraid you wouldn’t like them, so I just put them in the tray. I’m so glad you picked them out!”

Early on, I gave her some milagros, Mexican amulets shaped like the object of a prayer—an ear of corn for good crops, a chicken, a car, even lungs and a stomach. I asked her to make some beaded wine glass markers for me with them and she did, although she later revealed that the little twists of wire were very difficult to work with. Still, for our wedding, she surprised us with another, even more beautiful, set of glass charms—all about movies. She'd always talked about coming to our annual Academy Awards party and this was her way of being there vicariously.

If one just tallies it all up—the beads, the dinners, the dancing—what does it amount to? In the days following Bonnie's death, I obsessively checked Google news and the homepages of all the Chicago television stations and newspapers. Hearing her story told was important; the world should know about Bonnie, I thought. After the third or fourth day, her story slipped from the websites and there were no more updates. I wanted to shout, "NO! Bonnie is an important person! Don't you know what an amazing woman we've just lost? How can you be talking about baseball and the Supreme Court?" The world does go on, of course. But I know that the number of friends who are grieving so deeply, the number of students who see new possibilities for themselves, and one very loved son are the measure of a truly extraordinary life.

Deborah Hyland

My memories of Bonnie span the last 12 years beginning with Bonnie's beautiful smile greeting me at almost every barn dancing event. Our late nights talking and dancing at Sugar Hill, Breaking Up Thanksgiving, Balance & Swim, Sistersville will never be forgotten. I got to know Bonnie more intimately over the past several years in our book group. She was an amazing woman with an open heart and mind with opinions I couldn't wait to hear as we discussed our book selections, and our lives.

The memory that is most important to me, is Bonnie, at "her beach," tan, smiling and beautiful in blue, greeting us fellow "bookies" with wine, chocolate and luscious sun-warmed plums. She said it was the happiest summer of her life and I feel so grateful to have been even a small part of that. I will miss her warmth, her humor, her candor and her grace. She will be deeply missed, but never forgotten. Her smile will continue to lighten my heart.

Dianne Fox

Bonnie was an incredibly supportive mother. Over the years I often witnessed her faith in Rhys and his abilities, and that confidence was extended to his friends. One memorable experience with her was a brief but remarkable encounter where I experienced her support first-hand.

A few years ago I attended a barn dance with Rhys and other friends. Bonnie also was there, and at some point during the evening we were paired as partners in a contra line. The steps were seemingly complex and after a particular turn I found myself consistently bumping into our contra neighbors. I kept apologizing to Bonnie for causing the collisions, and each time she reassured me that my turning was correct and that it was everyone else who must be confused. The collisions continued until one time I reversed the direction I was turning, and miraculously we were in sync with our neighbors.

Embarrassed, I admitted to Bonnie that in fact it was me all along who was causing the problem. She would not accept this; mere facts could not lead her to believe that I had done something wrong and she remained convinced that it was our neighbors who must have straightened out their steps. Later, when I told this story to Rhys, he confirmed that this was the basic model of his childhood. Any confusion, no matter how trivial, was the result of other people's error.

Though her belief in my contra line skills might seem insignificant, Bonnie's resolute support made a difference to many people in the largest and the smallest of circumstances. I am honored to have been one of those people.

Matt Turner

When I want to remember pure joy, I will recall Bonnie on the day of Rhys and Christina's wedding. I don't think I saw her with less than a full grin the entire time, and she seemed to radiate her happiness to all around her. I imagine that intense joy is common for a mother on the day her son gets married. But I also think Bonnie took what is typically exceptional joy and made it something different, and something better.

Bonnie was one of the most remarkable individuals I have ever known. She was warm and welcoming from the moment I met her, but this barely hinted at the altruism that in my mind most defined her. More than anyone I can think of, she seemed to find genuine, profound, and selfless pleasure in the accomplishments of others. When relating things in my life to her—no matter how mundane and seemingly inconsequential—they seemed to take on a profound significance when Bonnie reacted with pleasure and excitement to the telling. And it was not just that she gratified my ego. She seemed to take my best qualities and highlight them, encouraging me to recognize my successes and strive to be even more successful. Her unadulterated joy at others' accomplishments encouraged those around her to be better people.

Bonnie showed me a level of humanity that I will strive to achieve for the rest of my life. I feel blessed to have known her and been able to call her friend and neighbor. I will miss her, and I think my sense of loss will only grow as time goes on. But I will always be thankful that I had the chance to know her and learn from her; and I will attempt to follow her sterling example of what a person can and should be.

Nathan Corvino

We remember a little game Bonnie played with our toddler daughter, Leila. Bonnie would have a huge smile on her face and come up close. Then Bonnie would use both hands to pretend to turn her smile upside down into a frown and then back up again into a smile. It was such a simple thing, but Bonnie's face was so marvelously expressive that her little trick surprised and delighted both children and adults watching her. After that, Leila would always refer to Bonnie as "the smile lady."

Jane Liao, Louie and Leila Stallone

Bonnie was a wonderful and brilliant human. Her family spent a lot of time with our family when they were living in Clinton, Iowa. Bonnie taught all of us how to make "salsa"

the true Mexican way from having lived there. Avocado, lots of limes, tomato, onion, and cilantro! Each time I make it, I think of Bonnie. She was indefatigable when it came to the children. She would read and tell stories to Elizabeth and Jacob, especially her grandmother's story of Ivan the Fool. She reintroduced us all to Dr. Seuss—"King Stilts"...his older and funnier stuff. She got us all involved as she was preparing for her first marathon. We all went from marker to marker to cheer her on, and we took turns running a mile with her. We were all the better for her enthusiasm and love of life! Bonnie's star will continue to shine brightly for all of us.

Kathy Reuter, Mark Jaeger, Elizabeth Reuter Jaeger, Jacob Jaeger Reuter

May her wonderful smile and overflowing love live in our hearts forever.

Kathy Gordon

I always enjoyed dancing with Bonnie. She was one of those women who is really fun to swing with. She had a great sense of balance and weight and you could always count on a great spin. It was always a pleasure to see her coming at me in the contra line.

Will Higgins

Roberto Clemente High School

Mrs. Jones had a passion for what she was doing and such knowledge that I can now only acknowledge. She taught all of us well. She was very stern but she did it because it was her job. I hope she can forgive all of the Clemente Students for their ignorance. I only knew her for so little time and she gave me hell, but I thank her for pushing me to do my best. What I remember most about Mrs. Jones that will probably stay with me is October of last year 2004, when she was dressed as a witch. Every one thought it fit her. She walked around with candy and a skeleton. For those that don't remember, take a look at the yearbook of 2004-2005. She will be forever missed. Mrs. Bonnie Jones, may you rest in peace.

Jeannette Rodriguez

Mrs. Jones (I could never bring myself to call her Bonnie) was my sophomore English teacher and so much more. She was so influential in exposing me to the finer things that life and Chicago had to offer. She saw potential in us, and I am forever grateful to her for that. I'm a teacher now, and part of that success goes to her encouragement.

Ozni Torres

I was lucky enough to have Bonnie as an English teacher at Clemente. She had a lot to do with my seeing beyond the ghetto and eventually going to Grinnell College, where Rhys graduated a year before I started. I'm sorry I never thanked her explicitly with the hug and kiss she deserved. Rhys, we all send our love and condolences

Jose

Mrs. Bonnie Jones will be missed and she will never be forgotten. She was a nice lady who loved her job and loved her students. We will miss you, Mrs. Jones. Be at peace and remember we love you.

Mario Salgado

I will miss your yelling and detentions, and sending me to ISS for stupid stuff. I'm sorry for every word of anger that came out of my mouth. You will always be the greatest dean..

Gigi

Ms. Jones was a pretty tough dean but she can straighten the kids out. When I heard about her death I couldn't believe it. I used to be a student at Clemente and I had detention many times and Ms. Jones would keep us and I had a hard time with her. But I'm glad she did so I can gain respect. God bless you, Ms. Jones. You will be missed.

Sylvia Guadalupe

Sitting in class, staring at the walls, thinking about you and I'm sorry. The times we shared were all for bad reasons. Now I'm sitting here wondering why. Are you watching me now? Do you see that someone actually cares about you, thinks about you, cries for you? You just wanted what was best for us. All you did was care. You will always be remembered in my heart. I'm praying to my angels that they get you to the gates of heaven gently and safe. I'm going to do better for you, Mrs. Jones. I'll prove to you that I *am* better. Everything that you ever said to me is still in there, never forgotten, just misplaced.

Samantha Castellanos

I worked with Bonnie Jones at Clemente High School since the 1999-2000 school year. She had a generous spirit, warm heart and endless passion for her thankless job. She was a floor Dean, the disciplinarian, and relished the fact that the kids disliked her. Their alleged contempt, she knew, was proof that she was doing her job the right way. She knew she was not here to be a friend to the students, rather to correct their behavior when they strayed. I feel honored to have known her as a colleague and, more recently, as a good friend. We first bonded when I began taking fiddle lessons at the Old Town School of Folk Music. She would always encourage and cajole, nag me about practicing and became my "fiddle mom." The enormity of her loss is hard to fathom and probably always will be. I am a counselor at Clemente, but despite my graduate training and years of experience, nothing prepared me for this.

Martha Trueheart

I had the privilege of working with Dean Jones at Clemente. She was one of the greatest role models any teacher and person could ever have. She was one of the first people to enter school in the morning. She would do anything in her power to help any teacher who approached her. Simply put, she was great at her job. Last spring, several teachers and Mrs. Jones took our students camping. We had such great time. We hung envelopes on clothes string with individual names on it for people to write nice, positive comments for others. Ms. Jones' "mailbox" was the most full! I loved to see her run (it just brightened my day) through the halls of Clemente and along the lakefront in Evanston. I am not sure how she got the energy to work as hard as she did and train as much as she did! I cannot say enough wonderful things about her. I am so blessed to have known her and know that my life is better because she was in it. Mrs. Jones will not be forgotten. She has left her mark on this world as a wonderful person.

Adie Slaton

I have worked with Bonnie for five years at Clemente High School. She was one of the most stern, and yet, fair administrators at school. I was very fortunate to work with her, and I learned much. Her professionalism and good spirit will sorely be missed.

CMurphy

I worked with Bonnie at Clemente several years ago and she was one of the most committed sincere educators I have ever known. She spoke to me many times of her love for her son and how special he was. I used to see her running along the path along the lake where I might have been on my bicycle or walking my dog. She will be truly missed.

Virginia O'Brien

I had the pleasure of working with Bonnie for three years at Clemente High School. Her passion and dedication to her job were so obvious to those of us who saw her at work. My sympathy goes out to her family. She will be dearly missed.

BHubbard

Too often we let people pass us each day without much thought about what they are going through. I worked closely with Bonnie for four years. She was the dean of the students that I taught. She glowed when she talked about her son. She made her own jewelry and always gave bracelets and earrings to the teachers on the floor. I trusted her and felt like she always had my back. Most of all, she was a genuinely good person with a great sense of humor. She will be truly missed.

CMC

I worked with Bonnie for 19 years at Clemente. Most recently I worked closely with her while I was supervisor of the In-School Suspension room. She was an extremely hard worker and always tried to get through to the students. She was strict but fair. She was a great person to work with. I know she will be greatly missed. My prayers are with the family.

Janet C. Maslan

I remember working with Bonnie at Clemente High School. It was the year Rhys was in Europe. She was keeping in touch with him through e-mails. She would tell me where he was and what he was doing. She was very excited for him, and glad that he was enjoying himself. She was all smiles when it had anything to do with Rhys.

Connie Denham

I had the honor of working with Bonnie for a few years when I taught at Clemente. She was such a great dean to our students and a great friend to her co-workers. She once told me I reminded her of herself when she was an English teacher. I took that to be one of the greatest compliments I have ever received in my career. Several months ago, I visited Clemente and brought my new daughter there. Bonnie held her and boasted of hopefully having a grandchild sometime in the near future. My thoughts and prayers are with her family. I am very blessed to have known her.

Jen Micko

Family

As Bonnie's brother, I have enough memories to fill volumes—family time, family vacations, conversations, etc. I would like to share some of the memories.

Bonnie was happy to look at me at the hospital nursery baby room. When I was young, I didn't know how to pronounce my sister's name and kept saying "Ba Ba." She would not look at me until I pronounced "Bonnie" correctly.

Bonnie was a troublemaker to me. She picked on me. I cried and told our parents about Bonnie. Bonnie lied and smooth-talked her way telling our parents that I started to pick on her. Our parents blamed me. I couldn't hear what Bonnie said to our parents. Several years later my mother found out about Bonnie's lies. She smacked Bonnie.

Bonnie and I played Monopoly, played cards and other games. When our parents went out on Saturday nights, Bonnie and I swam at Foster Street, Howard Street and Sherwin Avenue beaches and built sandcastles. Bonnie loved going to Camp Winona for girls every summer.

Bonnie and I enjoyed making fun and mocking at people with our facial expressions. Bonnie always crossed her eyes signing "crazy." Bonnie tried to learn sign language several times but she kept saying it was hard. I told her not to worry about it. I could read her lips clearly. Her facial expressions and gestures were very good.

I was a sophomore at Lake View High School when Bonnie got a new job as an English teacher at the same school. Bonnie was my sons, Robert and Rick's favorite aunt to enjoy and laugh with.

Last March, I broke my leg badly the night before my wife and daughter-in-law were flying to Hawaii. I begged my wife to go to Hawaii with her daughter-in-law Renee. I was in the hospital for three days and ended up being laid up for six months. Bonnie took care of me at her home surrounded by views of beautiful Lake Michigan for a week until my wife returned home. Bonnie left school during her lunch time and brought me school cookies and then returned to school.

Bonnie was excited to purchase her new Nikon digital camera last June. Not surprisingly, she took several pictures of me in the hospital while the doctor removed the fixator with four posts last July. She takes pictures of just about anything and everything!

I visited Bonnie last September. Bonnie and I sat at Pratt Avenue Beach. I had a hard time walking on the sandy beach with my cane. We held our arms together to walk on Pratt Avenue Beach. We enjoyed talking and laughing about everything.

Bonnie loved dancing, crosswords, jewelry making, running, swimming, reading, playing guitar, piano, drawing, being a camp counselor, sunbathing at the beach, talking, and laughing with her always smiling face. We were good brother and sister.

Thank you, my lovely sister, Bonnie for wonderful help! I miss my lovely sister Bonnie so much.

Peter Postl

My sister-in-law Bonnie was wonderful and lively person. She loved sunbathing, swimming, jogging, music and folk dance. I remembered that she wanted to have talent like I

and her mother had. I do sewing and crafts while her mother was always sewing pretty things and knitting. Bonnie began making jewelry—pretty earrings, necklaces and bracelets. She was showing off her “first-time” watch with pretty sky-blue beads band that she made, as well as matching earrings and necklace only two months ago. I think of her each day.

Susan Postl

I visited her with my father during my brief visit in the Windy City last February. She looked awesome and lively and it was a visit I was glad I chose to make instead of the miscellaneous activities I did almost every time I visited my kind of town for a short time. I thought to myself there’s always a tomorrow. But like all of us, I didn’t expect it to be the last time I’d see her. Bonnie was a very lively, spiritual, cultural and fun-loving woman. I feel her spirit as if I saw her yesterday. There will always be a special place for her in my heart as long as I live.

Robert Postl

Aunt Bonnie didn’t have to try hard to become my favorite aunt. As a kid, I would excitedly and repeatedly crank my neck back to look through the back windshield of my parents’ car to see her make funny faces as she tailgated behind. I always looked forward to the fun and joys of her companionship.

I had the good fortune of staying for extended weekend alone with the Jones family when they lived in Clinton, Iowa. Aunt Bonnie was supposed to drive me back to Chicago but, heck, she didn’t feel like driving so she arranged my flight home on a small propeller plane. I was a young boy and thought the flight home all by myself was incredibly cool. This flight home sealed her place in my heart as “No. 1 super cool aunt.”

I also admired Aunt Bonnie’s loving and humble relationship with Rhys and her realizing his sheer intelligence and natural abilities. Her devotion in nurturing Rhys clearly has led him towards favorable directions and decisions in life.

Aunt Bonnie became close to my children, showering them with her humor, love and wisdom. She made several trips and mailed numerous packages to our home in Stoughton, Wisconsin. Every Christmas and birthday, her presents included books carefully handpicked and inscribed with a personalized message to each child and the goofiest and creative toys one only finds while searching with a purpose. She also made several “special request jewelry” in the exact color and combination requested by my children in letters to her.

She offered plenty of welcomed and sound parenting advice to my wife Renee and myself. I know she would have been the most wonderful grandmother to Rhys’ and Christina’s children and regret profoundly this won’t be possible, at least not in human form. But surely Rhys and Christina have inherited and will multiply Aunt Bonnie’s generosity.

Rick Postl

Last Thanksgiving, my children and I flew to Chicago to visit Aunt Bonnie. Rhys and Christina were there and my children *loved* listening to Rhys playing on his fiddle. Bonnie and Rhys spent time teaching my children to play on their old guitars and a banjo. Bonnie had a bowl full of dried apricots on her coffee table in her living room and my daughters, Katarina

and Daphine, ate some. By the end of the visit, the bowl was almost empty. Bonnie was quite impressed that they had eaten so many.

After the holidays, Bonnie began to discover dried apricots hidden everywhere in the apartment—mostly in the living room. They were under the cushions of chairs and couches and one was even found under the rug. My two-year-old son Dawson had spent the whole visit hiding apricots. Last June, seven months later, Bonnie e-mailed that she had finally found the last one! Bonnie had much fun discovering all the apricots which were the symbol of my children's love for her. Bonnie was tickled with joy as she discovered each treasure from Dawson. It was a wonderful memory of our last visit with her and we will always remember this special visit we had with Bonnie on every Thanksgiving in the years to come.

Renee Postl

Dear Aunt Bonnie:

I had fun times with you when you were alive. You were one of my FAVORITE aunts. You made the most BEAUTIFUL necklaces ever!! I also remember when I was little, your family and mine were driving in the car and there was silly music playing and then you started singing along in a funny voice. I always loved it when you sang!!!

Love forever,

Katarina (age 7)

As a cousin of Bonnie's, my memories go back a long way. We were the same age and as a child I remember going to her family's apartment on Margate Terrace and playing in that wonderful apartment. How I enjoyed the fact that she had her own room and lived so close to the lake. What fun we had!

Andy Herbster

I have lots of memories of family get-togethers at my house and hers. The red pop on the kids' table, and painting pictures on the closed-in back porch of Bonnie's apartment.

But, what I remember most and what I typically think of as pure Bonnie was her high school graduation party. One of the aunts bought her a couple of records, one was Van Cliburn and the other was Johnny Mathis. She came and thanked the aunt for the gift and then proceeded to ask who Johnny Mathis was. I wonder if she ever learned to like popular music.

Paulette Gardner

Bonnie, the ultimate cousin stands out in memory as probably the funniest, the most upbeat and certainly one of the smartest people I ever knew. When I was 12, I drove across the country with Bill, Charlotte and Peter in their station wagon, a wood-paneled model. We stopped at camp in Wisconsin where Bonnie was a counselor and I decided at that point in life that I wanted to definitely be a teenager. She was having such a good time.

In Guadalajara, where Bonnie showed us an amazing time, I remember visits to markets to buy food that was carefully soaked in iodine—what a great idea—to make sure that no harm ever came to anyone at the dinner table. Her Spanish was something to behold, really

like a native speaker. And as always the cooking was to die for.

One of the best times I had with Bonnie was at BookExpo in Chicago. I don't think there was any way she could be happier, picking up bound galleys that would keep her in hog heaven all summer, surrounded by wonderful books she could share with friends. She couldn't get over the fact that publishers were giving her books she really wanted to read. She was so happy to have a badge to get in.

Bonnie spent a lot of time in Muskegon, sailing, enjoying the sun and the beach. I remember one time when we were all ordering pizza she explained to my dad, who was somewhat concerned, that one of the purposes of food was to have fun and actually enjoy it. It was a view that raised an eyebrow but dad did pick up on the idea.

Bonnie loved our mother and they could regale each other for hours. After Charlotte's untimely death, Bonnie became closer to my mother. The linkage between two teachers was strengthened by the fact that they were both diehard readers, Chicago born and bred. My mother and Bonnie knew how to make each other laugh. She really appreciated a comment my mother made after finishing *Portnoy's Complaint*. "I'd really like to meet Phillip Roth," she said, "but I don't think I'd like to shake his hand."

Roger Rapoport

My one overall memory: Bonnie is always smiling her great lovely lopsided smile as she cracks a joke or laughs about the world. She's almost always telling some story that cracks everyone up. And in my mind, this amalgamated memory is always on the deck of the upper house at Idylwild.

Julie Rapoport

My grandmother, Shirley Rapoport, used to quilt, knit, or crochet gifts (mostly quilts and afghans) for family members. My wedding was the first in our family after Grandma died and Bonnie decided to take up the mantle of afghan-making. She crocheted a beautiful afghan in colors of my choosing. Bonnie clearly had her doubts about whether the colors I chose clashed but eventually ended up agreeing that they worked well together.

Bonnie loved children so it's no surprise that she was one of the biggest fans of my daughter, Allanna's, website. Almost all our emails from the past 18 months started with Bonnie commenting on a picture she particularly liked. It gave us a nice excuse to correspond. Sometimes this led to her reminiscing about Rhys' childhood.

One of my favorite passages: "This is a wonderful age, but then again, all ages are wonderful. Bathing is especially fun. I used to become very impatient with my family when they weren't overly anxious to join me in the bathroom for the nightly ritual which I found so fascinating. (oops, I take that back, certainly not nightly, I was definitely not convinced that was necessary.)"

We were sitting on the beach in Muskegon in July 2004 when Bonnie remarked that my daughter, Allanna, was the "cutest baby ever born." She quickly corrected herself and declared Allanna to be the "second cutest baby ever born" as she knew her (at the time unconceived) grandkids would be cuter.

Years ago, Bonnie took Rhys, my sister Julie, and me to a carnival where Julie had her first cotton candy. Bonnie loved to tell the story of then five-year-old Julie's statement that

she could eat an “infinity of cotton candy.” I heard Bonnie tell that story a dozen times but it never got old because Bonnie mimicked five-year-old Julie’s deep gravelly voice perfectly.

Here’s another e-mail from Bonnie talking about running in the New York Marathon last year: “It was wonderful. I skipped Chicago this year because I didn’t want to jinx NY, but next year, if I get into NY again, I might do both since there is a month between them. Anyway, Rhys and Christina took the subway all over, meeting me four times, letting me know where I was—‘Hey, mom, you’re in Queens!’ It was fantastic to see all five boroughs on foot. I loved Brooklyn, architecture, people, so interesting. Very thrilling being an older runner because you get a lot of attention from older people in the crowds who cheer you on, especially in Harlem, the old ladies on the card chairs in front of the Baptist churches, seeing the aged face, shouting, ‘You go girl!’

“I was very satisfied with my time. I finished in just under six hours, just about my time for the Chicago marathon, and since New York’s course is much more difficult (hilly, bridge ascents) that means my time was faster than usual. There were 172 women, ages 60-64 running, and at age 64, I placed 104—respectable.

Rebecca Rapoport

During the years we lived in Detroit our family would travel to Chicago to visit my sister Charlotte and her husband Bill. They had huge photos of Bonnie and Peter, made by a prominent local photographer, displayed in the living room for many years. As Bonnie grew older we were amazed at her physical skills. We all remember her accomplishments as a marathon runner. It is interesting to note that Clemente High School, where she was dean, was formerly Tuley High School which her mother, her aunt Anita and I all attended. Bonnie was a remarkable photographer and recently proudly told me of her acquisition of a digital camera that could use her wide assortment of Nikon lenses. We will all miss her terribly.

Dan Rapoport

My daughter Charlotte, who is named for Bonnie’s mother, went to stay with her when she was 10. Charlotte says that she had always wanted a daughter to spoil so they went right out and bought a Barbie doll and immediately painted her hair blue. The Blue Barbie was their secret joke, because Charlotte had stopped playing with dolls long before. But the purchase was typical of Bonnie—childhood and childish pursuits shouldn’t stop just because we grow older. She knew how to have fun in a way that one can only admire.

Carla Rapoport

Bonnie, Bonnie, Bonnie—your grand broad-beaming smile, your joyous outlook on life, your palpable zest for really living it, your trenchant observations to take me there, too. The first time we met was 37 years ago, two days before Ron and I got married. He’d promised me I’d love his cousin Bonnie because she was such a neat person, and was he *ever* right! Great grin, funny wisecracking lady, great mind, accurate words to express what she thought, chef extraordinaire.

That first meeting you helped us open wedding gifts...your quintessential Bonnie comments on cookbooks, sheets, and the like cracked us all up and instantly proved Ron’s

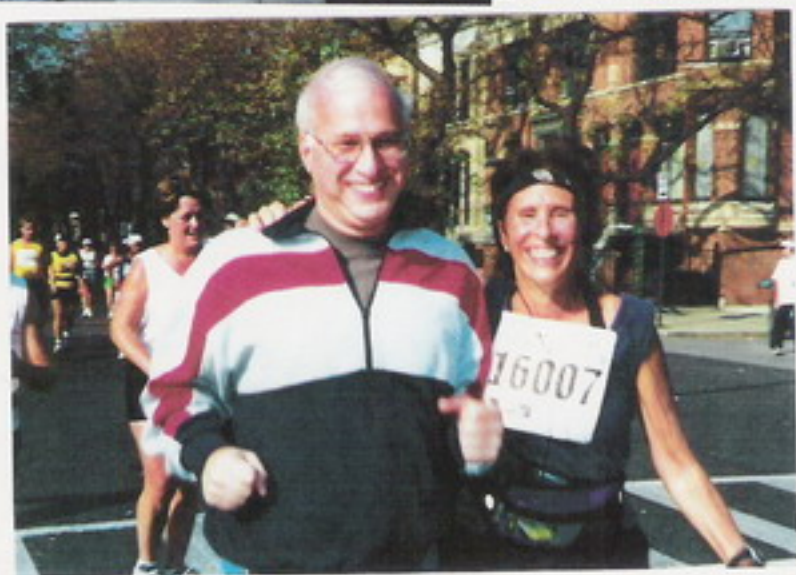
prediction about how much I'd like you correct. The last time we vacationed together in Muskegon, you made your delicious salmon with dill sauce and the legs of lamb. Four for 17 of us! You looked so cute running in, drenched from the rain that arrived just two minutes too early to let you bring them inside without a raincoat. But you wanted them to be perfect, as indeed they were, but for the number. Two would have fed us all. Ron and I enjoyed the leftovers for two weeks afterwards—and they still tasted great. Your touch was like that with everything. I'll want you back forever. It's going to be very hard not to see you again.

Joan Rapoport









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