

## **A Loving Tribute for Dianne Ruhland January 6, 1944 - April 23, 2011**

To me, Dianne was the master of a lost profession. An artisan with a craft from a different era. A calling for which few people respond. When I think of Dianne, I think of her fondly as a Home Maker.

A home maker is not a house builder. She didn't pound nails, pour concrete, or put up the stud walls of their house. That's not to say that she couldn't. Dianne most certainly could have. On top of all that she'd have made cookies to snack on and had supper ready at the end of the day for you too. Just be darn sure to take off those muddy boots before you come in the house.


Dianne wasn't about building houses, she was about building people. Perhaps more importantly, she was about building *family*. You see, people may sell houses, but they *earn* family. When it came to family, Dianne invested wisely and tirelessly.

Dianne got her start helping others at an early age, pushing her baby sisters around in a doll buggy. As a young girl, she pulled a nearly drowning Joyce from a silo sewer. She helped Paul with his studies while they were in high school. While she and Paul began with very little, they made the very best of what they had and they were happy. She cooked homemade meals; the family ate together and grew together.

As a home maker, she was there to provide comfort and support for hospital and emergency room visits. *Lot's* of hospital and emergency room visits. She was a bed-side rummy partner while recovering from knee surgery and the nurse on call when struggling with a high-risk pregnancy.

Her enthusiastic support extended well beyond the hospital. It extended to the track, the court, the field, and to the mat. To smokey bars, across card tables, concert halls, and bleacher seats. Through triumphant wins and devastating losses. Through broken records and broken hearts.

She taught us how to sew clothes, bake bread, balance a checkbook, and how to plant a garden. When she came to visit, she never came empty-handed. There were always pictures to



share and homemade goodies to enjoy. She was the hub of a vibrant and loving family, a social network long before anyone knew what Facebook or the internet was. She was an adoring grandmother known for reading stories, playing polar bear, hosting tea parties, and making monkey bread.

Yes, Dianne did all of those things. But what set her apart was *how* she did them. Her handwriting, even at an early age, showed a sense of pride, consistency, and meticulousness. She clearly believed that a job worth doing is worth doing right. If the hem was done but it wasn't done right, you ripped it out and did it again. Dianne taught best by example, through actions and deeds, not words and mandates. She allowed us to make mistakes and helped us learn from them. She encouraged our successes and helped us learn from those too.

Her skill as a home maker was not confined to just her own children. We all benefitted from her pride and her praise and her unconditional love. She didn't have to agree with you to understand your value as person or to show you respect. You knew you were loved and you knew she was proud of you. Dianne showed a keen balance between strength and gentleness, between patience and resolve, and between expectations and support.

Perhaps the most important thing Dianne taught us was how to take care of each other when she was no longer there to take care of us. We can all be absolutely confident that *she did the job right*.

Just last Sunday, many of us gathered to do exactly that - *to take care of each other*. Several of our family gathered around a dining table sharing a home made meal and going through some of Dianne's photo albums.

*Together* we helped work through shock, grief, and unpleasant details and preparations. *Together* we shared memories and stories, laughter and tears, hugs, and support. *Together* we grew as a family.

**You see, Dianne understood that a solidly-built house may withstand wind and rain, but a solidly built family can withstand *anything*.**

This tribute was presented at Dianne's Funeral Mass on April 29, 2011