

## Likeable, Laudable, Lovely Lydia

By Sylvia Grosh

When I think about my mother, a beautiful handful of attractive alliterative adjectives gather in my mind and capture well many aspects of who my mother was.

**Lovely.** The word lovely works for Mom on several levels. Mom had a freshness and loveliness about her that started inside, in her spirit, and flowed out. Mom enjoyed beauty. She always took the time to dress nicely. She made our home lovely with her organizational skills, cleanliness, creativity and tidiness. She made beautiful things for us, including multitudes of outfits meticulously cut out on our dining room table and sewn up on her Singer sewing machine. She carefully and lovingly hand-crafted gifts for us that took hundreds of hours to make.

**Likeable.** Mom loved the people in her world, and drew them in with her hospitality. Loving and caring for others so well is part of what made Mom likeable. She enjoyed people and we enjoyed her.

**Lady-like.** Mom was a well-bred lady through and through. She had that genteelness that we associate with old-school up-bringing.

**Literate.** Mom was well-educated, and brought that education into our home. She made sure we used grammar correctly, and helped us develop a robust vocabulary. She invested hundreds of hours into reading to her young family daily from a variety of genres, including Christian biography, missionary biography, historical fiction, classics, and just-plain-fun-literature. From CS Lewis, to Laura Ingalls Wilder to Rudyard Kipling to AA Milne, she read them all to us and many more. Not only was she well-read, she was also well-versed in a wide variety of board games and she happily played hundreds of hours of family games around the table with us and with friends. Scrabble, Probe, Sorry, Flinch and Clue were some of the games that she enjoyed.

**Laid-back.** Mom never seemed to be impatient or in a hurry. Although she was always on time for things, she accomplished that in a laid-back manner that permeated everything she did. She knew how to plan enough time for what needed to be accomplished so that she would not have to live life rushing from one thing to the next. She also did not demonstrate impatience toward others in her life.

**Luminous.** Mom had a soft luminous glow about her. She was generally smiling, and she let God's love flow through that smile to touch those in her household or place of work. Her good mood positively impacted those around her.

**Loyal.** Mom was quietly loyal to her family and friends. She was unwavering and steadfast in her devotion to God and to us. She was a staunch support and helpmeet to Dad, staying at his side for 59 adventurous years.

**Lilting.** Not only can we say that Mom herself could be characterized by having a quietly buoyant life-rhythm, but she also infused our home with music. We were often treated to beautiful classical concerts as she sat at her piano. She practiced singing with friends in our home for special music presentations. She played both classical and sacred records. And usually, when we worked together in the kitchen, she was quietly singing a hymn. She not only enjoyed the music, but she understood it, and brought it to us in a meaningful way.

**Laudable.** Mom was laudable in many ways. She set us an example as a hard-working woman. She wasn't afraid to roll up her sleeves and jump into scrubbing or sewing or cooking or washing or typing. She gave thousands of hours to the task of preparing Scripture for

publication in many minority languages. She poured out her life in in a laudable manner in love and service for God and for others.

**The lovely, likeable, lady-like, literate, laid-back, luminous, loyal, lilting, laudable Lydia!** “A woman of noble character, who can find? .... A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”

## **Remembrances**

By Stuart Carlson

Mom loved birthday parties and because of her dementia we threw quite a few parties for her this year. After living with my sister Judy for four and a half years, Mom moved in with us. At this point, her dementia had progressed. She was a joy to have her with us, but when she had her frequent UTIs which exacerbated her dementia symptoms, she could be a challenge to get along with. We did enjoy having her with us and I enjoyed many hours sitting on the back porch watching the birds with her, and I felt privileged to be taking care of my Daddy's princess. One day we were watching a Little House on the Prairie episode that included a church service where the congregation sang "Bringing in the Sheaves". Hearing and seeing that, Mom got it in her head that she needed to go to church NOW. We told her it was not Sunday and that neither her Sunday School class nor church would be in session. Since we were not offering to take her there she said she was going to walk there. Jesse, the caretaker who came to care for her three times a week, rushed out the door to go with her, but in her hurry left her phone behind. After about half an hour Ruth went looking for them. Mom had walked up a fairly steep hill, walking about half a mile. Ruth helped Mom into the van and drove her to her church parking lot. Recognizing it and seeing no cars parked, Mom allowed that maybe there was no church service going on.

One of the recurring themes was that she wanted to go home. During those times we could not convince her that she WAS home. When she got it in her mind to go, she would just take off walking to get there. After dark on October 31 she said it was time to go home and so she and I started walking. We walked up the hill to Camp Wisdom and headed east. After about half a mile, she was exhausted and said, "I guess I have to give up". Since her walker is the kind with wheels and a seat, I got her seated and wheeled her back.

She still wanted to go home and told us that one day she was going to leave and not tell us where she was going. That day was Thursday November 10. We thought she was in the restroom, but instead, she had slipped unnoticed out the heavy metal back door and headed down the rather steep driveway. Then she stepped off the driveway onto the gravel and fell forward. Oh, the pain! Her hospice nurse and the EMT guys who had arrived helped us get her into her bed and the mobile X-ray showed her humerus was fractured but that it was not a break that could be casted. She would be in pain but it would heal on its own. The hospice nurse got her pain management going and she slept soundly. When she woke up she was in Heaven with Jesus her Savior. She had finally arrived Home. She died November 13 on my birthday, three days very nearly to the minute after she had fallen, just four days shy of her 95th birthday.

What a birthday gift God gave me, giving my mother a sound mind and body. What more could a man ask for? HAPPY BIRTHDAY in heaven, Mom. Enjoy your best birthday party ever.  
Stu

**A Tribute to My Mom,  
Lydia Christine Wieboldt Carlson**  
by Judy Reed

God gave me an amazing mother! She was an example to me in many ways! She chose a wonderful man to be my dad, and she honored him as the head of the house. She courageously followed him to the mission field and supported him throughout all their years there, and beyond. She bore him five children, and valiantly took them places most American women wouldn't dream of going. She left the comforts of the United States, and went with Dad and three little kids to Jungle Camp in Mexico. She rode mules and took canoe trips and got in the river—all things that were *way* outside her comfort zone. She also studied linguistics. Eventually she pulled up her roots and, following her man and their God, she re-planted herself and her family in Peru, South America where she gave birth to two more children. During her years there she braved roaches, spiders, snakes, bats, rats—especially that one night when we overnighted at a little jungle army camp or something on the way to the indigenous village, and rats ran everywhere, keeping her awake all night! For 30 years she endured all kinds of critters. And she did so with pluck and without complaint.

Her walk with God was a precious, private thing for her. I occasionally got a peek at her reading her Bible in her room during her nap time when I was a kid—it was the only time of day she could get away and shut the door and be alone with God. I appreciate her example of faithful devotion to God. I also appreciate the way she prayed daily with Daddy for us kids and our families in later years. We needed that!

During our growing-up years, Mom cooked three meals a day for us to eat together as a family at the table. What a sense of safety and security we had in the routine that she and Dad provided in our lives. Twice-daily family devotions were always a part of that routine. When Dad traveled, she faithfully kept up family devotions in his absence. I remember one time when Mom helped us memorize all the verses of a hymn in family devotions. That was one of my favorite stretches of family devotional times.

Mom knew how to run a household efficiently and create delicious and adventurous meals on a missionary budget. She sacrificed endlessly for her family and was a hard worker. When I was growing up, she was often up before dawn in order to get the family laundry done before she went in to work. All missionary moms had to put in several hours of work for the mission in the mornings, and she enjoyed being able to do that. She then worked hard all afternoon and evening, caring for children, cooking, doing dishes, keeping the house clean, and faithfully

writing letters to ministry partners. Even after moving to Dallas she chose to volunteer out at Wycliffe when she could just as easily have decided to stay home and work on her own projects there.

She was also creative and spent long hours on her creations. She made each of her daughters and her daughter-in-law a lovely hand-crocheted fine tablecloth in the patterns of our choice. What treasures they are to us! She also more than once sewed curtains for her home. She sewed clothing for her family when we were growing up, including a cute little kangaroo dress that Pat and Sylvia and Jeanne wore as toddlers. She made Christmas stockings for each of the grandkids with their names and a Christmassy pattern cross-stitched on them. She also made lacey crocheted Christmas tree ornaments several years in a row, enough to send one to each of their supporters and give them to us kids as well.

She has always been a gracious hostess. She and Dad reached out often to single lady missionaries in our midst who had no families of their own on the mission field. She was happy to share her family with them. We often had company over for meals. Overnight guests were also not an unusual occurrence in her home.

Her musical talent was a very special gift to our family. How I loved singing with her. I also liked hearing her play the piano and enjoyed stumbling through fun piano duets with her. The blessing of her musical talent has reached far beyond our own family. Music is also a gift she gave back to God and she used it weekly for Him at the church until she could no longer see well enough to read the notes. I have it on good authority that she was much appreciated for her piano playing at church!

Mom's fingers reached near perfection in typing and later keyboarding. She has typed Scripture in many languages. People all over Peru and around the world are reading Scriptures which she had a big part in preparing for press!

She was a fun friend to her adult children. She was not a meddlesome mother or mother-in-law. She participated in our lives in positive, welcome ways, but never once did I see her interfere. She allowed us to be adults and make our own decisions and live with the results, good or bad.

She chose to keep her brain exercised by daily working on crossword puzzles and word games until she couldn't do them anymore. She also did an excellent job of keeping her body in shape. She faithfully walked ½ hour minimum daily both in Peru and here in the U.S. and often did exercises as well.

She was never moody—always upbeat, pleasant, and fun to be around. I don't remember hearing her be impatient or grouchy. Even when she was so sick that she came close to dying from hepatitis I don't remember her being cranky.

Having Mom in my home and caring for her for 4 ½ years was the cherry on top! Oh how I loved being her caregiver! What special times we had together! We often found things to laugh about together, and she loved to get out with me and shop or do errands or go to her Sunday School class. After dementia set in, life got harder for her. It was my joy to tenderly help her navigate

life as she battled that monster, which she did with such grace! The last several months of her time in my home, she didn't always know who I was. But after she moved to my brother's house, for some reason, she almost always did know me. It made my day to see her eyes light up with recognition and her face break into that beautiful happy smile of hers when I arrived bringing lunch for us almost every day. Love and joy mingled and overflowed as I hugged her in greeting and delighted in our time together.

Mom had a bad fall a week before her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday and soon went into a coma. The following evening her breathing became labored, and we all gathered around her singing hymns and reading Scripture. We had a precious 48 hours together with her and each other as we anticipated her Graduation. With a last gentle sigh, she woke up in heaven just as we were singing Face to Face With Christ My Savior. Can you imagine her joy, and that first celestial bear hug?!! Oh my! After Jesus, I bet Dad was next in line, followed by so many family and friends who preceded her.

I love you Mom! And we all miss you so much! But we're glad you're Home!

Judy

### **From Faith Miller, Granddaughter**

Greetings, my name is Faith and I am Lydia Carlson's granddaughter.

First and foremost, I believe Grandma, or Lydia to most of you, is an extra ordinary woman. She esteemed others better than herself, was remarkably kind, thoughtful, and she was awfully encouraging.

She is similar to a door hinge. The reason I say such is simply because:

- A door hinge lifts up the door. Grandma encouraged and lifted us up.
- A door hinge helps the door accomplish its task. Grandma was very good in that department.
- A door hinge may seem insignificant at times, but it makes a huge impact on everyone's life, as did Grandma.

Thank you.

### **Open Mike**

#### **From Dorothy Hudson Ott**

Aunt Lydia has a special place in my memories every year on our wedding anniversary. When she arrived at Mark's and my wedding, she came and found me, and gently asked what we were doing about music. It was very quiet as people were coming in. I told her we had not been able to arrange any music, and she asked if we would like her to play the piano for us. Without any advance notification, she sat there and played hymns, and just played and played. It was beautiful and added so much to the occasion. Then, she also played on the spot in

accompaniment of the people who sang a duet. She was so gracious and helpful! It was a very special memory I will always cherish.