

A Powerful Woman

My Mother was a very powerful woman.

I made the case back in 1990, in our family Christmas letter, when Grandma (Wanda) Luders and Aunt Doris Weinheimer passed away.

Those fine ladies, and my mother in particular, do not fit the modern definition of powerful women, but in very real terms the way they lived their lives was a tremendous source of strength and a model of life for all of us to follow.

My mother never drove a car, she never held a job outside of the home (although she raised half the kids in Elma in her basement), and she never prided herself in the acquisition of the finer things in life.

Instead, her life revolved around the house my father built, her children, and her extended family that was always close by and very close.

She and my dad had their struggles, but they never lost sight of the big picture, faced their challenges head on and did what was best for us kids.

We were in church and Sunday School every week (what's your excuse when you live across the street?) and then it was off to Grandma Bauder's house for Sunday dinner. After dinner, Uncle Florian and my Dad crashed on the sofas, the women cleaned up and socialized, and us kids played under the ever watchful eye of Grandma Bauder...another very powerful woman from whom my mother learned the lessons of life.

At a very young age, and before the name was tagged, my mother was a "single mom" and had the "pleasure" of raising this 13 year old son all by herself. A memory that remains forever etched in my mind from that period involves my little 5' 2" mother waiting for me at the bottom of the stairs, when I was

giving her grief about something that escapes my recollection, and her giving me a right hook to the jaw that gave me an attitude adjustment that remains vivid to this very day. I'm sure I deserved it...and yes, she was a very powerful woman.

As I mentioned previously, she never prided herself in the finer things in life, yet we lacked for nothing. Save for her peanut butter fudge, goulash, and cinnamon rolls, Mom was not really that much of a cook. She raised a family of five on \$20 a week. Those trips to Super Duper with Aunt Carolyn every week yielded 10 loaves of white bread for \$1, chicken pot pies, jello with fruit cocktail (gag), TV dinners, hot dogs, bologna, and hamburger...even that gross Neapolitan ice cream, from which nobody wanted the strawberry, and those delicious Banquet frozen cream pies. As I say, we lacked for nothing because even the creamed peas on toast and scalloped potatoes were made with love. She always put her family first!

We learn by example...and my Mom was a great one to follow. She was one of those rare individuals who never had an unkind word to say about anyone. Given my obvious bias, and I'm sure due to the fact that I could do no wrong in her eyes (just ask Lori), my Mother was one of the nicest people I ever met and I'm sure many of you would agree. She was always very pleasant, impeccably presentable, and always put the welfare of others before her own.

The house at 2130 Woodard Road was her pride and joy and it was immaculate. You could eat off the floor at Aunt Alice's house and she and her Electrolux vacuum cleaner were inseparable. She and Anna Ziebarth were a domestic force to be reckoned with, although even my Mom couldn't keep up with Anna's boundless energy. Life on Woodard Road gives a person very deep roots and they remain with you forever.

On the subject of energy...does anyone have a memory of my mother when she's actually sitting down? I doubt it, because that was a rare moment indeed. She gave me the same affliction, because you won't catch me sitting down very often either. In

her later years, I have a visual of her in the family rocking chair, feet up on the hassock with a cat sleeping on her lap...that's a good memory.

My mom was all about family, be it her own, the church family, or the community. She never missed a birthday or special occasion and she kept every remembrance from every wedding or special event she attended in her lifetime. She prepared for Christmas all year long and those Christmas Eve's at Aunt Carolyn's house are a very strong memory and Mom always had a gift for everyone...even those Christmas babies who had a birthday.

Our families are the greatest gift we give to the rest of the world when we leave this life. We can find comfort in the fact that the love given to us, and the examples of how to live our lives, will be passed on through to the generations that follow.

Alice Laura Bauder, Alice Luders, Aunt Alice, Aunt Al, Mrs. Luders, Grandma Luders...Mom...gave to us all,

a life full of lessons by the way she lived it,

a life full of love by the way she shared it,

and a life full of faithful service to the Lord.

Yes, she was a very powerful woman and as she always told me,

"Don't worry about me, I'm fine"

...yeah Mom, I know...