

Memories of Grandma Richman

By Diane Nelson Spafford

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She was the best grandma in the whole world! Growing up with her was a highlight of my life.

Three or four times a year, Mom (Reta Nelson), me, and Donna would drive to Salt Lake and stay in a hotel overnight. We would spend all day shopping. I thought she was so rich! She always gave us some dollar bills and quarters.

She lived in a tiny one-bedroom house, but it was my favorite place to go. She always had Pepsi and Twinkies for us. She also made us toast with grape jelly. Loved it! Every Sunday after church, we went to her house for dinner. It was usually roast, mashed potatoes, and gravy. My cousins and Lynn and Joyce came, too. We talked, laughed, and watched Ed Sullivan on her little TV.

She came to every event we ever had—programs with church, dance reviews, graduations, baptisms, and eventually weddings.

One year, she decided to go with us on a vacation to Yellowstone. Lynn and Joyce went also. They stayed in a travel trailer and we stayed in a cabin. That night, everything started shaking and roaring. It was an earthquake! Grandma threw the covers off and jumped right into her shoes and laced them up before any of us could even get out of bed! (We laughed about it later.)

It was the biggest quake to ever hit Yellowstone. Roads were blocked from mountains coming down. Camp sites were buried. A new lake was formed, later called Quake Lake.

Grandma ran outside and yelled, “It’s an earthquake!” We all went to Lynn’s trailer and, to our great relief, they were all safe. Aftershocks continued for a few days. Grandma was a trooper!

Another trip we went on was back east to pick up by brother, Mike, from his mission in the Atlantic States Mission. What a wonderful experience. Grandma said over and over how unbelievable it was that she could go. We visited all the historic places in Philadelphia, Washington D.C., New York, etc. We also stopped at all the church history places, too. We saw the Sacred Grove, Liberty Jail, Nauvoo Temple, etc. We also went to the New York World's Fair and saw Mary Poppins at Radio City Music Hall. It was so fun to have her with us.

All my friends told me how lucky I was to have the "perfect grandma," and they were right! I loved her with all my heart and vowed that I was going to be the same kind of grandma to my kids.

One day, Mom called me when I was living in Sandy with my little family and told me Grandma had a stroke. I went straight to Brigham with my kids and saw her in the hospital. She couldn't talk and it was so pitiful. After that, she went into a nursing home and we would visit her weekly. During that time, I was expecting my last baby. She would point to my stomach and clap. After I had little Amy, she passed away and I didn't want to tell Grandma, so Mom and I went to see her. She pointed at my stomach and looked surprised and made a cradling with her arms. I knew then that she knew what was going on around her, so I told her the baby had died in her sleep when she was 3 days old. Grandma put her hands on her face and cried. She then said as clearly as ever, "It should have been me."

I know she always loved me. I knew she always would. I knew she was in Heaven with my little Amy and it has been a great source of comfort for me.

I can't wait to see Grandma again and tell her face to face what a marvelous blessing she was—and is—to me.

Love you, Grandma.

Diane