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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Warm Tributes Paid To Columnist's Wife

By NEIL A. MATHESON

SO MANY people have voiced such warm tributes to the lady who made our house a wonderful home, I feel you expect me to pay a final tribute myself. Most of you know that I have talked about her many times in this column when she was in good health, as well as after she suffered a severe stroke two years ago.

Of all the many tributes I like these paid by two people who lived in our home when they were students at PWC.

One is a mother of a fine family, then she was a shy young girl.

She said in part, "In comparison to other people, I've always felt that the Mathesons lived many lifetimes together."

The same lady wrote "Once . . . just shortly after meeting you both, an unkind person said 'You are poor.' I always felt so sorry for her because I am so much richer just knowing the two of you."

Big Smile Of Welcome

SHE ADDED she always remembered coming to our house and Mrs. Matheson "opening wide the door at 291 Kent. . . with the biggest smile of welcome I have ever seen."

The other letter came from a professional man who recalls Mrs. Matheson's kindness to him when he "was just a kid from the country." He was "made to feel and be a part of the home."

Closing his reference he said "If I can have the opportunity to look back on my life during its fading hours, and realize that I have even come close to the goal she attained, then I would be happy.

I have chosen these tributes because both of the letter writers had told our loved one of their feelings and appreciation of her effort while she was still alive.

When I add a personal tribute of my own, the situation is the same. I had told her many times of my love and my high regard for her, how the privilege of sharing my life with her was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. Compared with anything else, and I've had some wonderful experiences – well there just wasn't any comparison.

Several persons have written "you must have had a wonderful life together". Looking back on our life together I cannot imagine anything that possibly could have been better.

No matter how rough the day or night had been – there were times when the road of life was rough – somehow the burdens of care started falling away as I turned the car for home, and the lady who never did stop being my wonderful sweetheart.

Thinking Of Others

HER THOUGHTS were always for someone else, and particularly for her own family.

In her last week on this earth she had grown terribly weak, she was nauseated much of the time, she was often in pain, always in distress. Yet she asked a visiting neighbor lady "Could you give Neil a pan of biscuits sometime this winter when he is alone?" Despite her pain, and suffering, she was always thinking of somebody else.

My daughters, my son-in-law and I were almost overwhelmed by the large number of people who came to the funeral home to pay their respects to our loved one and extend their sympathy to us in our loss.

They came from all over the Island. I know of people from Alberton and Alma in the West to Souris, and even farther in the East. Cards and messages of sympathy are pouring in at the rate of 50 to 70 a day. A New Brunswick man writes "I have never met you, yet I feel I know you through "Across the Island" which we enjoy, the he adds his thoughtful message.

Warmth Of Greetings

GRATEFULLY, HUMBLY we acknowledge the wealth and the warmth of your greetings and your expressions of sympathy.

Our life together was all too short, for both of us. Yet I keep remembering this friend who said we "lived many lifetimes together".

Some were disappointed that the coffin was closed. Our loved one suffered so painfully and so long, her appetite was all but non-existent for so long, I could not possibly make you realize how thin and worn she was at the last. That's why the coffin remained closed.

I wanted you to remember the woman you knew in her active lifetime, not the shell that remained after sickness and pain had finally drained away her life.

"Is Not To Die"

EARLY THIS week a lady who had long been a friend of both of us wrote:

"To live in the hearts of those who love is not to die."

What a beautiful thought to end this humble tribute.

My hope is that the words I have used to express these thoughts in our bereavement, may serve in some measure at least to voice the thoughts of all those who have recently been sorely bereaved in whatever home this paper may enter.