

## Vergie Leen (Eaton) Dawson (1916-1997)

### A Tribute to Gram!

3 September 2022



It's hard to believe that this coming weekend (September 3) will be 25 years since Gram went home to be with the Lord. Martha and I wanted to recall some of the wonderful memories that we have of her and thank her for all she did for us for so many years. Right now, our dear Martha is in such terrible, such unbearable pain with her sciatica that she will probably not be able to do this. We will have to wait until she is feeling better to get her thoughts. For now, here are a few of my own.

#### **The Frog Story**

I probably met Gram for the first time on March 28, 1970, when Martha and I had our first date. I have no idea what she thought of me, but I understand that Kenneth and Martha's Dad used to call me "The Dude" as they watched me drive up while they were washing fruit on the fruit washer. I'm afraid Gram's first impression of me was also less than favorable, due to the following true story. On a subsequent date with Martha, I gave her some seashells that my family and I had collected at Sanibel Island to show her class at school. Along with the seashells, I also had also saved the carcass of a BIG frog that I had dissected in Biology class a few years ago. When Martha wasn't looking, I slipped that frog into the bag that Martha was taking home. Martha then took the bag of "shells" home and tossed it on her bed. Gram saw the bag, and she was curious about it. She asked Martha, "What's in the bag?" Martha replied, "A few seashells that Bob sent for me to show my class. You can look at them if you like." Martha still had NO IDEA what ELSE was in the bag. I understand that Gram didn't dump the shells out to see the shells. She REACHED in the bag and pulled out the FROG!! To this day, I'm STILL saying, "I'm SO sorry!!" Mother's Day was coming up, and I was delivering flowers for my

friends who owned the Eustis Flower Shop! I remember bringing Gram flowers for Mother's Day as a way of apologizing for the incident. Again, I slipped up—I forgot to bring any flowers to Martha, a very serious error that I have repeated a few times over the past 52 years.

[BTW, I wonder what ever happened to my frog???)

### **“Martha, are you still up??”**

Another incident I remember from our dating days, after a date, Martha and I used to sit in the family room, admittedly sometimes rather late in the evening (or morning!). At some time in the evening, Gram would come out and say, “Martha, are you still up???” Translated, that meant, “Bob, it's time to go home!” Sadly, I usually didn't take the hint, and for that too, I must apologize. Gram was right! It WAS late, and it really WAS time for me to go home! I was just so in love with her daughter . . .!!

My most vivid memories of Gram were to come after the arrival of Robby and Philip. In my career as a math teacher, I had many opportunities to go to conferences, with some trips as far away as New York. One thing I have to say, I NEVER wanted to go ANYWHERE without my dear Martha, and in fact, because of GRAM, I NEVER did go anywhere without Martha. We ALWAYS left Rob and Philip with Martha's Mom and Dad! They were ALWAYS available, no matter how tired Gram was, no matter how bad she felt, she NEVER turned us down on keeping the boys for us. And did Gram know how much they LOVED her for doing that? And did she know how much we appreciated her sacrificial help to let Martha and me do so many out of town activities together?? We just never understood how hard it was, how much pain she must have been in, when she did what she did for us. Like Rob's attitude towards Gram's “fish frying”. He used to talk about how much Gram LOVED to cook fish for us! He didn't understand that it was NOT how much Gram enjoyed cooking FISH for US, but how much she loved US that she would cook the FISH!! What a GREAT influence Gram and Papa were to our boys!

### **“Please, don't throw him out!”**

My favorite story about Gram was the time in the summer of 1997, near the end of her time with us. The boys were grown up enough that we could leave them at the house while we took a trip to New York for my visit with a potential publisher. When we got home from this trip, we found what was left from a party that Philip and some of his friends had had in our absence! Alcohol had been involved, and I

was FURIOUS! Philip was on one side of the family room when I entered from the other side. I was headed for Philip for a HUGE confrontation, when Gram, all 85 pounds of her, stepped in front of Philip! Gram looked up at me, and she pleaded with me, “Bob, PLEASE don’t throw him out!!” Her words, the courage she had to get involved and keep me from making a HUGE mistake, still ring in my ears and bring tears to my eyes! “Please don’t throw him out!!” She LOVED us ALL so much!! Look at Philip today! I’m SO PROUD of who he has become!! And so much of this is because of GRAM and PAPA’s influence on our boys, and THEIR influence in helping us raise them! The scripture from Proverbs comes to mind:

**Proverbs 22: 6 “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”**

### **A Godly Woman, Role Model for Martha**

My favorite INCIDENT or story may have been Gram’s intercession on Philip’s behalf to save me from making a TERRIBLE decision, but the MOST IMPORTANT was the influence that Gram had on Martha when she was growing up and even after we were married! When I was in high school, I remember people telling me that if you want to know what your GIRLFRIEND will be like in a few years, just look at HER MOTHER!! If Gram is watching me write this paper from a Portal in Heaven, I want her to know that this is EXACTLY what is happening to my Martha. No wonder I fell in love with her! She is SO MUCH like GRAM! In fact, in Philip’s tribute “Papa and Gram”, he stated “One thing is for sure Gram--I’ll tell my kids, I wish they’d met you!” Well, as you know, Philip has some VERY sweet kids, kids that have ALL accepted the Lord as their Saviour.” Indeed, it is sad that they didn’t get to meet GRAM, but they did the next best thing—they met their NANA, who has patterned her life after GRAM!

Gram, and her almost TWIN sister Aunt Pansy, were HEROES to EVERYONE in the family. We knew by the way they conducted their lives that they were SOLID praying Christians, filled with the LOVE of the LORD, demonstrating it in EVERYTHING they did! “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man [or woman] avails much!” And they were that! Gram and Aunt Pansy were “righteous women”, and their prayers did indeed avail MUCH!!

### **My Hero, Too!**

One more thing, Gram touched ME! I never had a “mother-in-law”! She was always more like a “mother” to me! I am SO thankful for all that Gram did for us for all

those years! Gram was and is the BEST!! Thanks, Gram, for loving us so much, for being an example of a Christian woman, and for inspiring Martha to be the woman she has become—so much like Gram! Thank you SO MUCH!

With all my love,

Bob