

Jane's JOY!

Eulogy for Jane's Memorial Service, Feb. 15, 2014.

Written and read alternately by her daughter-in-law Doris Perry Stam (bold), widow of her son Chip, and Clara Stam Flores, Jane's granddaughter and daughter of Chip and Doris.

JOY is what Jane poured into our lives. Jane was constantly pouring JOY into the lives of others. She was filled with JOY - irresistible, unquenchable joy. Aren't we all so thankful to the Lord for the joy we have known because of Jane? There is a wonderful acronym for joy—do you know it? It is Jesus, others, yourself. That is the secret of Jane's joy.

Jane was a vessel for joy, a conduit, a channel. Like this pottery pitcher I am holding, she was molded and shaped to pour out. And she poured out joy with her giggles, her smiles and twinkling eyes, her heart hugs, her myriad meals served without pretense or cold formality, her silliness and cackling laughter. Where did all that energy for joy come from? Why didn't she ever run out or show us an "empty" moment?

Refills! She tapped into God; she was a channel, not the source; she, like this garden hose she used so often, was hooked up to the supply of living water where there is never thirst or lack. Jesus said: "He who believes in me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" John 7:38 The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not lack; I have all I ever need! I am the Good Shepherd, said Jesus. And Jane believed this to the core of her being. "The thief comes only to steal and destroy," said Jesus. "I came that they might have life and have it abundantly." Jane had *that* joy.

JOY - JESUS is first. There is no real joy without him. Christianity is not a religion or a set of rules to keep, she would say—it is a relationship with the living Triune God. Jesus was not merely a religious leader with a moral life to imitate, rather, Jesus is the Holy God who lived perfectly, the way none of us has, and then offered himself as our substitute—crucified for our failures, hard hearts and secret shame. Jesus is the risen champion crushing the power of death, and now reigning over the universe. Jane knew these things as really true, not because she was super smart, which she was! She learned it from the Bible—the self-revelation of God.

She was a scientist, majoring in zoology, her father was a chemist, her husband a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Princeton, but for them, the universe was not a closed system where miracles were impossible and God was a figment of the imagination. She studied constantly to learn more and more about the creator God, His creation, and evidences of her heavenly Father's hand intervening time and space, so that she could help others see his hand too. Jane & Paul & Jack resisted modernity's insistence that rationality replace the need for divine revelation. She loved the natural revelation of God in creation,

and also cherished the Word of God, that reveals who our Creator is, and what He done, and will do.

Jesus was her treasure, not simply a ticket to heaven. Seeing His beauty, Jane surrendered her life to be His handmaiden, His servant, not perfectly, but she pressed on, until the last breath, to “know him and the power of his resurrection...”

Putting Jesus first in her life didn't preclude suffering. For years, a needlepoint poem hung framed at the top of the arduously steep staircase at Raspberry Ridge, her farmhouse home.

*One ship sails east, another west, with the self same winds that blow.
'Tis the set of the sails and not the gales that determines which way they go.*

Gram's sails were set by her Maker, Hero, and Friend, by his sustaining grace, she sailed toward the eternal home that her heavenly Father prepared for her.

Though her joy was exuberant, it was not the shallow smile of naivety. Gram experienced the gales of suffering and loss in her course. Her father died when she was a baby; she grew up during the depression and lived through two world wars. Together with her first husband, Paul, she walked through dark seasons, depression in the family, tragedies, and uncertainties; she had breast cancer in her 50s; unexpected widowhood in her early sixties; lost her son, my husband, Chip; then faced widowhood and cancer again in her final years.

Gram faced the storms of life as we all do in this sin-sick and fractured world, but her living relationship with King Jesus set her sails. The gales of life only impelled her on.

Just a week before Gram left us to be present with our Lord Jesus, I walked with her as she slowly shuffled from the living room to her bed for the night. She closed her eyes, from pain and weariness, and I supported her weight, holding her up and steadying her as she slid one foot a few inches past the other. Mid-way through our trek, I noticed a dramatic shift in her movement. She began to lift each foot several inches into the air before each step. “Grammy, what are you doing?” I asked. A faint reply in whispered song, “I'm marching to Zion,” her stride strengthened and voice emboldened, “Wonderful, wonderful, Zion. I'm marching onward to Zion, the wonderful city of God.” Though they were still shut, I saw the twinkle in her eyes. Jesus was her joy in life, and now, her joy is complete.

I am reminded of how Gram loved to watch and study birds. She loved to show us the baby blue birds, hatching in her yard each year. Jesus comforted her through trials with his tender, personal care for her, *“Look at the birds. They don't worry*

about what to eat – they don't need to sow or reap or store up food – for your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are of far more value to him than they are” (Matt 6:26).

JOY – Others are next. What a magnet for people! She was the Pied Piper, and we all loved following and enjoying life with her. My children had Peter Pan for a grandmother. She never grew up, helping us to “think of the happiest things, that’s the way to get your wings,” and then encouraging us to fly with fun, having the “abundant life” that Jesus came to give.

One of the first books we studied together, when I was 20 years old, was *Open Heart, Open Home*. Jane’s home was always open. No matter that the house wasn’t in tip-top shape—come on over! Stay for dinner! She could rustle up a banquet with no notice and no trip to the grocery! And she always had a job for you to do, and made you feel helpful.

Weren’t we all laughing and having a blast with her?! *Humor was an inroad to the heart, she knew*. She seriously wanted her son Chip to attend clown college, so he could use fun & games to introduce others to true joy and happiness. (Chip and Matthew Wright, “Staff Clown” and member of the Bible Church with Jane, would have been at clown college at the same time!)

After her first husband died, at age 64, Gram went ahead with a lifelong dream, built a clay tennis court in her back yard, and then spent over 20 years investing her life in children who attended Raspberry Ridge Chapel Hill String Camp in her backyard. She helped found the camp in 1992, with Nancy Brooks and Mary Frances Boyce, who encouraged their Suzuki violin students to attend, and also spread the word to area string teachers. Chip led the camp, conducted the orchestras and choirs, coached ensembles, led group soccer, and helped Jane teach tennis (you do realize that tennis racquets have strings, too! Thus the name: String Camp!) Doris helped organize food, Bible Studies, and many details. **At camp, Jane taught everyone to call her “Gram.” She offered herself, her counsel, her home, and her love as grandmother and friend to all.**

Jane was a bridge builder, a wall demolisher. Whatever the walls that divide people, she never hesitated to burst through human barriers and favoritism to fully embrace others on every level, regardless of age, race, health, or title.

Jackson, Mississippi, Jane’s hometown, was the setting for the movie “The Help,” which vividly displayed racism in the South during the 1960s. But the widows in Jane’s home had already given her a different model, and her aunt, President of the Mississippi Art Society, and the Jackson Symphony, volunteered regularly at the black school to teach art. During the 1960s Jane was in a serious car accident, and was unable to lift her baby boy. She found some black sisters attending college in Greensboro to move in and assist with the children. While most women in the neighborhood treated blacks like “The

Help,” the Stam family meals included the sisters. Car rides were given to the girls for school and church. A friendship developed that lasted through the years. Even the week before Jane died, one of the girls was in touch with Jane. It didn’t matter if you were high-fa-lootin,’ low-fa-lootin,’ wealthy, penniless, international and unable to speak English at all, highly educated, uneducated, old, young, deformed or demented with alzheimers, - Jane built bridges.

And Jane didn’t give up on people, just because they didn’t think the same way theologically. She kept up relationships with thousands! You should see her bulging address book. A bridge builder like her Savior, she prayed for and rejoiced to see reconciliation, restoration, even between parties who had not spoken to one another for years.

Jane intentionally studied how to care about and for others. Her children, Karen, Skip and Billy, learned from her, and have demonstrated this *so beautifully* as they sacrificially cared for her these last 11 months.

Jane reached out to others her whole life. She held Good News Clubs in her home for years in Danville, Va., and Greensboro, using Child Evangelism Fellowship materials to lead neighborhood kids to understand the gospel. Jane and Paul were counselors at the Billy Graham Crusade in NYC in the 50s.

Around that same time, Paul’s sister began working for a fledgling ministry called Young Life. Later in the 70s, after she had moved back to Greensboro, Jane prayed weekly with a group of ladies around her dining room table for Young Life kids by name. Doris Perry was a name she prayed for, before I ever met Chip or she ever knew me, and before I ever understood that a relationship with God is a gift of grace, open to all who will humble themselves, repent, and receive forgiveness. I am an answer to one of her countless prayers, that God would open the eyes of hearts and minds, to see this Jesus and his joy.

When I was 18 she took Chip and me to a Serendipity workshop where we learned can-opener questions to “break the ice” in groups and allow for each person to share about their lives in a non-threatening way, which could then easily lead to deeper questions and opening-up in a safe environment. *How many of us were able to be honest about the hurt and pain, the sin and shame, the disappointment and doubt in our lives because of Jane creating a space for us to talk, and to be heard. She listened well, and communicated that Christ’s arms of forgiveness were open wide on the cross to welcome all of us sinners, and that underneath every sorrow were the everlasting arms of the good and sovereign God, who, though we might not see or understand now, would one day make all things right.*

Jane was thrilled for us to be a part of the Chapel Hill Bible Church during college. Her son Skip was one of the first elders! I was a baby Christian,

and didn't know the answer to a single question when the Stam family played Bible Quiz. But Jane encouraged me to attend Bible Study, and I grew like crazy. Dozens and dozens of ladies had a blast at BSF in Jane's discussion groups; hundreds and hundreds could see and savor the Savior in new ways through Bible Studies, tennis lessons, retreats, and events that Jane led. Her delight was to point people to Jesus. Jesus filled her up, and she overflowed to all of us.

Jane was consistently, unreservedly, unconditionally loving and supportive to me, even when I was not at my best. She overlooked faults, hoped and thought the best of others. She welcomed me into her life and her home lavishly, always opened armed and generous.

In college, Gram embraced God's heart not only for "others" around her here in the US, but for the "others" in the distant corners of the world. Gram and her first husband Paul were deeply impacted by the way God poured out his Spirit at Wheaton during their years there, giving all a love for and burden for those without access to the message of Christ. They sent their friends all over the world as Christian leaders and missionaries. Paul's uncle's martyrdom in China in 1934 motivated many to offer their lives as Ambassadors for Jesus Kings, to bring the saving message of his grace to the remote places of the earth.

Paul and Jane double dated with Billy and Ruth Graham while at Wheaton. Jane's second husband, Jack Miner, chose to be a missionary doctor during these same years attending Wheaton, and later served in India and many other countries. Minds were on the global gospel, anticipating that people from every nation, tribe and language, the global church, would worship Jesus. Gram had a heart for the world! Their Wheaton classmate Jim Elliot challenged Jane and Paul before his martyrdom in Ecuador with these words, *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot loose."*

When I was little, I would stay with Gram sometimes for weeks at a time. Following her mother's example, Gram would let me crawl into bed with her and together we would read this book, *You Can Change the World*. A to Z, we would learn about and pray for the physical and spiritual needs of different children around the world (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, etc.).

I actually thought that we went to China each Friday night when I tagged along with Gram, teaching Conversational English (Southern English, of course) to Chinese at the Bible Church. My earliest memory of baptism is watching the Chinese church baptizing new believers on Gram's side porch, in the hot tub.

She met weekly to pray for the church's missionaries with her "World Serious" ladies, and with the Mission Prayer group. Her bookshelves are filled with missionary biographies, Lausanne and Urbana literature, while missions magazines cover the coffee table. Ever eager to learn, Jane was emailing and encouraging folks

around the globe just as soon as the technology became available—years before most grandmothers ever knew how to even log-in. Next to her computer she'd taped up special communication guidelines for emailing missionaries living in high security countries.

Gram did change the world, and taught many of us the simple secret of how. She changed the world each time she prayed, "Father, we are so thankful that we can come into your presence through Jesus, and we know that you is here with us now." She would talk to God on behalf of the unreached nations, her friends who did not understand her relationship with God, and she spoke to her heavenly Father on your behalf and mine.

The reality is, God himself is changing this world. He is the one who will recreate the heavens and the earth, the lasting change and enduring rest for which each of our souls longs. God is the one who will gather in, restore and heal people for himself from every tribe on earth. Gram taught and modeled the baffling reality that God invites us to participate, in His work of recreating others, through prayer

JOY - yourself, last, and the order is vital. In God's economy, the more you give to others, the more you have for yourself! Jane had lots of joy for herself.

Our own Mary Poppins, she could turn even the most dreaded chores into fun and games—challenging you to a contest, tricking you into enjoying dirty, hard jobs, and cajoling even the most stubborn grandchild into gathering hundreds of dried day-lily stalks at Raspberry Ridge for 1 cent a piece! Like Reepicheep, she bravely took on every challenge. Fueled by frugality, the most amazingly creative ideas tumbled, oozed, geysered (!) from her. Like Scarlet in *Gone with the Wind* and Maria in *The Sound of Music*, Jane would rip down the curtains (so to speak) and create wonders in a paradigm shift no one else would imagine.

The very first time I met Jane, on the doorstep of the tiny condo where she lived, awaiting the building of her dream-home with the tennis court in the very center of the house (*I am not kidding—she had the lot and the house-plans all ready, but Paul went to law school instead, and the temporary condo plan turned into her home for over 20 years!*) Jane gave me a happy, huge hug and invited me in to snuggle on the sofa with the family. I was stunned! No one had ever hugged me like that! And I never ceased to be stunned EVERY time I was with Jane; stunned at the extravagance of her love for others (especially the rather unlovely, or hard to love, or inconvenient to love!), and the shockingly silly or strong opinions and correctives that would come from her mouth, all the while keeping us in stitches laughing and laughing!

When Paul began UNC law school at age 50 (after Burlington Industries announced they would phase out the research and development area he oversaw), three of her four children were already at Chapel Hill: Karen and Skip in law school, and Chip a Morehead Scholar undergrad. Jane taught probably hundreds of ladies (including me) how to play tennis during those years, whipping out her racquet and ball-hopper from the front trunk of her canary yellow Volkswagen convertible, gracefully modeling the strokes and cheerfully helping the beginners. Delightfully attractive in her cute tennis outfits and straight blond bob haircut, being around her made you feel great about everything! I didn't know til years later that she was not naturally blond, but I do recall an advertisement from that time: "Blonds have more fun!" And Jane surely had fun!

Though she grew up without her earthly father or siblings, Jane never lacked for confidence. "When I was a little boy..." she would say, as she taught the grandkids how to fix something around the barn or tractor. As a child, Jane learned much from the household of competent widows in which she lived, and from her Mounted Girl Scout Troop—mounted, as on horses, that is. And every summer was spent in the North Carolina mountains at Camp Tanawanda, near Flat Rock. Jane went on to have a horse and pony for her own family and friends; she took her children and neighbors on many camping trips; she lead her daughter's Girl Scout Troop in Greensboro, (which still gets together!); and she taught swimming to countless kids and grandkids. When my boys were small, Jane bought her first Volkswagen camper-van, and we all headed out West for an amazing 6 week camping trip. She was always heading up some adventure or another! (I am sure I would never have entertained the delights of skinny-dipping had not Jane insisted I join her.)

Jane was undaunted by new things. She loved to study new gadgets, new technology, new theology, new scientific discoveries, and new biographies. Books, tapes, and videos filled her home. She attended conferences and retreats, ever eager to learn and grow. Games, educational or just plain goofy, were always happening when she was around.

Being rather independent, a free spirit, strong of body and mind, Jane never waited for others to take care of things...she jumped in and did them herself! She was a "can-do" person. Carpenter, painter, gardener, sewer, tractor driver. She could do anything with WD-40 (her perfume of choice), Clorox, and hot water. Nothing deterred her, baffled her, disturbed her. She had the peace of Christ that passed understanding! Freed by the assurance of her identify in Christ, belonging to her Heavenly Father, a child of the King, she was free to be self-forgetful, unencumbered by what others thought of her, she was never bogged down with "Did I say the correct thing?" "Do I look alright?" "What do they think of me?" For when you loose yourself, when God is your only audience and your only treasure, you will find yourself (your true self),

and lose the burden of clutching to stuff, or status, or anything this world offers. Her reactions to circumstances found their root in the cross, where she saw herself as debtor to God whose debt was totally paid, canceled, credited to her with the riches of God's grace enabling her to be rich toward others with boundless, bottomless, endless love and joy—coming through the garden hose of the Holy Spirit, tapping into the rivers of life in Christ, secure in the arms of her Heavenly Father.

Have you tasted the joy that marked Jane's life? Jesus offers it to all of us. In John 15:11 he invites us, *"These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full."*

One of her favorite hymns, from college days, was "May the mind of Christ my Savior live in me from day to day." The last verse is a fitting end to my comments, and I am sure this is what Jane would want you to remember about her:

"May His beauty rest upon me, as I seek the lost to win; and may they forget the channel, seeing only him."