



Sallie McPherson Miller

January 27, 1942 - April 18, 2019

“Sallie”

“Sallie”, I always wished that was my name - pretty cool, I thought. She was named for our Aunt Sallie McPherson, sister to our Dad (Lester “Fussy” McPherson). Back to Sallie ... she was such a pretty girl. It was thought that polio had crooked her spine when she was a pre-teen. Many X-rays were endured and her doctors recommended that she wear a brace which proved to be very uncomfortable and often cut off her breath when she maneuvered the steps up and down the entry to the DeKalb County High School while she attended years of high school. Many nights just outside the door, I witnessed her crying in the bathroom about her condition and the struggle she had to overcome each day just being a teenager and also overcoming the stigma of the treatment for the scoliosis. Even her beauty didn't block out the wrestle she experienced with the brace which was made with steel rods, leather straps, buckles and a prop which nestled under one of her arms. Graduation came in 1960 and she somehow managed to sail through it with a goal of attending nursing school after graduation.

Working on weekends and academia during the week were bound to be a grueling schedule. Sallie taught me how to read a mercury thermometer which came in handy for years of my own needs as well as my family needs. I don't think she realized how valuable that lesson was to me because it was simply a way to do her homework for class.

An impression of Sallie's work ethic was seared into my mind because many mornings I saw her leave wearing her uniform outfit. She was antiseptic looking, she was immaculate, stainless, and flawless in her appearance. The hat was starched to stand to attention, the uniform could stand alone because it had been laundered stiff (I can still remember the sound as she poked her arm through the long starched sleeves), the nylon stockings were without runs or flaws, and the shoes were polished white with the shoe strings currently bleached white. You knew she was clean and without germs!

Sallie was instrumental in showing us how to take care of our parents in their last days of

1986 and 1988. Although her instructions were perfect in showing me how to give a pain injection, I was nervous and often jerky in administering the shot - definitely not with the ease a true nurse could manage. Sallie directed us in how to give our parents a bath from head to toe, while in the home hospital bed; where to start, what to wash first and all from a pan of water. We were able to be excellent caregivers as a result of Sallie's knowledge passed on to Mother (Lessie Lyons McPherson), the other sisters (Martha Glover and Evelyn Jones) and me in Daddy's dying days. Daddy died first and then Mother two years later, giving her the same tender care as instructed that we gave Dad.

Sallie married Rex Miller. She loved him with an undying love until she didn't know him in 2018 due to dementia. They had a beautiful son (Michael Miller) that I had the pleasure of assisting her for two weeks when she brought him home from the hospital. Again, I learned so much from her skills of caring for a new born baby. I saw in action her unconditional love for the men in her life.

I don't have exact statistics of babies born or duration of Sallie's duty of nursing through the years after I married and left the Fort Payne area, but I'm sure the numbers are huge of the births with which Sallie assisted either the mother or baby or both.

This is a story of how adversity in life can be overcome and you can continue to press on and be a huge impact on people's life even if you have health issues and setbacks through no fault of your own. Sallie would not be thrilled with me writing this article and I can just hear her say "this is not the correct protocol", but she made an impression on me to press on during difficult times in my life. I asked her late in her life "who do you call on to comfort you when you are confused or scared"? Her reply was simply "My Lord."

Written by Brenda McPherson Cox

A memorial visitation for Sallie Miller will be Thursday, May 2, 2019 from 5 until 7 p.m. at the Wilson Funeral Home Chapel.

Wilson Funeral Home & Crematory is in charge of arrangements.

Events

MAY **Visitation** 05:00PM - 07:00PM

2

Wilson Funeral Home Chapel

3801 Gault Avenue North, Fort Payne, AL, US, 35967

Comments



“ Sallie was an amazing person and an excellent nurse. I worked with her at the hospital and was amazed at her professionalism as well as her sense of humor.

Jeff Lyons - April 25 at 11:49 PM



“ Thoughts and prayers are being sent your way, Michael, Evelyn, Brenda. Sallie and I had a special friendship all through our school years and after into our adult years. Sallie was always there with me during all of my "medical issues" child birthing and all. I would not have survived without her being with me. I loved her and will miss her !!!!

Helen (Lessley-Brooks-) Walker

Helen Walker - April 25 at 07:20 PM