

Mrs. Anna Blocher Davis Lank Jones: Oct, 16, 1907 – June 8, 2002

Some of you know our grandmother as Anne, and some of the grandchildren called her Nanna, but our family knew her as Nanny, so I'm going to still call her that today.

Let me tell you a little history about our Grandmother.

Early Childhood:

She was born in Wilmington Delaware.

Nanny never knew her father. He died before she was born. Of her mother, Roberta Buckley Blocher, Nanny would say, "She was a wife, a widow, and a mother all in the space of a year." Nanny was only 4 years old when her mother also died. She was adopted and raised by her unmarried aunt and uncle, Abba and Kenny Davis. During her childhood years, she developed a close and life long friendship with the Lank family, especially May Lank. It was over the many visits and dinners to the Lank household, that Nanny fell in love with Jefferis Lank, May's older brother. She told me her first kiss was one time when Jeff walked her home. It was a love that lasted throughout her life. Jeff finished college, they married and moved to Washington D.C. Jeff worked for Pepco during the War. They bought their second home on Arcadia Place N.W., which became Nanny's home for most of her life. My mother, Jean, was born and grew up there. My dad lived 2 doors down and they have been in love since mom was 14, but that is another story... Nanny would say, there is something special about the first love, but Jeff had a cerebral hemorrhage in 1952 and died at the age of 49. After Jeff's death, she started dating George Jones (the only grandfather any of us have known on that side of the family). George had also lost his wife and worked at Pepco, so they had known each other socially. They married in 1954, and while on their honeymoon, they called home regularly because my mom was expecting. I was born while they were away, and from that time on, she called me "Sugar #1" because she couldn't bear to call me "Jeff." {And I thought it was because she loved me best ☺}

Nanny and George spent many happy years together. There were more grandchildren and then great-grandchildren. They went on cruises and traveled together. And Grandpa George died a few years ago.

Perhaps because of the many deaths she experienced so early in life, and from the lost of her first husband, Nanny never seemed to get over expecting the worst to happen – though the worst hardly ever did. My mom called it, "Hanging Crepe," from the old term for putting crepe window curtains in funeral homes. {I think I inherited a little bit of Nanny, because my wife calls me a 'doom and gloomer.'} What is *funny* is that she was so wrong about herself. She couldn't get life insurance or health insurance because she was considered such a bad risk, due to her family history. Yet she lived to 94 years of age, and 90 of those years in great health, except for a knee

replacement at 80. In her late 80's, she trouped around England with my parents, just a few years ago, and kept up with my Dad, and out paced my mother, her daughter. Her mind was as sharp as a tack to the very end. She remembered birthdays and anniversaries and how much she paid in taxes and how much she owed on her bills. Her memory for things like that makes me feel like I have Dementia! She was fond of saying, 'Life was great until age 90, and then it was all down hill from there.' If only we all could be so blessed to have such a mind and health for so many years!

Nanny as a grandmother:

My oldest son, Jonathan, is Nanny first great-grandchild, and he spent many days with her as a child. When he got the news, his girlfriend came over to talk with him so he could tell "Nanny stories." And he remembered her things like "She taught me to shuffle cards... She taught me to play gin." After several hours of tears and reminiscing, she said, "well, what do you want to do now?" It was 3 am in the morning, and he said, "I want to play gin," and they played cards till 6 am! That is a perfect example of how we all remember Nanny. She doted on her grandchildren. Others said she spoiled us, but I don't think so. She loved us. And she gave us lots of individual attention. She taught me to shuffle and she taught me to play gin rummy! Her home was a place to get that special attention you couldn't get at home. Often there would be no other the siblings around – just you and Nanny. Her attic had secret rooms and passages and her basement had shuffleboard laid in the tiles. Her backyard led to the mysteries of a bamboo jungle and had hidden passages to neighbor's backyards and friends houses. Her garden and flowers, which she loved, always seemed to be a place of cool refreshment even in the hottest days of a Washington Summer.

And she loved to take us to the National Zoo. The zoo was probably one of her favorite places on earth (except for the Monkey house because it smelled). Smokey the Bear was there when we were children, and she loved the Polar bears, the seals, and the elephants. In those days, when she took Julie and me, we used to be able to buy peanuts and feed the elephants. And we'd end the day with root beer floats and milkshakes at Howard Johnson's. They used real milk and ice cream. She also especially loved the beach – from the early days in Fenwick to the days in Bethany – the ocean was one of her favorite places to go. And she got to see it one last time just a month ago.

Each of you will have some special memories of "Just you and Nanny." She took the time to be a good grandmother and had the time to give each of us special attention, and give our parents a need break.

She always worried that the youngest great grandchildren would just remember her as an old lady. But even on Memorial Day, she taught the youngest to play tickle my

knee and peanut butter and jelly. She won't be remembered as just an old lady, but she has a lasting legacy of great memories in all our hearts.

For Mom and Dad, and friends, you have a thousand different memories that I cannot express. How she would rattle her keys constantly whenever you brought up a subject she didn't want to talk about. Cocktail parties, bridge with the ladies, coffee with every meal, and a drink every afternoon at 5. She wasn't perfect, but she was someone very special. Her death will make us miss her. It will be sad for us, but it would have been sadder still if she hadn't been ready to go.

I heard it said recently, that "When we are born, we cry but the world rejoices. We should so live our lives that when we die, the world cries, but we rejoice." I know Nanny is rejoicing.

It says in Revelation that I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

All of Nanny's grief is gone. All her tears over the losses she suffered are wiped away. All her questions are answered about how her parent's met. I guarantee you, she isn't hanging crepe anymore!

Long ago I asked her if she were afraid to die. She said, "Honey, no." And she told me the story of accepting Jesus Christ into her life as her savior and Lord. When she was 8 years old, she went to an old-time tent revival meeting, where the famous, turn of the century evangelist, Billy Sunday, was preaching. She said, "I took a long walk down the sawdust trail, and accepted Jesus. (The sawdust trail was the sawdust in the aisle on the way to the altar at the head of the tent.) So, I'm not afraid of dying."

Lately, she has looked forward to dying. She wanted to see Jeff and George again. She was tired of all the pain, of not being able to read; she was tired of being bored and tired of being 'useless.' She was frustrated about not being able to look forward to getting better, getting up and running around again like she did in her eighties!

When I was last with her in May, she said, "I don't want anyone to be sad when I die, because I'll be happy." We can't help but be sad because we will miss her. But I caught a glimpse of her in heaven when praying about her after she died. She was having a great time. She was experiencing the joy of being reunited with family and friends. And she is experiencing the truth of those scriptures:

No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him - Isaiah 64:4

Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal richness of beauty beyond all comparison - 2 Cor 4:17

And the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they will obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isa 51:11

So when I saw Nanny last at the end of May, I said, I love you, and she said, "You know I love you too." I said, "If I don't see you here again, I'll see you in heaven," and she said, "That's right. I'll be waiting."

If you have never taken a walk down the sawdust trail, you may not have peace in your heart when you think of dying. You may be afraid of what you do not know and of the uncertainty. I urge you to do what Nanny has done. Take that long walk down the sawdust trail and invite Jesus into your heart. Let him be the Lord of your life. Then like her, at the end of your life, "the world will cry, but you will rejoice."

Nanny, we love you. We miss you. And we'll see you soon.

Eulogy given by Jefferis Kent Peterson
at Asbury – Gill Memorial Chapel, Russell Ave. Gaithersburg MD
Friday, June 15, 2002