

## **Arnie Godmintz, August 15, 2008**

First of all, thanks to all of you for being here today, to help celebrate the life of Joan Lee, my wife of 28 years.

Thank you also for being there for Joan when she was sick and when she was well. Thanks for the cards, flowers, prayers, casseroles, the Teddy bears, and all of the love and good wishes you brought to help us get through the past few weeks.

I wanted to start to tell you how great and wonderful this woman was, as an activist and advocate, for seniors, the disabled, women, Children, and all of the people who are getting a raw deal in our society. But most of you who knew and worked with Joan already know what kind of person she was, so you don't need me to tell you any more about that.

I would rather focus my comments this morning on what Joan was for me during our life together.

Because I came from the rough-and-tumble world of politics and labor unions, which seemed to emphasize the kick-but kind of approach to making things happen, meeting Joan, with her calm, gentle, and reasoned approach to getting things done was a whole new experience for me. Initially, I was very skeptical. But over the years, I learned much from this woman. In many ways she became my teacher, and while I was often a difficult pupil, I managed to learn a lot, mostly that the biggest, baddest, toughest guy often doesn't win the battle, or the discussion.

(Tell story of the governor's office.)

Joan also taught me an appreciation of the natural world around us, from bird-watching in the Sierras to the tropical critters of Costa Rica. The only way I could compete for Joan's attention was to become as observant and as interested in these things as she was.

As many of you know and have had an opportunity to hear in this service, Joan was an accomplished cello player, and played in a number of chamber music groups around Sacramento, and here at the church.

Joan was also a journey-level artist and poet. Examples of her work are on the table to your left.

Most of all, Joan taught me how to love and be loved, when I had believed prior to meeting Joan that these feelings didn't exist. Joan was my wife, lover, companion, and above all, my best friend. Joan became the kind of friend that I could share and tell everything: my hope, my dreams, my fears, with nothing excluded.

Some of you may be familiar with this poem by Roy Croft, about friendship and love, which was my poem to Joan. (This was often the way we talked to each other.):

I love you,  
Not only for what you are,  
But for what I am  
When I am with you.

I love you,  
Not only for what  
You have made of yourself,

But for what  
You are making of me.  
I love you  
For the part of me  
That you bring out;  
I love you  
For putting your hand  
Into my heaped-up heart  
And passing over  
All the foolish, weak things  
That you can't help  
Dimly seeing there,  
And for drawing out  
Into the light  
All the beautiful belongings  
That no one else had looked  
Quite far enough to find.

I love you because you  
Are helping me to make  
Of the lumber of my life  
Not a tavern  
But a temple;  
Out of the works  
Of my every day  
Not a reproach But a song.

I love you  
Because you have done  
More than any creed  
Could have done  
To make me good  
And more than any fate  
Could have done  
To make me happy.  
You have done it  
Without a touch,  
Without a word,  
Without a sign.  
You have done it  
By being yourself.  
Perhaps that is what  
Being a friend means,  
After all.

--By Roy Croft

In closing, I found this the other day in going through Joan's papers, and written on the top in her handwriting it said she would like, as part of both of our memorials, these words:

Do not stand at my grave and weep.

I am not there, I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.

I am the diamond glint on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you wake in the morning hush,

I am the swift, uplifting rush  
of quiet birds in the circling flight.

I am the soft starlight at night.

Do not stand at my grave and weep.

I am not there, I do not sleep.