

From Denny:

I think we would all agree that we grew up in a loving family. We always kissed hello, goodbye, goodnight and good morning. In a way, we took it all for granted – sure we loved our parents and they loved us. I believe Mom was mostly responsible for that atmosphere – she could be stern when needed, but was rarely sentimental – and although there were plenty of hugs and kisses, there were few words of affection. Some of my clearest memories of Mom are those few times, some happy – some sad, when I saw her softer side.

I remember one day when I was probably about 7 or 8 years old, Easter I think, when we were all dressed up on our way somewhere (probably to the Balducci's) and I told Mom that I thought she was the prettiest Mom in the world. Her initial reaction almost made me think I had said something wrong – she was speechless for a moment, surprised that I would say such a thing. But then she smiled a very warm smile and said, “thank you, Denny, that was a very nice thing to say”. By the way, I really did believe she was the prettiest Mom in the world – but I don't think I ever told her that again. Why should I, she already knew it! That was the way it was in the Morrison family.

When I was 16 years old, I came home to school one night and was told that Mom was downstairs and had something to tell us all. I went downstairs – and Mom was sitting on the sofa with the biggest smile on her face – looking very beautiful. She told us, in a rather timid way, that she was going to have a baby. Her face had the most wonderful glow – a blush? At the age of 44, she was going to have another child – and she was embarrassed!

When Mom was dying from cancer, I drove down for a visit. Dad and I were sitting in the living room and he went to bring Mom out to join us. When she came around the corner and saw me there, she started shaking her head and acting like she didn't want to see me. I had heard other family members talk about Mom not wanting us to see her until she felt and looked better, but this was the first time I saw her act that way. She finally sat down next to me – and, after a while, I put my arm around her, hugged her and told her “I love you, Mom”. She put her head on my shoulder, and in a very weak voice said, “oh, I love you too”. That was the last time I talked with Mom. I couldn't remember the last time we had said those words to each other – or if we ever had. I am very thankful that I had that last moment with her.