



Jo Ann Price – A Quiet Fragrant Faithful Friend

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The Catholic book of wisdom says in Sirach 6:14, “Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter; whoever finds one finds a treasure.”

Jo Ann has become such a friend to many, mild, quiet, considering herself a helper, she does not like to speak before groups.

She was born in 1929, the year the rest of the world had, finally, adopted the Gregorian calendar for business, increasingly used since the 1582 reform of the Julian calendar. And she has traced her family back further, even twelve generations to Scotland in 1556, including Archibald Campbell (1607-61), 1st Marquess of Argyll and 8th Earl of Argyll, chief of the Clan Campbell, and at one point the *de facto* head of Scotland.

The lone daughter among four boys, her mother would not let anyone call her “Jo”; she has always been “Jo Ann.” Of her four brothers, Bob and Jack were older, then Jo Ann, followed by James and John, the youngest born in 1942. Jo Ann, a mere 13, fed John in the morning before school and walked him across town to the baby sitter.

“Sometimes,” she said, “I would be late for school, but they never counted me late, because they knew what I was doing.” All of her life – people trusted Jo Ann. She is meek and without offense.

She was born in New Lexington, Oh., where her father, Virgil Adam Campbell, worked for 19 years as a milkman for the Clouse and Snider Dairy. “Though father had been a milk man,” Jo Ann said, “we never went to bed hungry. We had a garden and my mother sewed every stitch I wore.” In her living room is the Grandfather’s Clock that her father made, as seen in the photo, with the embroidery she did. The pride in her family and roots glows about her home.

Then her father worked for The Flixible Company (oddly spelled, still pronounced *flexible* from the original Flexible Sidecar Co.) that made motorcycle sidecars, funeral cars, ambulances, and buses. He started as a carpenter and became a machinist. Her mother worked there too, after they retooled to make nose cones for airplanes in WWII.

Just before Jo Ann began her ninth grade, they moved to nearby Loudonville, Oh., which is known as the “Canoe Capital of Ohio” for the many canoe stations along the Mohican River. She graduated HS in 1947.



She loved her father and fondly remembers his ingenuity. Though he left school at 10 years old, he never stopped learning and had an uncanny talent with machinery. One time three engineers constructed a machine, but could not get it to work, and her father figured out it was put it together backward. He built most of their furniture and even made his own car. When her father went to General Motors (GM), he taught himself about tool and die work, and the jigs and fixtures that made all the car body parts. "One summer," Jo Ann said, "he made an air conditioner from spare parts, fashioned a cabinet for it, all made inside mom's dining room."



Yet, do not think Jo Ann weak. "I had always said, I would know who I wanted to marry when I met him," she said with a wry smile, serene and sincere. "I had been dating since 16. When they wanted to get serious, I'd tell him 'no.' I always knew what I wanted in a man."

Jo Ann ran around with her friend Shirley Campbell (later sister-in-law). Shirley wanted to visit her husband Jim at the Army base, and that is how Jo Ann met William "Bill" Howard Price in 1951, when he and Jim picked them up at the bus stop.

Incidentally, Bill's grandfather and singer Ray Price's grandfather were brothers.

"Bill came along, and he told me, 'I am going to marry you,'" said Jo Ann. "I told him, 'I don't like to be told what to do.' At first, we decided to marry after his military service, but then he called, and we got married on May 5, 1951." Just two months after they met!

He was in the Army at Fort Bragg, NC, and she went to work at the transportation office on base, helping soldiers' with their requests for travel, meal tickets, and so forth.

"They sent him to Kaiserslautern, Germany," she said, "and I went to live with him there from September of 1951 to April of 1952."

After the Army, they moved around bit in the search for better jobs, from Boaz, Al., and back to Loudonville, Oh., where their first daughter Debra Jo was born. Then to Pasadena, Tx., where Patricia was born and Bill got sick from chemicals at Chipman Chemical. But he recuperated back in Galion, Oh., and their third daughter Lynn Eyrl was born. Bill worked two jobs, at a lumber company and at nights at a café. It was payday to payday.



They moved back to Texas in Channel View, where Bill worked for the Fast Motor Freight Company. Jo Ann fondly recalls, "When he would pass in the truck, he would honk his horn. While on a delivery, Bill met a friend who was going to work for the Anheuser-Busch Brewery in Houston, about 18 miles from where we lived."

Bill got on and stayed with Anheuser-Busch for 26 years, retiring 1991 after a stroke. After the kids grew, Jo Ann worked at the Citizens Bank and Trust in Baytown as a credit manager for 16 years, herself retiring in 1992.

Since 1976, she has been a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

While living in Baytown, since 1979, they spent the weekends at their place in White Tail Ridge, with many barbeques with neighbors, attending the Baptist Church there. When she retired, they moved to White Tail Ridge. On May 5, 1993, they celebrated their 42nd Anniversary, and Bill passed on June 1.

On their precious marriage, Jo Ann said, “I always did what he wanted to do. He was the man of the house, and that was how I was brought up.... He worked a lot. But he loved our three girls; like Charlie’s Angels, they were ‘Bill’s Angels.’”

Jo Ann’s three daughters call and email nearly every week and visit as often as they can. “They are such an important part of my life,” she said. She has eight grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren, the twelfth arriving just last week!

After Bill’s passing, Jo Ann stayed in White Tail Ridge for eight more years.

She collects hat pins and especially perfume bottles. At her last count many years ago, she had 350 perfume bottles, and guesses she has about 500 today.

“We had eight huge oak trees to rake. It was killing me!” So, in 2001, she moved to Woodville and joined First Baptist Church (FBC).

The FBC Melody Makers visit local convalescent centers to sing on the first and third Tuesdays under the leadership of Assoc. Pastor Mark Tolar, who reflected, “Jo Ann makes all the arrangements. She is a silent giant.”

“One Sunday, I was late to Sunday School,” Jo Ann said. “Ron and Karen Sikora called, but the caller ID came up Corpus Christi; I do not answer calls I do not know. Then they came and checked on me, knocking on back door. I had slept in late.”

Quiet – yet always missed.

Jo Ann has been a member of the Order of the Eastern Star (OES), the largest fraternal organization in the world for both women and men that focuses upon good character (EasternStar.org), for over 65 years of *continuous* membership.

Fellow FBC and OES member, Sharon Fuller said, “Jo Ann is a Godly woman who truly lives by faith and biblical principles.... an inspiration to me and my family.”

Jo Ann’s sweet life is reflected in her work with the Melody Makers and the OES; Jo Ann calls the active members of both each month to remind them of the meetings. And, she said, “To check on them and see if they are okay.” It is hard to find a story about Jo Ann, though, because she does not make waves. She truly is the silent partner behind the scenes.

Almost every morning, Jo Ann goes to the Woodville Nutrition Center to play 42. On Wednesdays they play Bingo for prizes they themselves bring (not money). There are many regulars, and she named another couple dozen of her friends.

For over six decades now, every week since Cherie Valdner and Jo Ann graduated from Loudonville High School in 1947, the best friends talk on the phone. “Cherie is so comical,” Jo Ann said.

One day at the Nutrition Center, friend Betty Bingham said, “I have something for you,” and pulled two perfume bottles out of her purse and gave them Jo Ann. Sharing a little fragrance of life! Many readily call Jo Ann “my friend.”

There are others in Tyler County, too, silent and precious. Perhaps, just perhaps, there is no higher calling, than to be a quiet, fragrant and faithful friend.

