

In Remembrance of Roberta Hodges

Our dear friend and fellow advocate ROBERTA HODGES passed away on Tuesday, 24 March 2009. Her wonderful and loving husband, Malcolm, called me to give details for me to pass to you.

Roberta became ill about three weeks ago. She was given an antibiotic for a week due to an elevated temperature, swollen glands, and elevation of white blood cells. Her temperature increased and she returned to her Primary Care Physician who determined that her white blood cell count was greatly elevated and sent her to the ER of Wuesthoff Hospital. Upon admission there, her heart rate was 190 bpm and her BP was 186/120. Malcolm told me that Roberta had FIVE Physicians who did their best to diagnose her problems and restore her to good health.

Roberta received an electric shock to her heart which put her heart back into natural rhythm. Her pulse returned to an acceptable rate and her BP and white blood cell count dropped as well. She was given oxygen. This lasted for three days. Next came the removal of her salivary gland and a bone marrow scan. DIAGNOSIS: Leukemia. Critical symptoms returned (heart rate of 195 and white blood cell count up to 50,000) and she was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of Wuesthoff.

Malcolm reported that all during her hospitalization, Roberta was conscious, talkative, and kiddingly asking to go home with him. She died suddenly soon after Malcolm and their daughter, Edith, left the ICU on Tuesday Morning. The ICU Nurse was monitoring her.

Roberta will be cremated. Malcolm and Edith are planning a Memorial Service for Roberta in about one month. I will pass on the information as soon as I receive it. Meanwhile cards of condolence may be sent to:

Malcolm Hodges & Edith Hanahan
3456 Swan Lake Drive
Titusville, FL 32796

As you may recall, many of you recognized Roberta in August of last year when I requested and you sent her Emails and cards in celebration of her 86th Birthday. You made her very happy (Euphoric really) and I thank you for it. Roberta worked so hard to get funding for RESEARCH for brain disorders. She was a tireless and fearless Advocate and corresponded with people all over the world in her search for information. She learned to use the computer and was always working, learning, and passing on information.

Roberta was a wonderful person: a wife, a mother, grandmother and a true friend to all. She was an accomplished artist - she painted lovely pictures, wrote poems, did ceramics, played the organ for her Church (St Andrew United Methodist) and learned to play the cello. She entertained the NAMI members (and others) numerous times with her poems and cello concerts. She donated her lovely paintings. She was a member of NAMI - Space Coast, Inc., for over 20 years and until a couple of months ago was the Facilitator for the monthly meeting of the Titusville Support Group of NAMI - Space Coast.

NAMI - Space Coast gave her a Surprise 80th Birthday Party and our then-Brevard County District 1 Commissioner Truman Scarborough surprised Roberta when he presented her with a Brevard County Board of County Commissioners Proclamation. We, in turn, surprised Commissioner Scarborough with a Plaque to recognize his untiring support and assistance regarding issues close to our hearts: help for people who have mental illnesses.

Roberta is at peace now with Bob (Roberta and Malcolm's Son), who died last year. Many of us (especially those of you from NEFSH where Bob lived and was lovingly cared for by your wonderful staff) celebrated Bob's life during a Memorial Service on 13 March 2008 (what would have been his 55th Birthday).

I hope this is a fitting memorial for a very special person who did so much, did not quit, and taught so many people (including county commissioners, legislators, governors and their staffs) what it is like to have a loved one who has a mental illness. We all loved her and we will miss her presence.

Best to you - God Bless,

Freda

Freda Schildroth
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