

## Eulogy for Puddin Foil

August 22, 1938 – April 28, 2010

Delivered at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church, Concord

Friday, April 30, 2010 by Martin B. Foil III

You know – the last time I stood up here, I was in my early teens and dressed like a shepherd.....

What a beautiful day to be in the house of the Lord, celebrating the life of a beautiful and remarkable woman, my mother, Puddin Foil, who has been called home!

You know, I could stand up here all day and regale you with tales of my Mother. Tell you about her amazing intellect, or funny stories about growing up in her house. Or I could tell you about her love for both the fine and simple things in life. About her love for coffee, or funny birthday cards, fine bone china, a well turned pile of compost or a job well done. I could drone on about her many interests and hobbies or her accomplishments, too many to mention.

But it's too much. How do you summarize the life of a woman who was as remarkable and universally loved as my Mother?

Yes, Mother was a woman of many talents and gifts. But now, today, as Mother, a devoted follower of Christ and Prayer warrior extraordinaire is drawn up into the bosom of Heaven, there are only two gifts of Mothers that truly matter and are truly worthy of our praise. Gifts that were so central to who she was as to be indiscernible as gifts at all. These gifts defined Puddin Foil. These gifts were grace and her extraordinary ability to care.

Grace. Mother was, quite simply, one of the most gracious humans I have ever known. She was the embodiment of grace. She had grace in such abundance that it would make you think that a lot of people were shortchanged of their fair share

of grace. Everyone was drawn to her by her grace. Everyone was touched by her grace.

Just yesterday morning, during the Bob and Sheri radio broadcast, Puddin was showered with accolades by Sheri – a woman who had met mother only once, several years ago, and only then for a few hours. Among other things, Sheri described her as one of the most gracious women she had ever met. Somehow, in those few short moments, Mother touched Sheri in a way that would have an impact on her for the rest of her life.

Those few people who initially did not get along with her were eventually showered with such grace and compassion that they became fast friends. She was fond of telling each of the four of us that we would have to “love them into submission” when we described some conflict we were having with someone. Obviously, this was a long-term strategy, when what we really wanted to do was punch someone in the mouth. But her strategy always won. Like rain and running water can wear down the hardest stone, her grace could always win over a hardened heart.

But as gracious as she was, it was still not her greatest gift.

Her greatest gift to all of us was the gift of caring – the gift of love.

Mother cared about everyone, and family most of all.

She was deeply and genuinely interested in how each and every member of her extended family, every one of her friends, children of friends, and friends of friends were doing. And this is a truly remarkable and rare gift. Everyone was truly important to her. She deeply cared. She truly loved.

For each and every single member of our large family, for every one of her friends, she could tell you any noteworthy detail in their lives or the lives of their children. When were they born. Where were they born. How old were they now. Were they married and if so to whom. Where did they go to school. What kind of

job they had. What was going on in their lives. No detail or aspect of what was going on in their lives was unimportant to her.

In participating in a class on new church development, the speaker noted that people were like lego building blocks when it came to managing relationships. Every person is a lego block, and you can only manage as many meaningful relationships as you have room to click other legos onto your lego. The speaker went on to note that research has indicated that most people have room for only 8 legos, that is, 8 meaningful relationships.

Mother had the largest lego of anyone.

Her family and friends were constantly in her thoughts and in her prayers. Everything in her life was secondary. Nothing in her life was more important to her than her family and friends. Even in the past few weeks, even a sick as she was, she took time on the phone to help plan the most minute of details for the wedding of the grandchild of a close friend. When she heard of a threat of a tsunami in Hawaii, she called her friend there in the middle of the night to make sure she was okay. Even in the hospital she wanted to know how my daughter Sydney, who hurt her back while riding, was doing. She was always deeply interested in how all our members of Hinds' Feet Farm were doing. She cared more for others than she did for herself.

In her last days, we took great comfort in reading to Mother from her study Bible. We were amazed and in awe of the proliferation of notes and annotations in it. Her Bible is full of notes, comments, symbols like hearts, teacups and music notes and.....the names of family and friends. It seems that whenever she came across a scripture verse during her daily Bible study that seemed particularly suited to what was going on in the life of one of her friends, she would note their names beside that scripture. There are a lot of names in her Bible. I've not gone through her Bible cover to cover, but I am sure many of your names may be found on a page somewhere. She truly cared. And what is caring but another word for love?

Puddin Foil - full of grace and full of love. Grace and love. Love and grace. And as the Apostle Paul tells us, the greatest of these is love.