

## Memories of Carol Thacher

I did not know Carol during our college days although I obviously knew she was a beautiful, outgoing cheerleader and a member of Tassels (freshmen women's honorary society) and Mortar Board (senior women's honorary society).

After she became a lawyer in downtown Minneapolis, she specialized in providing legal advice to businesses on various issues. As counsel at a law firm at the end of her legal career, she also was a mentor to many beginning lawyers. One of them said she had "taught me about professionalism, the value of practical advice and the importance of listening" and that he "realizes now the fundamental impact [she] had on my practice."

As fellow Minneapolis lawyers, Carol and I occasionally had lunch together for general conversation about legal practice, family, Grinnell friends and general issues of the day, but our relationship did not really start until she hired me to represent her Italian client in a lawsuit in state court in Minneapolis. At the time Carol was a partner in a small law firm that did not have litigation capabilities.

Although the client in the lawsuit was a Minnesota corporation, it was owned by an Italian businessman, and in reality the litigation was an intra-Italian family dispute or feud. As a result, Carol and I had many meetings and conversations about facts and legal issues in the case.

She was deposed in the case, and I was her lawyer. The opposing counsel was unnecessarily annoying, and I had to make many objections.

When our principal client contact, Federico, was in town for the case, he joined Carol, her husband (Steve Ross), my wife (Mary Alyce) and me for a delightful dinner at Forepaughs, a restaurant in an elegant, 19<sup>th</sup> century St. Paul mansion.

Later Carol and I had a trip together to visit the client in Bergamo, an old city in Lombardy northeast of Milano and the hometown of opera composer Donizetti. On a weekend Federico took us to Verona, where he had played trumpet in a production of "Aida" in its Roman Coliseum. Our walk around the city took us to the famous balcony where Juliet was wooed by Romeo. On our return to Bergamo, we stopped for lunch at a restaurant overlooking Lake Como. It was the best day of the trip.

As her class obituary says, Carol's after-dinner remarks at our class' 50<sup>th</sup> reunion were wonderful. She charmed me by recalling her student years when she was skinny and could eat anything she wanted and could sleep through the night. That also was a time when she "was so naïve a lot of life's problems and issues passed me by" and "could easily be surprised by the dumbest things." Then she "could touch her toes, walk and chew gum at the same time," and "the guys would flirt with me and ask me out on dates."

Carol's last days were spent in hospice care, and the day before she died, I visited her. Although she was sleeping and non-communicative, I told her that all of our classmates and I loved and supported her in those difficult days.

The Minneapolis *StarTribune* obituary guest book had these two entries from classmates. Phil Grimm said, "My heartfelt thoughts are with Carol's family. Carol was a good friend at Grinnell. A great dance partner with a beautiful smile. Carol made our 50th reunion a great success with her wit and charm. We'll miss her." Jack Erler added, "My thoughts are with her family. A long time ago Carol and I together endured psychology, worked at Wyonegonic and became lawyers in states with the first letter M."

Carol is survived by daughter and son-in-law (Marta Skluzacek (Brian) Drew), stepdaughter (Kerry Ross) and four grandchildren (Henry, Caroline and Elizabeth Drew and Asher Ross). Other survivors are Carol's mother (Beatrice Thacher), sisters and brothers-in-law (Sue Crolick, Ann (Will) Schmid, and Becky (Tracie) Bell), brother and sister-in-law (Tom (Su) Thacher), brother-in-law (Rick Ross), sister-in-law (Sande Ross) and many loving nieces and nephews.

Duane W. Krohnke