

# Stephen Toussaint

## Lessons from a beloved educator on the 3-Fs: Faith, Family & Fraternity

Ancient wisdom assures that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. But who knew that same teacher would reappear decades later when the student was ready for advanced enlightenment?

Such a blessing was bestowed upon me shortly after my 40<sup>th</sup> high school reunion when I was reunited with my Hippie-era English teacher: Stephen R. Toussaint.

It was September 2013 – roughly 45 years since I’d received my first homework assignment from Mr. T.

I can no longer recall with accuracy whether the challenge was to probe more deeply into why Thoreau went to the woods or what the Dickens Charles meant when he observed it had been the best of times and the worst of times.

The important thing is that Mr. T inspired me to think, think, think rather than to merely memorize, memorize, memorize and recite, recite, recite.

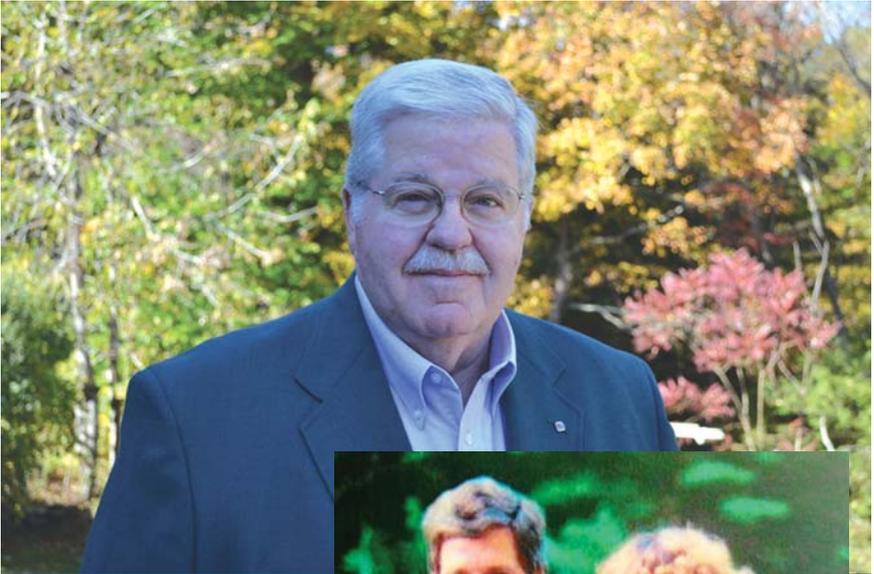
As per an essay I penned about Mr. T for the Winter 1999-2000 edition of *Saratoga Living* that is featured within the Magazine Memories section of [www.LegaciesUnlimited.com](http://www.LegaciesUnlimited.com), that lesson alone had earned him an A+ in my book.

How grateful I am that our story didn’t end as the sun was setting on the last century! For I was no more ready on the eve of Y2K than I’d been on the eve of my Class of 1971 high school graduation to ponder and pass along the greatest lessons my teacher had to offer.

Then it happened: The *Saratogian* invited me to prepare an advance story about the fact that Stephen R. Toussaint was preparing to lead Knights of Columbus Council 246 in a crusade to bring “solace to the saddened and sustenance to the poor with love and kindness, consistency and understanding.”

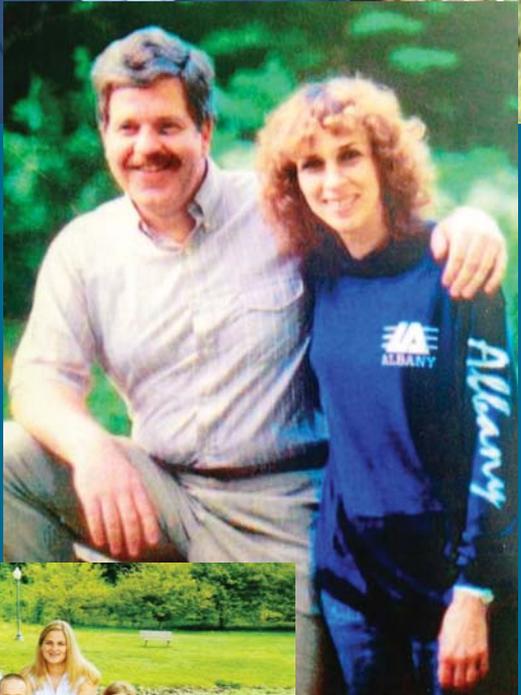
With just days to go before his October 2013 installation as Grand Knight of the 450-member strong Saratoga K of C, Mr. T shared that he would be seeking “new vision, new ideas and renewed energy” to deal with challenges that differ from those that faced his late father William when he had been installed as Grand Knight of the very same K of C Council 80 years earlier.

While the Order’s principles of charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism remain constant, Mr. T had reflected that the work was just beginning in other areas.



**MY TREASURE CHEST & MY JEWELS -- I AM A RICH MAN!**

Those are the captions Stephen Toussaint penned on the backs of portraits opposite and below. Photo with Registered Nurse wife Suzanne was snapped in 1973 after he earned his Masters in Educational Administration. Priceless picture at bottom includes all 10 of the now adult Toussaint children -- whose names appear in lower right corner. Portrait at top was taken by daughter Ginelle after her father was named Grand Knight of the Saratoga K of C in 2013.



Patriarch Stephen quips he and Suzanne, who wed in 1965, capitalized on the French Toussaint surname "to add another facet to our gems." Front row: Renee L'orient, Collette Marquier, Stephen Robert, Jr., Brigitte Loire and Allisse Rachelle; Middle: Neil Aaron, William Richard and Ginelle Dore; Back row: Marcelle Aimee and Suzanne Jemais.

Although he was only 19 when his father passed away, Mr. T said the example set by the patriarch of the family of seven children had left an indelible impression.

“My father was the primary mentor in my early years. He introduced a sense of values to me for my personal and spiritual life, the understanding of respect and love of life. There have been additional important role models and teachers for me in every walk of life. I am who I am because of the people who have taken an interest in me and my BE-ing,” said Mr. T.

“It is my belief that we are given this life to benefit others. It is most rewarding to actively support the work and effort of others we meet along our way through the years,” said Mr. T, who forged a distinguished career as a teacher and a principal in the Ballston Spa Central School District for three decades before taking an early retirement in 1999.

A member of the local chapter of the Columbian Squires during his teen years, Mr. T didn't become a member of the Saratoga K of C until 2007. This was in large part because he and wife Suzanne, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 2015, were so busy rearing their 10 children who have since gifted them with 13 grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Another reason: the former President of his fifth grade class at St. Clement's and three of his high school classes at St. Peter's (now Saratoga Central Catholic) has spent much of his retirement volunteering for secular causes. Primary beneficiaries were The Prevention Council where Mr. T served for 12 years, six as President, and on the Saratoga Community Services Board, five years, one as President.

Since joining the K of C, Mr. T's assignments have ranged “from washing dishes in the kitchen to being an inside guard” to serving as Council Warden and Chancellor. “It has been my privilege to work alongside many dedicated, action-oriented Knights,” said Mr. T, adding he would be doing his utmost as Grand Knight “to be present, in support of, if not working for, everything that Council 246 conducts.”

Mr. T's chief goals as Grand Knight included “supporting the sick and disabled, increasing opportunities for the growth of individual Knights in the focus areas of the order, raising funds to continue supporting individuals and institutions in our community” as well as “increasing charitable and fraternal opportunities for our membership.”

At the time Stephen Toussaint was chosen as Knights of Columbus Council 246's Grand Knight in 2013, District Deputy Rich Gorman said he believed it was “because Steve has a good understanding of people and good organization skills. he is not afraid to move ahead into areas with which he is unfamiliar and strives to realize the best results from situations that arise.”

What was NOT included in the piece I submitted to the daily newspaper back in 2013 was this delightful excerpt from one of Mr. T's literary pep talks to the Knights he was about to commence leading by word and deed:

*“It is with a humble spirit, a full heart and sincere determination that I take on the role of Grand Knight for Council 246 this term. You can expect my very best, persistent*



**WILLIAM R. TOUSSAINT** -- This portrait of Stephen R. Toussaint's beloved father was taken in December 1963 by legendary Saratoga Springs photographer George S. Bolster. At the time it was given as a present to William's wife Marion, neither she nor the couple's seven children had any idea the family's patriarch would pass away at age 61 in January 1964. The photo remains a cherished keepsake of son Stephen who wed Bolster's daughter Suzanne in 1965.

*and sustained efforts to fulfill my responsibilities on behalf of our Council. I am confident that I can count on the same from each of you (as) 'Many hands make light work!' (and) 'Too few, doing too much make the brave, well-intended, weary.' Know you are needed. Know that you are welcome to do as much or as little as you can, when you can."*

I like to think Mr. T's Dad was smiling from above as his read his son's words.

Please turn the page to learn more about the seasoned public school instructor-turned-educational administrator whose legacy includes having inspired scores of teachers and parents with the words: "*Kids don't care what you know unless they know that you care.*"



**ALWAYS A CLASS ACT** -- Counterclockwise from bottom left: Stephen Toussaint instructs a Ballston Spa High School English class in the 1970s; poses for a yearbook portrait as Principal of Malta Avenue Elementary School in the 1980s and bids adieu upon retiring as Principal of the Ballston Spa Middle School in 1999.





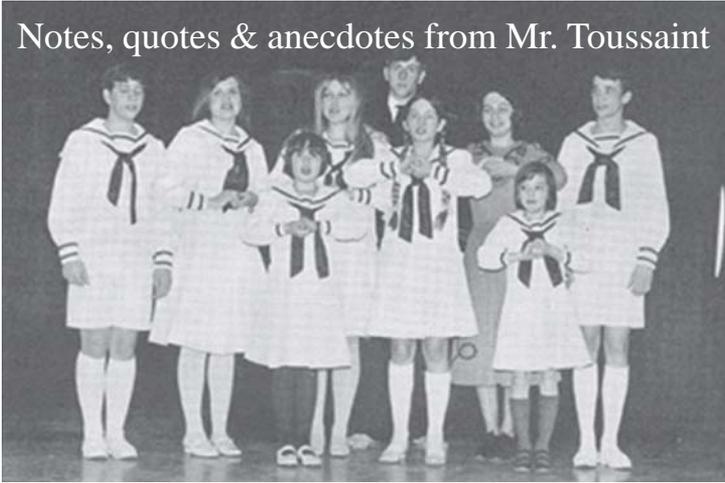
**On a keepsake quilt crafted by Humanities Department students:** “The absolutely magnificent quilt, which was created with a history museum donation in mind, is filled with squares depicting landmarks in the Village of Ballston Spa, which was chartered in 1807. I like to think that the quilt might be displayed as part of some future exhibit so that a new generation of students might enjoy – and learn from – something that was made by students of a now bygone era.”



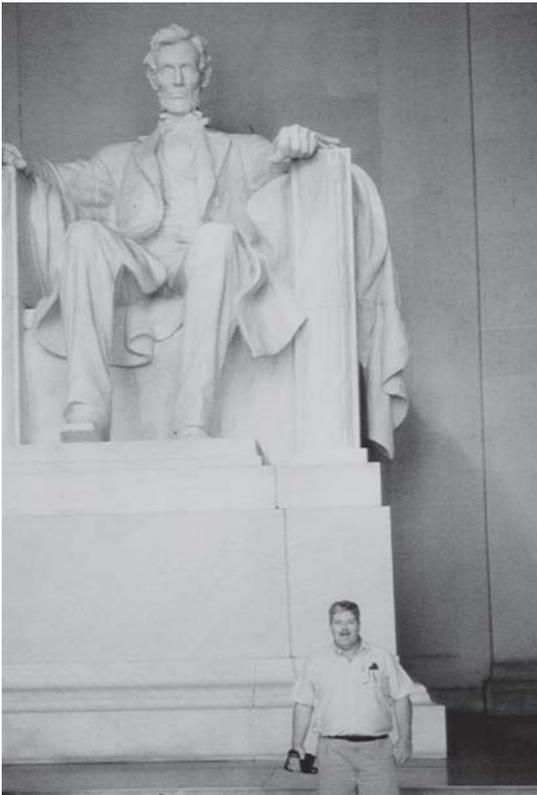
**Notes,  
quotes &  
anecdotes  
from  
Mr. T.**

**On making and preserving memories:** “I enjoyed getting to know Ballston Spa Middle School staff members (clockwise from left: Chery Camerota, Betsey Homer, Janet Ladd, Melva Meade, Anne Amedore, Barbara Neiman and Carol Piotrowski) better on field trips. To this day, I strive to stay in touch with former faculty and staff. And I always enjoy seeing and hearing from former students. It’s rewarding when bonds formed in academic settings last a lifetime.”

## Notes, quotes & anecdotes from Mr. Toussaint



**On directing *The Sound of Music* at Ballston Spa High School in 1970:** “Being involved in a high school musical production was a wonderful learning experience for me. Those kids taught me so much.” (Back row, left to right are: Ken Kilburn, Patti Gaba, Laura Stanford, Mike Petit, Maureen McCanty and Todd Waring. Children in the front row: Margaret McCanty, Bruce Rosch and Jaqueline “Jackie” McCanty.)



### **On visiting The Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. in 1995:**

“President Abraham Lincoln was one of the idols of my youth. Lincoln, along with my father and some of the Redemptorist priests at St. Clement’s in Saratoga Springs, all had a profound influence on my young life. I especially admired Lincoln’s ability to retain humanitarian qualities while being a strong leader. So when I had an opportunity to visit his memorial, accompanied by six of my children, while on the way to visit my son Stephen, Jr. (who was then residing in South Carolina), I jumped at the chance. Standing at the base of the towering monument, I was struck by the realization that a man who had been larger than life to me as a young boy remained larger than life to me as a man.”

**On playing Santa Claus in the 1980s:** “It took me an hour and a half to don that costume, snow white whiskers, rosy cheeks and all. None of the kids at the Ballston Spa Middle School ever recognized me. For a number of years, several teachers from BSMS also accompanied me when I’d visit St. Margaret’s, a facility for terminally ill children in Albany where my wife Suzanne, a Registered Nurse, often rocked and comforted babies. The teachers would be costumed as North Pole characters from elves to Rudolf. I loved every minute of being Santa because of the joy I was able to bring to the kids.”



**On downsizing:** “It wasn’t until 2014 when Suzanne and I decided to sell the spacious abode in Greenfield Center where we had reared our 10 children that we fully realized how many Christmas decorations we had amassed during our 40 years in the countryside. My sister Judy graciously offered to let us store the decorations in one half of her two-car garage. In July 2015, as part of our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary festivities, Suzanne and I invited our children to gather in the garage over the holidays to divide the ornaments and hopefully one day pass them down to their children and grandchildren. I had a feeling we’d have to cast lots for one ornament in particular. It features a snowman riding with a stork. That ornament always flew

near the top of our tree to announce the news of a pending arrival to our family. I got richer and richer each time the stork rode with the snowman. And you know what? It’s such memories that sustain us in our golden years. The big house was a home because of the people who shared it with us. We took those wonderful memories with us to our new home.” (The snowman stork ornament is now in the hands of the parents of the adorable infant below.)



**Special Stork Delivery:** This little fellow was “delivered” by the Snowman on the Stork (visible just above the baby’s button nose) on December 15, 2015. Cohen Sebastian Greenwood is the 12th grandchild of Stephen and Suzanne Toussaint and the second son of Suzanne Jemais and Kevin John Greenwood. (Readers might enjoy the Raining Iguanas blog by Cohen’s Papa John Greenwood: [rainingiguanas.blogspot.com](http://rainingiguanas.blogspot.com).) The newborn’s proud big brother is Caleb Kevin Greenwood.

As per the downsizing anecdote above, the Snowman on the Stork ornament has been in the Toussaint family for half a century. He also “delivered” firstborn Toussaint child Renee and has been featured on the family’s Christmas tree for every year that it has been appropriate to announce another baby was on his/her way. (News Flash: Neil and Suyanne Toussaint have announced that grandchild 13 is due to arrive before Santa slides down the chimney in 2016.)



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Several months after completing the preceding chapter honoring Stephen R. Toussaint came news of the passing of his beloved wife Suzanne Bolster Toussaint. A tribute to the matriarch's legacy that was prepared before it was known that daughter Ginelle had inoperable cancer follows.

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# A Fairy Tale Come True

Love and marriage were the last things on 14-year-old Stephen R. Toussaint's mind as he was walking along a corridor inside of St. Peter's Academy in Saratoga Springs in September 1958.

Yet mere moments later Steve was pointing out his future bride to classmate Jerry King.

"See that girl across the hallway?" Steve had asked his friend. "I'm gonna marry her someday."

Though normally supportive of his buddy's hopes and dreams, Jerry didn't even pretend to put any faith in this prophecy. "Do you know who that girl is? Her name is Suzanne Bolster. She's a sophomore. She'll never go out on a date with you – much less marry you."

Six decades later, Steve's eyes still sparkle as he recalls the indelible impression Suzanne made on his heart, mind and soul on that long ago autumn day. "I saw this beautiful young woman with a blissful countenance walking in my direction on the opposite side of the corridor. I fell in love at that very moment."

It didn't take long for future educator Steve to do his homework regarding the fascinating tenth grader who he remembers was wearing a block print skirt and a blue blouse the first time their paths crossed at St. Peter's – now Saratoga Central Catholic Junior-Senior High School.

"I eventually learned that, despite being a grade ahead of me in high school, Suzanne was only two months, one week and one day older than I. Once I did the math, things no longer looked as hopeless," he muses.

That's not to say Suzanne, daughter of Helen Baker Bolster and legendary Saratoga Springs photographer George S. Bolster, was quick to picture a life as Steve's wife. "I'd like to say I swept Suzy off her feet the first time I summoned the courage to say hello, but it took a lot more than that to convince her to agree to go out with me. In hindsight, I was a study in the art of perseverance. Suzy finally broke down and said 'Yes' in the spring of 1959 and went to a school dance with me – possibly because I'd turned 15 on my birthday in March."

The couple – who that evening adopted "Let It Be Me" by The Everly Brothers as their song – would continue to date throughout high school and college, leading up to their wedding on July 10, 1965.



# Let It Be Me

The Everly  
Brothers

I bless the day  
I found you  
I want to stay  
around you  
And so I beg you,  
let it be me.

Don't take this  
heaven from one  
If you must cling  
to someone  
Now and forever,  
let it be me.

Each time  
we meet love  
I find complete love  
Without your  
sweet love  
What would life be?

So never  
leave me lonely  
Tell me you  
love me only  
And that you'll  
always  
... let it be me.

Composers Gilbert Bechaud,  
Pierre Delaoue & Manny Curtis.





“Suzanne’s countenance is all I see every time I look at this moment frozen in time,” reflects Steve of the 1958 photo on the previous page that captured his first dance with his future bride. The fact that Suzanne’s father, George S. Bolster, was then the photographer of *Veritas* (the St. Peter’s Academy yearbook) ensured many pictures of her were taken throughout the couple’s high school years.

“George had no idea of the joy his camera caught when he took the photo of our first dance -- which led to the taking of many more photographs the day when Suzanne and I exchanged vows of Holy Matrimony at the historic Church of St. Peter on South Broadway in Saratoga Springs, NY.”



Judith Toussaint attended as maid-of-honor with Steve’s brother Joseph P. Toussaint serving as best man. A romantic honeymoon in Quebec, Canada followed.

By the time she became Mrs. Toussaint, Suzanne had graduated with the St. Peter’s Academy Class of 1961 and earned her Registered Nursing Degree at St. Elizabeth School of Nursing in Utica in 1964.

Suzanne subsequently worked in Saratoga Hospital’s Labor, Delivery and Nursery Department, but left to devote her love, talent and life to her teacher husband and the 10 children they would welcome into their home during the 1960s and 1970s.

A celebration of the courtship  
of Suzanne Bolster Toussaint  
& Stephen R. Toussaint

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Prom and bridal portraits by George S. Bolster.

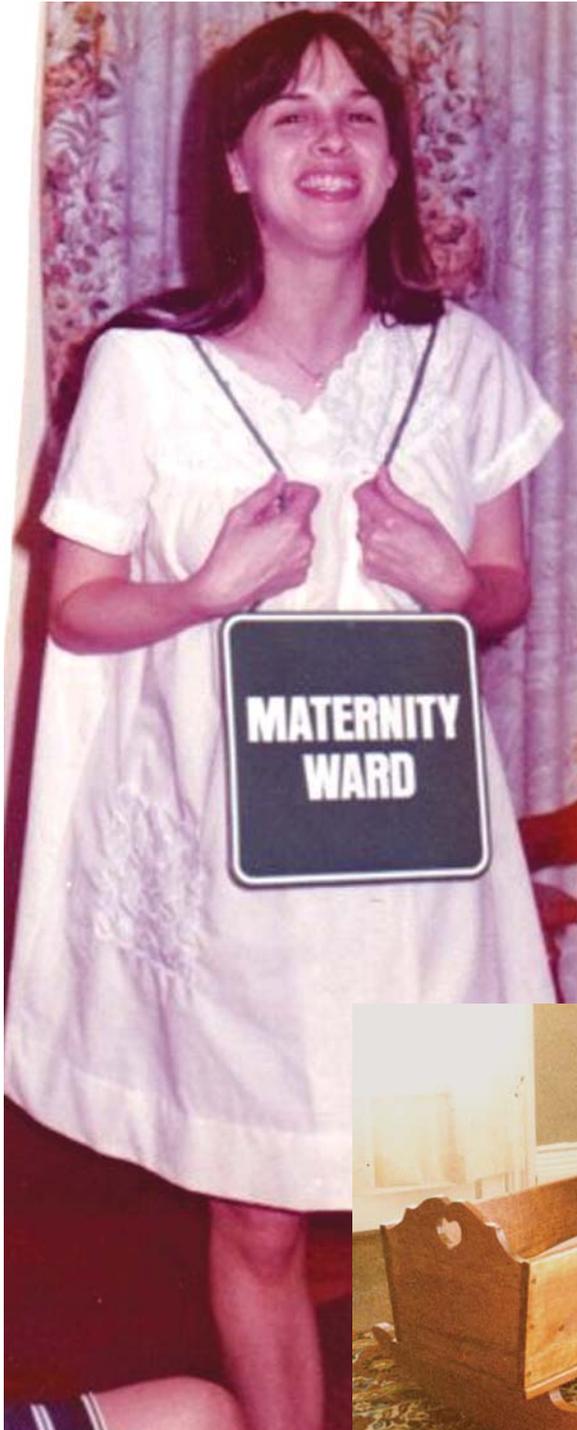




**Images of a  
picture-perfect  
childhood in  
Saratoga Springs**

Daughter Suzanne was one of legendary Saratoga Springs photographer George S. Bolster's favorite subjects. The other was son Frederick, seen with Suzanne on the sidewalk outside of the family's Walton Street home during the Eisenhower era. Portrait of toddler Suzanne was taken by her father several years earlier at the age of 18 months and four days when Harry Truman was President of the USA.





## Welcoming babies was literally the answer to a prayer!

As mourners at Suzanne Bolster Toussaint's Mass of Christian Burial would learn in August 2016, she was just 12 when she began praying a novena to St. Anne asking for the favor of one day being blessed with healthy children. Suzanne continued to pray to her favorite saint throughout her long and happy marriage. "Our mother devoted her life to children as a parent and in her profession as a nurse. She loved, cared for, taught and nursed all of us," states a passage from the poignant eulogy compiled by her seven daughters and three sons. According to their father Steve, who took the photos on this page, the cradle below was crafted by Suzanne's father, George S. Bolster, for holding all of her babies -- and her dolls -- over the decades.



# The blessings of motherhood



Now a great-grandfather, Stephen R. Toussaint says it seems like yesterday that he took the black and white portraits of infant Renee in mother Suzanne's loving arms, followed two years later by the one of toddler Renee and 10-month-old Marci. A virtual blink of an eye later, the parents were visiting freshman Renee at Harwick College in Oneonta. (In fact, it was September 1984.) Third daughter Collette Marquier Toussaint chose to use her saintly French middle name as her Confirmation name when Bishop Howard Hubbard officiated at her ceremony at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Greenfield Center. Among those on hand to congratulate Collette after she received the sacrament in 1984 (facing page) were her youngest sister, also named Suzanne, and their mom. Color image above the Confirmation photo commemorates the 1967 Baptism of Marci at St. Stephen's in Worcester, MA while the one below it showcases radiant Mother-of-the-Groom Suzanne with Neil in 2009. Pictures at far right feature Suzanne as a doting Mom in the 1980s; as a devoted daughter to Helen Baker Bolster in the 1990s; and with Marci's granddaughter Kaylee Robinson in July 2016. The importance of the red petunia plant on the facing page is detailed below while the significance of the beautiful long-stemmed yellow roses is revealed later in this chapter.

## A living memorial to a mother's everlasting love

When loved ones gifted Suzanne Bolster Toussaint with a red petunia plant on Mother's Day 2016, they did NOT have especially high expectations for its future growth and development.

Stories about Suzanne's lack of a Green Thumb that had taken root during youthful gardening adventures in Saratoga Springs were further cultivated during the decades when she left the care of flora and fauna on the family's rural Greenfield Center property to husband Stephen.

Steve, who "gained early experience playing in the earth" while weeding and tending flower beds for relatives and neighbors in and around The Spa City, embraced opportunities to expand his gardening skills after he and Suzanne settled on Daniel's Road where their 10 children ultimately sprouted up.

While Suzanne had devoted herself to caring for Steve and their offspring, she'd rarely dug her hands into the soil, much less fretted over the condition of the petals on the flowers that sprang forth from it.

Thus nobody was more surprised than Steve when the daily nurturing of the red petunia plant became a special source of pride and joy for Suzanne throughout the remainder of May as well as all of June, July and the first half of August 2016.

No amount of heat or humidity could keep Suzanne away from her petunia plant, which responded to her tender loving care by producing an abundance of blossoms.

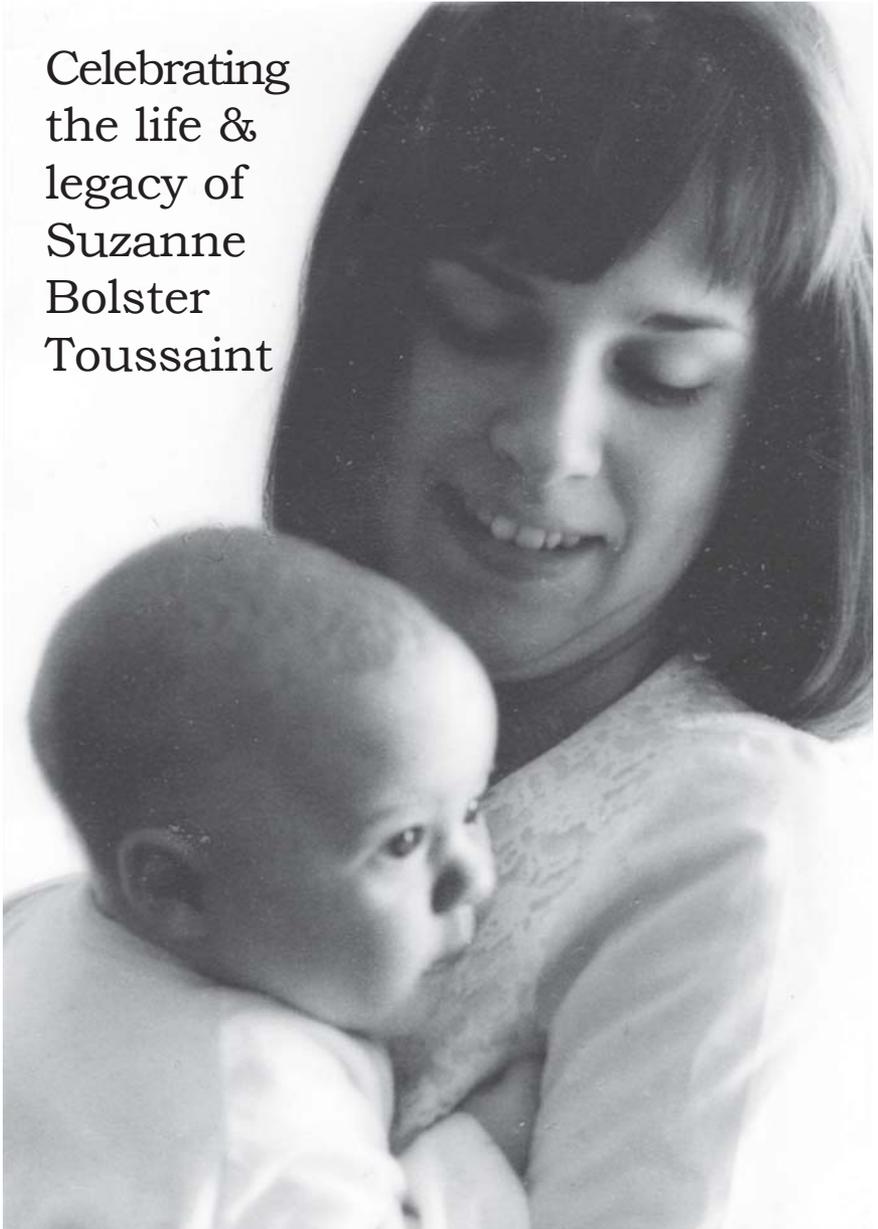
The living Mother's Day present continued to flourish following Suzanne's untimely passing on August 19, 2016 – and was still in full bloom as autumn leaves were falling.



**The Circle of Life . . . and Love**



Celebrating  
the life &  
legacy of  
Suzanne  
Bolster  
Toussaint



*“She had a slender, small body, but a large heart -- a heart so large that everybody’s grief and everybody’s joys found welcome in it and hospitable accommodation.”*

-- Mark Twain

# The Eulogy

The heartrending eulogy that follows details Suzanne Bolster Toussaint's legacy as a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. A compilation of memories of all 10 Toussaint children, the tribute was eloquently delivered by eldest Renee on behalf of siblings Marci, Collette, Allisse, Stephen Jr., Brigitte, Ginelle, William, Neil and Suzanne at the close of the Mass of Christian Burial that was celebrated for Suzanne at St. Clement's Roman Catholic Church in Saratoga Springs on August 23, 2016.

Those in attendance at the Mass and burial that followed in the family plot at the nearby St. Peter's Cemetery included cherished grandchildren Jake and Karley Robinson; Amburlin Wilhoite; Mikayla and Rachael Toussaint; Darien, Caeden and Morgan LaPietro; Leah, Greyson and Aaron Toussaint; Caleb and Cohen Greenwood; and great-granddaughter Kaylee Robinson.

In sharing a copy of the eulogy with author Ann Hauprich, grieving widower Stephen R. Toussaint (who took the cherished portrait of his radiant young wife with their first baby on the facing page) noted: "We are saddened and too fully spent to gather the many more memories of all Suzanne did for – and with – us. We will do so for the rest of our lives. We have faith that Suzanne is at rest with God in His heaven. We hope that she'll peek at us from time to time and that we shall join her on the last day."

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At the age of 12, our mother Suzanne began to say a novena to St. Anne asking for the favor of being blessed with healthy children ... some day. She continued to pray to her favorite saint throughout her life. She married our Dad in 1965 and together they were blessed with 10 healthy children. Our mother devoted her life to children as a parent and in her profession as a nurse. She loved, cared for, taught and nursed all of us.

*“When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart,  
and you shall see that in truth you are weeping  
for that which has been your delight.”*

-- Kahlil Gibran

She taught fun, encouraging dancing with Dad after dinner to Neil Diamond and Jesus Christ Superstar. How she smiled at our joy, as she sat on the couch, breastfeeding our newest sibling, while tapping her foot to the music and dance.

We learned to walk while being “baited” by her wedding ring. She would hold it up for us to see and we would toddle toward her receiving big hugs and kisses when we reached her open arms.

Her prayers to St. Anthony were frequent when items, from eyeglasses to car keys, were lost and help was needed to locate them.

She taught us fairness in that she strived to give the same to all ... in love, gifts, lessons and wisdom. Right down to the prizes from the cereal box collecting and storing them — up high in a cupboard, inside the wooden salad bowls — until she could give one to each child.

Mom taught the value of gratitude and the importance of expressing gratitude. When someone was helpful to her, she baked cheesecakes or spoon brownies that she sprinkled with powdered sugar. With thanks and a big smile she delivered them to neighbors, friends, and to the family who delivered the wood that was used to heat our home . . . also the mechanics who fixed her car and the coworkers who supported her at work.

She stood up for us if we met unfairness during life’s travels. She used her nursing knowledge and skill to obtain and provide the best medical care. She tended the wood stove to keep us warm and could start a perfect fire. Mom was a fearless expert at showing a bat the kindest and fastest way out of our home on Daniels Road.

Our Dad left her a dozen yellow roses after the birth of each baby. The roses told our Mom that the baby was healthy, and had 10 fingers and 10 toes. Today Dad placed a dozen yellow roses on the casket to let her know that we will all BE OK.

She was a loving mother who held your cheeks gently with her fingertips as she kissed you tenderly on the lips to say hello and goodbye. I did the same to her as I said my last goodbye to my mother on Friday.

A wonderful mother, she was indeed. She and my father brought up outstanding children. We were taught to love by seeing the way she loved her parents and the way she loved my father every day since they were 14 years old. She lived a full life and it’s time now that we send her to be with God.

She carried each of her children into life, and today, WE will carry her to her final resting place.

# Co-workers fondly remember Suzanne as loving, caring & giving

*It was not until the youngest of the 10 Toussaint children started school in 1984 that Suzanne returned to her nursing profession at St. Margaret's Center for Children in Albany, from which she retired in 2000. Memories of some of those who came to know her best during this time follow.*

Rebecca Fingar remembers Suzanne Bolster Toussaint as “the most loving, caring, giving person I ever knew.”

An LPN and mother of two who worked the 3 to 11 evening shift with RN Suzanne at St. Margaret's Center for Children in Albany for about a decade starting in the late 1980s, Rebecca further praised the co-worker who became her close friend as both “outgoing” and “easygoing.”

“There wasn't much that would upset her,” recalls Rebecca of the virtually unflappable mother of 10 who enjoyed rocking babies inside of the Hackett Boulevard residential setting in addition to tackling her demanding professional nursing duties.

When late night snowstorms hit, for example, rather than fretting about the slippery roads leading to her country home in Greenfield Center, Suzanne would calmly telephone husband Stephen and tell him she'd be home before he and their children left for their schools in the morning. (At the time, Stephen was a Ballston Spa Central School District principal.) “Suzanne and I worked every other weekend together and always enjoyed catching up on happenings in one another's families during our dinner breaks at St. Margaret's,” recalls Rebecca.

While her son Stephen was serving in the US Navy and daughter Michele was in college, Rebecca made a dollhouse for the youngest Toussaint daughter, whom she affectionately called Suzy Q. And when Michele had her first baby, Suzanne and eldest Toussaint daughter Renee couldn't wait to get to the hospital to offer their congratulations. Like her mother, Renee also couldn't wait to hold and rock the baby.

As the years passed, a friendship also developed between Rebecca's husband Clay and Stephen Toussaint – so much so that the men eventually celebrated one another's retirements. The Toussaints also enjoyed taking hayrides at a 50-acre farm owned by the Fingars near Kinderhook.

Lori Simmons of Delmar and her mother Ruth also shared happy memories of their years together with Suzanne at St. Margaret's. “I always appreciated Suzanne's calm, sweet nature,” says Lori. Suzanne was also so “family-oriented” that Lori felt she knew every member of the Toussaint clan.

Ruth Rettonis of Waterford adds the following insight: “Suzanne was the most compassionate and caring person, both as a nurse and as a co-worker. I have wonderful memories of her at St. Margaret's.”

# The George S. Bolster Collection

*In lieu of flowers, Suzanne Bolster Toussaint's family asked that memorial donations in her name be made to The George S. Bolster Collection of the Saratoga Springs History Museum, PO Box 216, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. The story that follows sheds light on the importance of preserving this treasure trove of images from the past for present and future generations.*

According to the Saratoga Springs History Museum's web site, The George S. Bolster Collection contains about 325,000 negatives from Saratoga Springs.

In addition to Bolster's massive portfolio from the 1930s to the 1980s, the collection includes a series of "Old Saratoga" negatives made by other photographers between 1900 and 1960. The latter images represent the talents of H.C. Ashby, C. C. Cook, Gustave Lorey, Harry B. Settle, Seneca Ray Stoddard, and Jesse S. Wooley.

The George S. Bolster Collection includes not only studio portraits, but also historic images of residential and commercial structures, houses of worship; interiors and exteriors of grand and small hotels; mineral springs, bottling plants, and drink halls; the racetrack; and people at work, study, and play. Dramatic changes in the shape of the city are documented in aerial photographs taken as early as 1929.

"George S. Bolster was a consummate Saratogian – not only by birth, growth and development – but by choice," reflects son-in-law Stephen R. Toussaint. "Throughout his long life, George dedicated his talents as a photographer, woodcarver and rambling oral historian to the city that was his home from his birth in 1913 until his passing in 1989."

While Bolster and wife Helen (nee Baker) made a home for daughter Suzanne and son Frederick at 55 Walton Street, his photography studio was situated at One Phila Street, near Broadway in downtown Saratoga Springs.

Working closely with Bolster in that studio for nearly two decades was devoted young apprentice, Michael L. Noonan. "I was very fortunate that I had opportunities over an 18-year period during the 1970s and 1980s to closely observe and learn from George as he perfected his technique for hand coloring images," says Noonan, who has long since distinguished himself both as a photographic archivist who meticulously hand-colors images made from glass plate negatives or films from bygone eras and as a contemporary photographer.

"George had been hand coloring for at least a decade before I started to pester him, experimenting with various fiber-based photographic papers and toners," recalls Noonan, who is also the co-author with Chris Carola and Beverley Mastriani of the 1990 Donning Co. book titled *George S. Bolster's Saratoga Springs*.

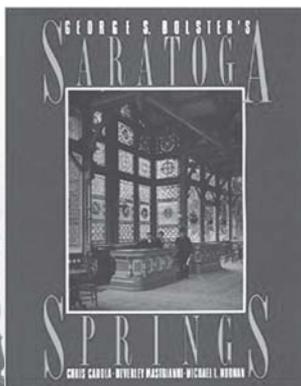
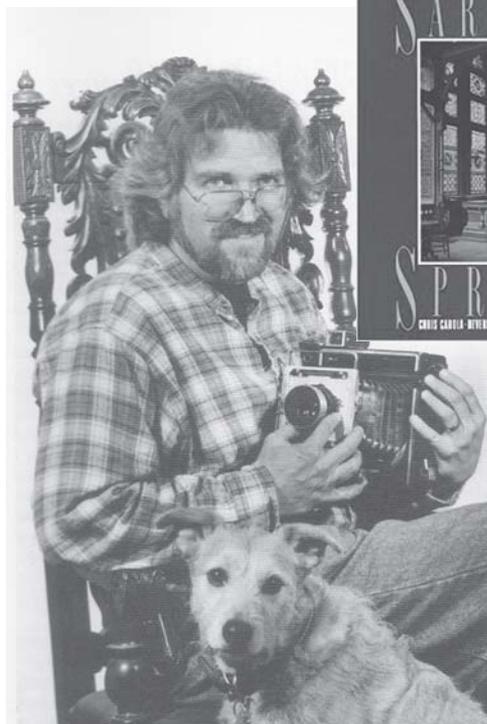
The sepia portrait of Bolster on the facing page, which was taken in 1985 by Noonan, captures the master photographer hand-coloring an image using transparent photo oils that were developed by John G. Marshall in the 1930s.

"The Marshall Company was George's preferred oil color brand and it's mine as well," says Noonan who also uses cotton balls to apply oils and (for finer work) cotton rolled into skewers. In addition to oil colors, Noonan uses transparent photo oil pencils that enable him to accomplish the finest of details in hand-colored photos. These evolve in stages from negatives to individually hand printed black and white fiber photographs covered with archival wash. The next step involves sepia toning. Everything is done meticulously, patiently and entirely by hand."

To learn more kindly visit [www.saratogahistory.org/bolster-collection](http://www.saratogahistory.org/bolster-collection).



Michael L. Noonan took this portrait of photographer George S. Bolster at work in his studio on Phila Street in Saratoga Springs, NY in 1985.



## **Michael L. Noonan**

From Bolster's Apprentice  
to Master Photographer

Portrait of Michael L. Noonan, co-author of *George S. Bolster's Saratoga Springs*, courtesy of Maeve Noonan. Those wishing to learn more about Noonan's archival photography services -- including his extraordinary hand coloring skills and vast portfolio of photographs taken during Ballston Spa's Bicentennial celebrations in 2007 -- are encouraged to call 518.885.8833.



# **Live, Laugh, Love**



Celebrating the brief,  
but purpose-filled, life  
of Ginelle Doré Toussaint

# Ginelle Doré Toussaint

Remembering a solid gold daughter,  
sibling, wife, mother and volunteer

Ginelle Doré Toussaint made a lasting impression on my writer's heart when she responded to an SOS from my home-based office in September 2013.

*The Saratogian* had assigned me to prepare an article about her father, Stephen R. Toussaint, who was being installed as Grand Knight of the Saratoga Knights of Columbus. While my deadline allowed ample time to research and write the feature, securing a portrait of the leader to accompany the piece was another story entirely.

Because I was then still using a film camera, negatives had to be sent to a lab before I could scan, upload and email photographs to my editors. Upon learning of my predicament, Ginelle offered her digital photography skills to aid this tech-challenged Damsel in Distress.

Despite her hectic schedule (Ginelle was busy earning the REAL LIFE equivalent of a PhD in Early Childhood Education at the time), she came through in a manner befitting the legacy of her maternal grandfather George S. Bolster.

It was Bolster who took the 1975 baby portraits of Ginelle on the facing page. And, in a Circle of Life moment, the newspaper awarded the picture an adult Ginelle took of her father a Front Page placement. Ginelle wouldn't hear of receiving payment for her contribution – which she subsequently donated for reprinting in this book.

Although physically weakened by cancer, Ginelle's caring, giving, nurturing spirit remained strong. Upon learning that Ginelle's heart and mind had continued to overflow with concern for the well-being of others right up until her untimely December 27, 2016 passing, I found myself reflecting on a verse by Emily Dickinson:

*“If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Into his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.”*

The following is a tribute to Ginelle's brief, but purpose-filled, life.



*“On October 19, 1974 -- a cloudless and sunny day -- God paused, reached down to earth, and blessed Stephen and Suzanne Toussaint with a precious baby girl they named Ginelle Doré.”*

-- Passage from the January 3, 2017 eulogy for Ginelle Doré Toussaint, who grew up to become a caring, supportive, loving daughter, sister, spouse and mother.



Ginelle’s French middle name Doré translates to “blonde” or “golden” in English. Following her passing, father Stephen R. Toussaint would reflect that although Ginelle didn’t yet have an abundance of golden tresses when the name Doré was given to her as a newborn, “there was solid gold in baby Ginelle Doré and in her actions throughout her lifetime. A most fitting name.”



“More than anything else in the world, Ginelle cherished being a mother to Darien, Caeden and Morgan. That was her true calling,” reflected a grief-stricken Jason LaPietro shortly after his wife’s untimely December 27, 2016 passing.

“Before Darien was born 15 years ago, Ginelle had planned on a six-month leave of absence from her job. By the time Caeden and Morgan (now 13 and 11, respectively) arrived, Ginelle and I would joke that she was enjoying the longest six-month maternity leave in history.”

Even though the couple’s shared decision for Ginelle to be a full-time homemaker meant doing without certain material things, Jason said her commitment to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of their children provided them with things money cannot buy.

The way they looked at it, Ginelle could always return to the outside workforce should the need arise after their youngest had left the nest. Until then they’d find creative ways to stretch Jason’s income as a varsity football and lacrosse coach in the Burnt-Hills-Ballston Lake School District.

But when an inoperable form of cancer claimed Ginelle’s life midway through the 2016-2017 academic year, a desire to assist The LaPietro Family quickly became a community-wide cause.

Credit for the creation of a GoFundMe page to subsidize Ginelle’s medical and hospital bills goes to primarily to friends of the family. In seeking donations, supporters were reminded of Ginelle’s incredible contributions as a parent volunteer in classrooms and as an enthusiastic booster of athletic events.

As a relative affectionately observed: “Ginelle was at school events, concerts, parent teacher time, art displays, Mother-Daughter Nights, Field Days and Moving Up Ceremonies to name a few. She enjoyed family vacations to Maine and loved the ocean. She went camping, on many day trips and picnic outings. Ginelle was in attendance at every athletic event possible, often while sitting in the bleachers or car supporting Morgan’s homework efforts. Whether it be games of soccer, lacrosse, baseball, basketball or football, Ginelle was behind the children and Jason, encouraging each of their personal activities.”

Just how many lives had been touched by Ginelle was evidenced in the long lines of mourners who wrapped themselves around the interior – and exterior – of the Glenville Funeral Home to pay their respects at her wake on the afternoon and evening of January 2, 2017. The slowly moving sea of humanity with a shared goal of wishing to console Ginelle’s family must surely have felt like a comforting community-wide hug.

Perhaps the Rev. James Vaughan expressed it best when he reflected that Ginelle’s wake had been “a testimonial to her goodness” and how she had lived her life, day in and day out, devoted to caring for others, especially her children.

Because his own mother died when he was young, leaving him to be reared by a single father during The Great Depression, the padre shares a special bond with those who feel Ginelle’s absence most profoundly.

I join Father Vaughan in praying God will bless the fund that has been established in Ginelle’s name to help ensure the realization of the hopes and dreams of her cherished children.



Vocation is rarely used in the same sentence as motherhood. But no other word does justice in the case of Ginelle Doré Toussaint. This beautiful soul devoted her life to the care of her three offspring in a manner worthy of one who had taken vows promising to make their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being her most important mission.

Ginelle and Jason with Darien in 2001. The couple would later joke about Ginelle taking “the longest six-month maternity leave in history.” The more recent photograph captured a blissful Ginelle relaxing at home in Burnt Hills, NY with Darien, Caeden and Morgan.



## **Ginelle’s Family Fund**

Donations may be sent to:  
Ballston Spa National Bank  
Burnt Hills Branch  
PO Box 70, Ballston Spa, NY 12020

*“Ginelle very easily brought a smile to your face and would want us to remember the fun, happy, joyful times that we all shared.”*



*Passages from Ginelle’s eulogy shine light on how she exemplified dignity and grace -- even as she was courageously battling cancer near the end of her human journey.*

“In 1999, Ginelle met her future husband Jason in downtown Saratoga Springs. She was taken with Jason’s outgoing personality and warm smile. Jason felt Ginelle’s kindness and loved how happy they felt together. They became a loving couple and started making plans for their future and creating a family.

Being a mother was the essence of who Ginelle was. As a teen she began caring for the children of neighbors, friends and family, bringing love and joy to them through her gentle nurturing. Ginelle became a mother with the birth of her first son, Darien Connor. Soon followed the births of Caeden John and Morgan Elizabeth. Ginelle was so proud of her children and believed being a mother was truly who she was meant to be. She invited other young children into her home while their parents worked. She nurtured all of the children with music, love, education, outdoor fun and the special requests made by their mothers. Sisters Marci and Suzanne are forever grateful that Ginelle cared for and loved their babies as if they were her own while they were at work.

Last July the family vacationed in Maine. Despite limited resources, children’s summer sports schedules and last minute plans, Ginelle and Jason seized the opportunity and brought their family to the ocean. Once in Maine, Ginelle delighted in being by the seashore with her immediate and extended family. She enjoyed lobster dinners, watching her children frolic in the waves and souvenir shopping.



## **THREE CHEERS FOR AN AMAZING MOM!**

These photographs capture some of the moments that won Ginelle admiration as a true parenting partner with husband Jason and as a loving and supportive mother to Darien, Caeden and Morgan. Whether assisting in a classroom with Caeden, waiting for a bus with Morgan or at a sporting event with Darien, Ginelle rocked in her roles as a multi-tasking Mom and an enthusiastic cheerleader.



Our family is grateful to have had an intimate view of Ginelle mothering her children with love, grace and beauty during her last few weeks. She nudged everyone to get their showers done on time, helped Morgan with her hair, lent a hand with homework, went over next day's schedules and reminded Caeden not to lose his lunch box. We enjoyed seeing the kids kiss their mother hello and goodbye as they came and went from their daily activities and Ginelle smile or make a joke to lighten a somber moment.

Ginelle exemplified charity, kindness, love, patience and tolerance. She always shared her smile with others. A high school friend who was a new student recalls Ginelle saving her a seat at the lunch table every day. A neighbor remembers her as a most wonderful person who always made sure that everyone was happy.

In her last weeks while in the hospital her warmth came through in her interactions with staff. She never failed to say please and thank you assuring them of their importance to her.

We remember that Ginelle lit up the room with her happiness and genuine joy to see you. She very easily brought a smile to your face and would want us to remember the fun, happy, joyful times that we all shared. She is watching to make sure that we Live, Laugh and Love, just as we did when she was here with us.



THE TOUSSAINT FAMILY JEWELS -- It was ca. 2007 that Ginelle and her nine siblings posed for this portrait as gift to parents Stephen and Suzanne Toussaint. Front row (L to R) are Renee, Brigitte, Neil, William, Suzanne and Stephen. Jr. Back row: Marci, Allisse, Ginelle and Collette.

*The following eulogy excerpt speaks volumes about the strength of the bonds that united the 10 Toussaint children and endeared Ginelle to her six older and three younger siblings.*

“Though she was seriously ill, Ginelle remained thoughtful and inquired about how Dad was every day (because) she worried about his grief after our mother died in August. When Renee had oral surgery recently, Ginelle was the first to call to see how she was feeling. She loved to hear about Marci’s visits with granddaughter Kaylee. She continued to share favorite music and songs with Collette. She prayed for Allisse to find the perfect new job and she wondered how Ambur was coping with the stress of final exams. She congratulated Stephen as the Oakland Raiders made their way to the play-offs. On Christmas Day (two days before she passed away), Ginelle asked for a visit with Brigitte because sharing conversation with a sister was just what she needed. She expressed concern for the health of Bill’s aging dog. She admired her brother Neil for gathering the family together at his home for the Christmas holiday. Ginelle prayed that (youngest sister) Suzanne will continue to have a healthy pregnancy.”



Top photo taken by Pa Toussaint in 1975 shows a "Little House on the Prairie" Christmas with Ginelle front and center, flanked by Stephen, Jr. and Brigitte. Behind them are Renee, Marci, Collette and Allisse. Ginelle, who would later welcome three younger siblings (William, Neil and Suzanne) was an excellent student who made many wonderful lifelong friends while attending schools in the Saratoga Springs City School District. The SSSH Class of 1992 graduate subsequently attended the State University at Cobleskill where she majored in Early Childhood Education. Ginelle was also employed at the Saratoga Shoe Depot prior to starting "the longest six-month maternity leave in history" around the turn-of-the-millennium. Young Ginelle also enjoyed doting upon Marci's children Jake and Karley (who went on to attend Skidmore College) as well as caring for the offspring of other youngsters in and outside of her family circle.



# Golden nuggets among the sand

*As I was putting the finishing touches on this tribute to Ginelle in late February 2017, I felt an inexplicable urge to visit an old email account I'd been contemplating cancelling due to its largely dormant status.*

*With emails dating back nearly a decade, I was tempted to hit DELETE ALL. But something made me reconsider. Instead I typed in "2013" -- the year when Ginelle had assisted me with the portrait of her father.*

*Like an old prospector panning for gold, I was blessed to discover a few precious nuggets among "the sand" in my electronic IN BIN.*

*With permission from Ginelle's family, I'm reprinting two of the uplifting and insightful messages I received from her iPhone that October on the facing page. I didn't realize at the time how many balls Ginelle was juggling. In hindsight, it's a marvel she found the time and energy to compose them.*

*But perhaps the greatest testimonial to Ginelle's solid gold heart and soul are the final emails she sent to her mother-in-law and her father just days before her spirit passed over.*

## Ginelle's father treasures this email sent to him on December 25, 2016

Merry Christmas Dad! We have all had a nice day. I think we all have that feeling of it being a bit different than usual. I ate and drank some. Took a nap & then had a very nice & relaxing visit w/both Renee & B. Thinking I might take another nap & then try some of the food that was sent (so much food)! I hope that u had a good day so far & that it continues. Enjoy dinner at Neil's. Hope all goes smoothly. Love u. ♥



**PARTING WORDS OF PRAISE** -- In her last text message to mother-in-law Kathy LaPietro (right), Ginelle wrote: "If something has been forgotten, no worries. It is what it is and will all work out just fine. You are tired. I can't thank you enough for everything you have done and continue to do for my family. You are amazing and I am truly blessed. Good-night for now. Let's wake up to a wonderful Christmas together. Love you." Ginelle took her last breath on December 27, 2016 -- the birthday of her recently deceased mother Suzanne Toussaint (left).

——Original Message——

From: ginelle toussaint  
To: Ann Hauprich  
Sent: Sun, Oct 20, 2013 10:23 am  
Subject: Re: Belated Happy Birthday to YOU!

Thank you for the birthday wishes. I had a wonderful day, spent with my family. My 10 year old son scored 2 out of the 3 touchdowns in his game yesterday. He made the pass for the 3rd touchdown. Exciting! When we returned home, a copy of your book was in our mailbox! Can't wait to read the article about my father. :) I hope you enjoy the rest of the weekend.

~~~~~

——Original Message——

From: ginelle toussaint  
To: Ann Hauprich  
Sent: Tue, Oct 22, 2013 2:03 pm  
Subject: Re: Sounds like you had a banner day!

Thank you very much! My boys make me proud! Their hard work & determination helps to get them far in the game! My oldest, however, is out for the season. Hoping he'll be cleared for sports & gym next month. Their father (Jason) is an assistant coach for the Varsity football team here in Burnt Hills. My boys are also very involved with that as well. Sports is their passion & they are very athletic. I saw the article about my father online this morning. You did a wonderful job! Thank you!