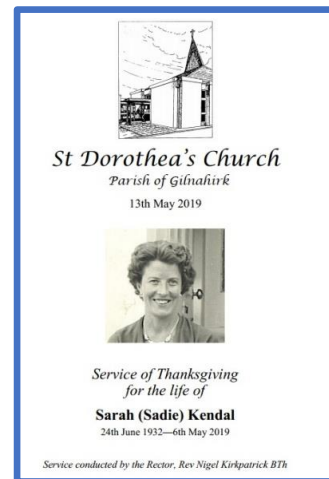


Sarah Kendal
24 June 1932 – 6 May 2019
Eulogy



My Mum was born 1932 in County Tyrone in a place called Pullyernan. Pullyernan lies west of Castlederg and is about half a mile from the border with Donegal.

Her parents were Patrick Connolly, a carpenter and Jeannie McCrory.

Her Mother died in child birth when my Mum was only three.

She could remember her mother's funeral.

My Mum, her older sister Mary and younger brother Tommy, were orphaned when their father died 8 years later.

She had just turned eleven and heard the sad news on the way home from hospital following seven weeks confinement with Scarlet Fever.



My Mum, Mary and Tommy were subsequently raised by their maiden Aunt, Mary Anne. Mary Anne ensured the three of them were kept together as a family.

We lost my Aunt Mary 10 years ago. I'm delighted that my Mum's younger brother, my Uncle Tommy and friends from Castlederg are with us today. You are very welcome.

At the age of 17 my Mum followed her sister Mary to the Big Smoke of Belfast. Initially she worked at the Priory Inn in Holywood.

She met my father at a dance in Dundela. I asked my Mum about the dog he had before they met. She said it was a wee Jack Russell and it went everywhere with him. Even the dance I asked? Even the dance she replied. I asked her what the dog did while they were dancing. She said, he just ran around and round our feet.

They married in St Anne's Cathedral and found digs in Belmont. Then I came along.



In 1956 they were the first occupants of 19 Knock Grove, her lifelong home. It was a new street packed full of young families. Many of the original occupants are still there today, 63 years later. They became a close-knit community and supported one another. Today we also remember the Whitley family whose mother, Hazel, my Mum's next-door neighbour who died 24 hours before my Mum.

My Mum worked all her life. Initially in various part-time bar jobs including Campbells in Dundonald, Smiths of Peter's Hill, The Clandeboye and The Shakespeare, That was followed by a period at Crawford's Chemist in Connsbrook Avenue.

For a while she worked as a machinist at British Vacuum Cleaners (BVC) in the Castlereagh Industrial Estate. Metal skelfs were a frequent hazard for the women in the factory. My Mum had a reputation as a skelf remover and everyday would head to work with a set of sterilised needles. On occasions I was her reluctant practice victim.

Finally, and for the last twenty years of her working life, she was a Civil Servant in the Department of Agriculture at Dundonald House. She developed many long-term friendships including Barbara McNeill who was like the daughter she never had and Iris Bull.



My mother was bright, determined and energetic.

In her 70s she successfully undertook a range of computer courses.

Her capacity for mental arithmetic was amazing. Maybe that was related to her bar work and adding up the prices of drinks in her head.

She was over the moon when her two granddaughters, Louise and Rebecca were born. The girls and I would visit on Sunday afternoons. I recall on one such occasion when the chimes of the ice cream van sounded in Knock Grove. My Mum asked “could the girls have I C E C R E A M?”. The girls by then were aged 8 and 10. They gave me a look of bewilderment as if to say “does she think we can’t spell?” Maybe on occasions she wasn’t that bright but she was always endearing.

We have received many sympathy cards during this past week. Thank-you. The words caring, considerate and kind were used frequently to describe my Mum. I and my family can vouch for that. My Mum was generous, giving and supportive throughout our lives in so, so many ways. She was also charitable and compassionate.

My Mum would frequently arrive at our house, laden with biscuits, cheese, roast chicken and peppers etc. The “Red Cross” parcels as we called them. She had a knack of identifying the right moment. During her last week, while sitting at her bedside, Rebecca told me of the time she broke up with a previous boyfriend. There was a knock at her door and who was there? her Gran, with a bag of biscuits, cheese, roast chicken and peppers. Always generous, always thoughtful.



You may recall that I talked about my Mum’s older sister Mary, who is no longer with us and her brother Tommy. Unbeknown to my Mum, Mary and Tommy, her parents had an older daughter. That daughter was raised by her grandmother, Sarah McCrory. My Mum always assumed she was their “cousin”. In their late teens my Mum and her cousin went their separate ways. Her cousin headed off to Scotland and started a family there. My Mum headed to Belfast.

My Mum, Mary and Tommy only discovered the truth about their “cousin” when that sister died in 1994. Late last year I tracked down and met her children, my new found cousins. They never met my Mum. Three of them, Myra, Karen and Louise, intended to be here today. Unfortunately, flight arrangements from Scotland proved problematic. We will complete the circle on another day.



Some people are unable to be here today but I know their thoughts are with my Mum and us. They include her Granddaughter Louise in Australia, who I know is heartbroken, Petrina’s Mum and Petrina’s sisters. Also, my Mum’s neighbour and close friend Jeannie and many of my cousins.

The last three months were difficult for both my Mum and I. During that period, I had great support from many people. From friends, from neighbours, from carers, from Lorraine and Gwen. Thank you. Thanks also to the staff at Towell House where my Mum spent four weeks in respite. Also, the staff of Ward 6 of the Royal, where she spent the last three weeks.

Thanks to Nigel and St Dorothea’s. My Mum was a member the congregation at St Columba’s for 30 years and would deliver their Church Magazine. She had been a member of the congregation at St Dorothea’s since 2005 and was never happier. Prior to that would have been here attending many events including special services and church fetes.

Above all, special thanks to my wife Petrina, my daughter Rebecca, my friend Brian and my cousin Joan. You kept me going. Thank you

After the service we will go to the family plot in Dundonald where my Dad and his parents are buried. My Mum was a frequent and regular visitor to my Dad’s grave. I recall the first Christmas Day after he died in 2006. My Mum, Aunt Mary, Louise, Rebecca and I took flowers to the grave. I excused myself, went back to the car and returned with picnic seats, flasks of tea, biscuits and buns. My Mum thought this was most irreverent. Despite her protests we persevered and soon we were sitting nursing our cups of tea and telling stories about my Da.

This is now an established family tradition and my mother loved it. Next Christmas we will sit down at the grave, sup our tea and tell stories about my Mum. Her spirit will live on.

**The song says “A mother’s love is a blessing”
For most of us, it doesn’t matter how much you love your mother,
Your love will never exceed the love she has for you.
Thank You Mum,**

