

Maxine Elner Maly

WEST DES MOINES—Take it from the man who is so happy and so proud to have been Maxine Maly's husband for more than 62 years.

She had it all.

Maxine was a tremendous wife. A fantastic mother. The family leader. A life-long Christian. An intelligent woman who was beautiful in every way. Soft-spoken. Very understanding. Interested in helping others. Always a giver, never a taker.

She was the best thing ever to happen to me.

Maxine was 83 years of age when she left us and joined her Lord Jesus in heaven on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 and I'm of the opinion that the world will not be the same without her.

Yes, that was quite a gifted baby Catherine and Henry Koehn delivered to Victor, IA on Aug. 2, 1936. So full of promise, so prepared to make a difference wherever she went and in whatever she did.

I didn't know Maxine until 1956. I was aware she had been making an impression long before that, and I was able to see it first-hand after our marriage on May 4, 1958 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids. We spent a wonderful year and a half in Albert Lea, MN and then moved to Des Moines.

Maxine was never happier and more proud than on the days our wonderful three sons were born – Lon David Maly, Mark Christopher Maly, and Kevin Patrick Maly. The clock was ticking on Lon's arrival. We moved from Albert Lea to Des Moines just two weeks before he was born.

I mentioned earlier that Maxine was a fantastic mother. In the years between their birth and the first day of kindergarten, I admired that she chose to be home with our sons, guiding them through the uncertainty of those times. Still, Maxine found the time to do such things as grow some of the prettiest flower gardens and tastiest vegetables in the neighborhood, and somehow had the energy to organize and prepare an annual Thanksgiving feast for 50 or so relatives and friends.

Amazing, that's what she was.

She knew how to relax. One way was to sit at her Wurlitzer organ and play hymns. Maxine especially liked to play Christmas and Easter hymns, "Beautiful Savior", "For All the Saints", and "Praise to the Lord the Almighty". Now the organ, which is still in the living room, is waiting for her to sit down and play another favorite, "I'm But a Stranger Here, Heaven Is My Home", one more time.

Maxine was baptized at Saint John's Lutheran Church in Lincoln Township near Victor on

August 23, 1936 and was always proud to have attended Saint John's Lutheran School and later Trinity Lutheran School in Cedar Rapids. Maxine was confirmed at Trinity Lutheran Church on April 2, 1950 and she was an active member of Missouri Synod Lutheran churches all of her life in Iowa and Minnesota.

In our early years in Des Moines, we lived within walking distance of Mount Olive Lutheran Church and School. All five of us were members of the church and Lon, Mark and Kevin graduated from the elementary school. Maxine was a devoted supporter of the ministry of Lutheran schools and especially Mount Olive Lutheran School.

We eventually outgrew our two-bedroom home in Des Moines and had a four bedroom home built in West Des Moines in 1967.

But don't get the idea Maxine was a stay-at-home wife and mother at that time in her life. Far from it.

She and I flew to Europe in 1976 so we could spend a month talking to people from another part of the world, see places such as Rome, Prague and Paris and ride trains. That started it. We liked that trip so much that we took our sons to Europe on a similar journey the following summer.

Maxine and I once put together a list of the places we had visited in Europe and Asia, and came up with this: Russia, Italy, the Czech Republic, Austria, Poland, Switzerland, France, The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, Athens, the Greek Islands, Japan, China and Singapore. We took cruises in recent years to Europe, Alaska and Hawaii.

My job took me to many bigtime sports events, including football bowl games and NCAA Final Four basketball tournaments. Maxine was quite a sports fan and accompanied me to most of those events. The bowl games included a number of Rose Bowls, Sugar Bowls, Cotton Bowls, Orange Bowls, Alamo Bowls, Sun Bowls and a Freedom Bowl. We counted one day and determined that Maxine had gone with me to 15 consecutive bowl games.

Maxine's survivors include her husband Ron Maly; sons and daughters-in-law Lon (Julie) Maly, Mark (Polly) Maly, and Kevin (Donna) Maly, and grandchildren Cole (Danielle) Maly, Jerika (Dylan) Bright, Shelby Maly, Claire Maly, Nathan Maly, and Megan Maly, plus many nieces and nephews.

Preceding Maxine in death were her parents Katherine and Henry Koehn, sisters Irene Timm, Mary Benyshek and Miquie Bruzek, brother Ervin Koehn, in-laws Alice and Julius Maly, and brother-in-law Phil Maly.

I mentioned that Maxine was a life-long Lutheran. She understood the significance of frequent prayer. She liked it when I joined her in prayer, especially at night. Maxine, I am praying with you now – the prayer you taught to me and your children: “Jesus, tender Shepherd hear me; bless Thy little lambs tonight; through the darkness be Thou near us; keep us safe till morning light. Amen.”

We love you, Maxine.

The family held a private memorial service to celebrate Maxine's life. A public gathering will be scheduled for a future date. Memorial gifts to Mount Olive Lutheran School are appreciated.

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