**EULOGY**

**FOR**

**BILL BRYAN**

Hello everyone and thank you for being here to celebrate the life of a woman that meant so much to each one of us. She was a friend to most... an inspiration to all... she cared and taught us with her kindness and strength, her talents and incredible curiosity about life... her devotion to her family and her dedication to God... she endured unthinkable loss and incredible challenges, yet through it all, she maintained a spirit and tenacity that taught everyone in her life what it truly means to be a **fine** person. Throughout her incredible ninety seven years on this earth, she was a loving and caring daughter, sister, wife, aunt, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great grandmother, and most of all, to me, she was all that and more... she was a thoughtful, compassionate, courageous example of goodness.... and every day I count my blessings that she was my mother.

We all know and share stories of how Peggy Bryan lived her life and led by example. While superficially, some may have thought she lived a simple life, it was intricate and deep. At times my mother seemed to be an endless source of creativity and reinvention. She exemplified the adage, “That which doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” Throughout the course of her long and productive life, my mother went back to school at forty eight years old, earned her degree, and became a registered nurse. She expressed her talents in her love of doll making. She honored her love of nature with her passion for gardening and her devotion to **ALL** creatures.... her dogs and cats, her turtles (**name them if you can**), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, her iguana, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**If you want a little levity, you can say**) .... **of course**, her **iguana**... (**and wait for the laugh**). She lived to learn and to explore and whether she was in Los Angeles, Rancho Cucamonga, Hawaii, or Africa, Peggy Bryan devoted her life to learning, caring, and doing for others.... always guided by her faith.

As her son, I was blessed to have a mother that led such an exemplary life.... she truly raised the bar on what it means to be a good, sincere, resilient person. (**If you want you can say this... the word is actually Yiddish... from German roots... I think it really applies to your mother**) I don’t know if many of you have ever heard the word “haimish.” Technically, it means, “ homey, cozy, unpretentious.” It also indicates a person of character... one who is there for others and lives his or her life devoted to pure **goodness**... I’m sure you can see where I’m going with this. My mother was the personification of that ideal. No matter the trials or challenges that stood in her way... and there were many... and they were daunting... Peggy Bryan rose to each one.... worked through her grief... anger... frustration... despair... and just grew, became stronger, and taught us all by example.

There was a period in our lives during which she and I were not as logistically close as in previous years, but my mother, whether she realized it or not, was, is, and always will be, with me.... and while in some perspectives, she was not always the easiest person... how could she be? She shouldered so much throughout her life.... she was a rock... helpful, compassionate... and there when someone needed her.

And many did... she endured the unthinkable loss of two of her children... David, who passed at a way too early age, and my sister Valarie... and Peggy Bryan was there... caring for her grandchildren... through her own insurmountable grief. Some may have observed that she had a hard life, but she was truly **engaged** in every aspect and lived it with grace... and humor. In her later years, as we got even closer and spent much cherished time in connection and conversation, I will never forget when.... in the middle of one of her reminiscences of all that she had been through.... and **survived**... said, “If I knew what it would have been like, I would have smoked and drank more...” (**Wait for the laugh**).

It’s observations and maxims like that one.... seemingly simple yet eloquent, funny, and telling, that write the saga... and tell of “the legend of “Margaret (Peggy) Bryan.” She was a good... maybe too good, disciplinarian... who will ever forget... back when I was a kid in high school... we had moved from Victorville to Pomona... and there was this girl.... and I was smitten... I’d call her every night... until my mother put a lock on the phone... but teenage love knows no bounds... I broke the lock and called again... and sure enough, that lock was replaced....needless to say... (**Wait for the laugh**) She was consistently devoted to a fault... placing others before self... **BOY** were we all blessed!! ... I want to believe that she had a real and vivid experience of all that she meant to each one of us. For her seventy fifth birthday, my mother received so many incredible letters and notes acknowledging just what she meant. Each recognition provided a piece to the complete the whole that represents my mother’s impact on those who knew her.

Margaret Bryan lives on in all of us. Each time we reminisce... every thought we share... in every gesture of hers we find ourself mimicking, she remains with us. Her faith provided a light for her in the darkest of times and memories of her will continue to provide light and guidance for us. The two of us, as I said, had many cherished moments and conversations in her later years, and for that I will always be grateful. At times, when things seemed to get to be too much, she would sit, frustrated, and wonder...She just wasn’t able to figure out why she couldn’t get to heaven to be with her loved ones.... Why? Because her time was not yet up. There was so much for her to do... to see... to feel... her line dancing... her doll making... her artistic pursuits... her travel... the wonderful trip we all took to Hawaii that meant so much to all of us... her annual luncheons at which she celebrated with her fellow nurses... her joy at sharing moments with the generations that have inherited her legacy.... she just wasn’t done yet.... and when the time did come... it was peaceful... and complete.

If there’s anything we all should learn from the passing of Margaret Bryan, it’s this... know that you’re stronger than your circumstances... cherish those around you.... count your blessings... and celebrate the unbreakable human connection... thank you all!