

A Voice to be Heard

BY TERI GELLOS, RN, BSN

It was only a year ago that Eileen found herself leaving her beloved South Dakota. A move prompted to be closer to family in the twilight of her life. She said her goodbyes to lifelong friends, sold her home and packed her bags for Tualatin, Oregon. She was born and raised in the rural endless grass plains of South Dakota during the years of the Great Depression, not far from Harley-famed Sturgis.

While life was hard during these times, extended family teamed to bring a loving and caring supporting influence. She recalls one winter in particular when at the age of 4, frostbite took several fingers; a blessing she later learned as the nasty blizzard could have taken so much more. In the years that followed, childhood polio and an appendicitis, while incredibly serious, were mere minor setbacks helping to shape a fighting spirit that carries her even today. Remarkably, as a Nurse, she mastered the utensils of the operating room and for many years balanced a productive professional career in a leadership role with the VA with the busy life on the ranch.

Her most recent setback began with subtle symptoms back home. Initially, she noticed a shortness of breath during church choir, now

progressed to a voice that no longer projects. She has difficulty swallowing and has lost her ability to speak, yet still has so much more to say.

Undaunted, and with the very same relentless spirit developed on the plains, she directs her end-of-life care with hand-written notes and the advanced-knowledge of a Nurse. Along the way, she has managed to write her memoir in a beautifully bound book as a gift to family and close friends she will soon leave behind. While she has known for some time there is no cure, she remarks what a blessing it has been to have not lost her ability to write, in cursive, of course.

It only seems so fitting; the hands that as a youngster were severely compromised, then helped to care for so many as a Nurse, now write the final chapter of her journey.

Her voice will be heard.

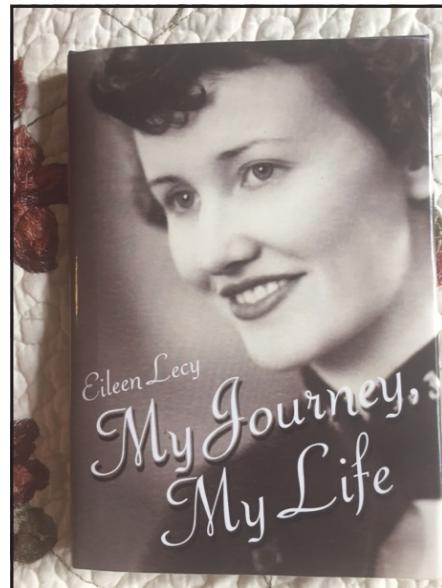


Teri Gellos, along with husband David have been residents of Tualatin for almost 20 years. They have 2 Sons Nick and Jake who are both attending Linfield College.

Eileen Lecy has ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) - August is ALS Awareness Month
For charitable donations: **ALS Oregon/SW Washington Chapter**
700 NE Multnomah St. Suite 1180, Portland OR, 97232



Eileen surrounded by her family, Tualatin residents Scott Campbell (son in law), Madi Campbell (granddaughter), Marty Campbell (daughter) and Drew Campbell (grandson).



Eileen with her daughter, Marty Campbell



Teri and Eileen