

Preface

This is the story I often thought of writing. I always believed we had something very special, but only those who knew us well will fully understand. I know most daughter-mother relationships should be considered special, but ours was somewhat different. We were all we had for life, and our life together was a perfect tale from heaven. God smiled on our meeting, and we realized it early. We were joined, not only by blood, heritage, and love, but much more than that. My mom and I met by grace.

God blessed me to have Mommie, and that became most apparent in her departure of this world. I say this because even the ending of our meeting had God's stamped approval. He had aligned our position to a point that there really was nothing much left to say. He had, in our lifetime, blessed us both with faith that prepared us for the moment. It happened; God spoke for her to come home, and he spoke peace in my heart simultaneously, the perfect ending to our love story. God said so.

This is the story of us; a tribute in my mother's memory, but most importantly, an opportunity to honor the Most High God, who made it all possible. He sent help on our journey, so this is also in loving memory of my grandmother, Petronia Lewis; the baby-sitter angel, the late Marie Bailey; and a neighbor you wanted to live with, the late Theresa Vann. Also, to my godmother, Erma Jones, who God has allowed to see her eighty-second birthday. I tell this story, forgetting not the shoulders God made available along our path.



Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, because without You, there is no me. Thank You for the approval and courage to share our story. Thank You for the blessing of this book, a burning desire of my heart.

Many thanks to Mommie, lubb-dubb, my heartbeat. Just when I thought it was impossible for you to become any more beautiful, look at you now, an angel. What brilliance and splendor! Thanks for the time of my life. I love you, Mommie.

To my other angels, Petronia Lewis, Marie Bailey, Theresa Vann, Inez Tisdale, and Deacon Robert Younge; the world seems so much different without you. I miss you all.

Much love to my husband. Thank you for the support and encouragement. I could not have picked a better ending to the story. And to the other man in my life, I love you, Daddy!

To the Fam: Uncle George, Queen, David, Trina, Valaida, Darrin, Curran, Wells, Douglas, Morgan, Louise, Shawn, and my in-laws, Charles, Jennie, Jennifer, Janice, Sebastian, Mike, and Chris. To my God-sent god-parents, Reverend Arthur S. and Mrs. Erma Jones. I love you much! To my godsister, Sheena, I could use that personality. Love you, and thanks! I am so proud to be a part of this family.

To my other Mommie, Chelsye Dian, my god-baby. To my babies: Kierra, Tamyra, Katrina, Chaz, Brianna, Kayden, Jazmine, Veronica, and Kyle. Remember all things are possible through Christ Jesus, so never stop dreaming. I love you all!

To my brothers and sisters in love, may God always grant you peace and unspeakable joy. Selena, thanks for that period you allowed God to use you, and look at us now. Highways and byways, love you! Kimmie, my radical sister in Christ, may the blessings of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, always be plentiful for you and your family.

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Thank You, Jehovah! I believe that You have said; that You will do!

Much Love:

Proof that the hood is totally misunderstood. Impeccable talent that must be recognized. How could I ever forget home? There's no place like it. Sincere thanks to the following for the use of your God-given gifts and talents on this project: Kimberly Arnold (US Government employee/journalist major), Darlene Brooks (engineer), and Dorothy Vann-Perrine (educator).

They almost missed us, but He who sits high is in control.

In the order you helped me during my life span ...

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Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound



ALL STORIES HAVE AN ALPHA. As I begin telling our story, it must be noted that I am not the author. No, this is a story inscribed by God Almighty Himself. Therefore, how could I ever begin without praising the One who made it all possible? Thank You, Jesus, for our story—a love story, straight from the heart, blessed from heaven.

My mom was married September 7, 1962, and by September 5, 1963, she found herself in the University of Pennsylvania Hospital with me. Now, because I don't remember the story well, I will have to use my imagination somewhat. Our first meeting wasn't what one would expect. I know this, because I've heard the story time and time again. I would imagine the first time I saw her, I fell in love immediately, but that was not the case for my mother. As she tells the story, when the nurse gave me to her to hold, she said, "Take her away!"

See, the pain involved in labor was much more than she could bear. As a matter of fact, she said that is exactly why she never even contemplated doing it again. I never did ask her when she finally held me, because I was always laughing too hard when she told the story. So here comes my imagination. I was hungry, as always, and I was crying. The



nurses were much too busy to feed her child, because God was at work and there were others being born. Do you know the work of a labor and delivery nurse? Once again they tried to give me to her, and this time our eyes met. I was crying, and it was clear I needed her. She took me in her arms, met my needs, and that's what she did my entire life.

The family started as three, but somewhere along the way we became a family of two. No one knew Mommie's struggle as well as I, but the thing I remember most about our life was her faith in God. This is why, when she spoke these words years later, it all came together for me. She said, "God gave you to me, and I gave you back to Him." She was awesome from the start.

Her test of faith began. She was a single parent with a little girl who depended solely on her. Her true walk with God started then, but I am not sure if she even knew. What she did know was if she were to make it, it would only be with the Lord. She was young and scared, with brand-new responsibilities, and it would be only He who could see her through. God did what He does; He gave her a path, and thank God she followed it.

She graduated from Bok Vocational High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was a seamstress by trade. Mommie had a job in a factory, making belts. I don't know exactly how long she worked there, but I do know that the pay was not good. With a full-time job, she needed someone to care for me.

As only God would have it, He sent her a babysitter named Marie Bailey. I called her Miss Perie, but everyone else knew her as Miss Marie, and boy, did I love that lady. If I can remember correctly, Mommie said Miss Marie took care of me from the age of nine months. She and my mother met at their church, Metropolitan AME, on 20th and Fitzwater streets.

Miss Marie took care of a lot of us. She cared for my natural cousin, who is Darrin. She also cared for Renee, Michael, Terry Brown, and some years later, her only grandson, Ray-Ray. There were other kids Miss Marie cared for, but we stayed the longest and were raised as family. To this day, Nay-Nay, or Renee, and I remain in touch. We always referred to each other as cousins.



We lost our baby much too soon. Yes, he was an adult, but I always introduced him as my “baby cousin.” He was a good guy, but sometimes the places we frequent can be trouble for us. I’ll never forget the first call I received, someone saying, “Ray’s been shot.”

“What? What hospital?”

I was living in Ohio, but I was able to get a long-distance call through. I was connected to his room. He answered the phone. I asked, “What’s up, baby?”

He responded, “Who is this?”

I responded, “Boy, it’s your cousin, Donna.”

Next I heard the voice I knew. Cheerfully he asked, “What’s up, girl?”

I asked, “How’s everything looking? Will everything be all right?”

He answered, “Yeah,” and then he said, “Where is your mom?”

I replied, “She is in her room. You want to speak with her?”

He answered, “Yeah, put her on the phone.”

I yelled, “Mommie, Ray-Ray is on the phone, and he wants to speak with you.”

Mommie said, “Bring me the phone.”

I sat on the top step and listened to their conversation. I always listened in on Mommie’s conversations, and it made her angry.

Mommie said to Ray, “Hey, baby, what are you doing getting shot?”

There was silence, and I assumed he was explaining. She fussed and told him to be careful about the people he was hanging with. I could tell that he asked for prayer. I listened as she entered the Throne of Grace. With great eloquence she lifted her former Sunday school student before the Lord. After that prayer, even I knew everything would be all right.

There was another call. It was the call no one wants. Ray had one more mishap. This time, he was no longer with us. We lost him on July 27, 2000. I’ll never forget purchasing the flowers to be sent to the church for his funeral. While considering what I was doing, I looked over to my mother and broke down crying. With such pain in my heart, I looked in her eyes and I said these words: “I’m not supposed to be doing this.” I was so angry with the streets. I asked her, “Why am I doing this?”

Mommie hugged me. She couldn’t tell me why I was buying those flowers, but she made me feel better. She said, “He was in my Sunday

school class. I know for a fact that Ray accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior, because I explained to him the plan of salvation. Raymond Bailey Jr. is with Jesus. He's fine baby."

I'd miss him, but who could ask for more than that, right? We are all very proud to remember him as serving our country. His father, uncle, and grandfather all served our country. My baby cousin's murder has never been solved. I know firsthand that senseless killings hurt. Black-on-black crime is unacceptable, and every suffering family deserves closure.

Back to Miss Marie. She was not only a blessing to Mommie, but to a lot of mothers who needed child care. She fed us three times a day, and I don't mean sandwiches. When she made breakfast, it was the best pancakes you ever tasted in your life. Lunch would vary, but you could best believe it was a southern-style home-cooked meal. She made our parents give us spending money for snacks when we got older. Every day at three o'clock was snack time at Mrs. Bailey's. Better than snack time, there was Mr. Water. He was a very nice man on Miss Marie's block who would pass out doughnuts to the kids.

At some point, Mommie started working at Gimbel's, a department store that closed years ago. Her hours were always changing, so Miss Marie wouldn't let her take me home if it was too late. She would tell her, "It's too cold to take that child out of here," or she would ask, "Are you crazy? It's too late to wake that baby up." So, that's how I started calling Miss Marie my second mom. At some point, I started staying with her just about every Saturday night, and she would take the children to church for Sunday school and morning service.



The nights I had to stay at Miss Marie's, if I came to the house late, she would chew Mommie out for keeping me out so late. Miss Marie would get the scarf and tie my hair, then we would say the Lord's prayer. After I learned it, my mom and I said it all the time. Miss Marie taught the kids to say grace before every meal, and if you forgot, that "hand pop" would remind you the next time.

Mommie and I, throughout our lives, always agreed to thank God for Miss Marie Bailey.

My mom and I went to get our hair done on Saturdays, and Miss Polly did our hair. Miss Polly could do some hair, but we would be at her house until the wee hours, waiting to get our hair done. She had a clientele that would not stop. People came from near and far for Miss Polly to do their hair. She would stop and cook; we'd eat and resume our wait. Those were the good old days.

Mommie had attended Metropolitan as a young girl serving on the Young People's Usher Board. She was also a member of the Young People's Department and a host of other organizations that I'm unaware of. I know it was a lot, because we were always going to meetings, and there was always food. A group of them were friends, and all of their children were friends. They were some sharp women, and all their children were sharp. Mommie and I talked about those days, too. She said they were Christians in progress.

You may or may not know, in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, your pastor can change, after conference. I was too young to tell this story, so I asked for help on this one. There was a change in 1961, and a young pastor by the name of Arthur S. Jones showed up at Metropolitan. I do know for myself that he



was a preaching machine. He actually christened me, which is special, because he is my godfather as well. He is married to a woman by the name of Erma Jones, and although she is his wife, Joseph and Arthur's mom, and later on in life she had her own grandchildren, I never viewed her as anyone other than my godmother. Sheena is going to get me for this one. She's godmother to us both. Mommie thought of everything. She said in the event that



she passed on while I was a child, she needed to know that I would be raised in a Christian home.

I always called Arthur and Erma "Grandmom" and "Grandpop." As a matter of fact, sometimes I truly believed they were my grandparents, because we spent so much time at the parsonage where they lived. Grandmom Jones always had a beautiful home. She should have been an interior

decorator. I don't remember a lot about the times in the parsonage, but I do recall all their beautiful Christmas trees.

Okay, like I said, at conference time, pastors just may be moved. Conference is a big deal in the AME church. It is a subject discussed for weeks. Depending on the devastation, you may never get over the move. Oh my goodness, we were at conference in 1968, and our district was up. Most times there is some warning, or you can just tell if there will be a move, but every now and then you received the shock of your life. Well, that is just what happened to us, when it was announced that Grandpop was being moved to another church in New Jersey.

There was not a dry eye from the Metropolitan members. I cried hard, but the real reason I was crying was because Mommie was crying. I later learned that my grandmom was moving, and then I really cried.

They moved to a church called Vauxhall. They were moving from Philly to New Jersey. We soon understood that this could happen at any-time. Just when we had fallen in love with everyone at Vauxhall, Grandpop was off to St. Mark's. St. Mark's was in East Orange, and they lived in Newark when Newark was thriving. They lived in the Hallmark House on the nineteenth floor, and as a little girl I always felt we were the Jeffersons while visiting Grandmom and Grandpop.

Grandmom sure could decorate a home. Grandmom was a housewife. She met Grandpop in North Carolina, and they were married in three weeks at the age of seventeen and twenty. They've been married sixty-four years now. Grandpop is a Wilberforce graduate, and he always had a dynamic job, so he worked full time and was a full-time minister. He lavished Grandmom her whole life with only the finest things in life, and she deserved everything she ever received. Grandmom took care of her husband. She is the best cook in the world, an immaculate housekeeper, and a fine Christian woman. God put them together; there is no disputing that.

Anyway, I spent many summers in the Hallmark House. I was getting older, and I would beg my mom to go to Grandmom and Grandpop's. All who know me are fully aware of one of my great weakness, shopping. I got it honestly. My mother should have sought help for shopping, and Grandmom Jones absolutely is the best at it to date. We would wake up early,

and the routine was to clean house, catch the first soap opera, and be back in time to catch her last show and start dinner. She had skills; she took shopping to a different level. She made it a science. It wasn't a good day unless we got a good bargain to show for it. My friends will now understand the rush I get from a good sale.

No matter how much fun I was having with Grandmom, eventually I would ask to call my mom. Grandmom would say, "You just got here, Donna." No matter who called first, Mommie and I would start missing each other always at the same time. That issue usually resulted in her driving to Grandmom's. The adults would stay up talking into the early hours of the morning. As for me, I would go into another room and listen to Grandpop's classical music. A lot of my friends would be shocked to learn of my passion for music, and I learned to love classical from Grandpop. Paul Robeson was one of his favorites, and I bet he does not know that I know. They were also good friends. Grandpop has an awesome singing voice as well, and he's a writer. My favorite play written by Grandpop is titled, *Ring the Bell for Julie*. Some New Jerseyans may remember my grandfather as director of the city of Newark's Employment and Training programs (TEAM), or if you were interested in politics around 1984, you may recall an impressive run for the tenth Congressional District. Bishop Hildebrand endorsed Grandpop using the phrase, "It's time for

change." I was watching very closely to learn how life should have been for Mommie and me; Grandpop, a great man of God.

Aaah, I wonder if Grandmom remembers our many dances with each other as we listened to Shenandoah, Man of La Mancha, and how could I ever forget, Purlie? We would sing with Melba Moore as she told the story of her man. Melba said, "She could not ever remember a man who could do what Purlie did." I understand why Grandmom was singing, but who in the world was I singing to? Grandmom will remember my favorite musical, the Sound of Music, take



your pick. Grandmom taught me the lyrics to “Do-Re-Mi.” Boy, what I wouldn’t do for those days again. It was a time for Mommie and me that was symbolic of peace and tranquility during our struggle. I would never have believed those difficult days that allowed for only a few stolen moments of joy would later in life become what I would consider a better time—you know, the good old days.

The other thing I always remembered about visiting Grandmom was that she could decorate a Christmas tree. Her tree was always in red. It was the most amazing tree I had ever seen in my life. Christmas was my absolute favorite time of the year. All of my Christmases were great, but Grandmom made Christmas mystical. God blessed us with friends. I never forgot.

Back to Mommie, she was focused on getting us out of that cold house. See, we had to move from Oakford Street, the house we lived in as a family, I’m guessing because Mommie couldn’t afford it alone. After Oakford Street, we moved to another house that was only referred to as the “cold house.” No matter how old she or I became, that house had no address. It was just the “cold house.” I kept colds in that house, and Miss Marie would be so angry, but my mom stayed sick too. If I was sick, Miss Marie would make Mommie let me stay on Bucknell Street. Miss Marie would make me a hot toddy, and I would be well the next day. Mommie always said she had no idea what Miss Marie was giving me, but it sure did work. Mommie said Miss Marie wouldn’t give the kids’ mothers anything to cure them and she would never tell what she was giving the kids. That story always made me laugh, because that was Miss Marie. She loved her kids. God always has a ram in the bush, doesn’t He?

Things started coming around for my mom. She had a friend from Metropolitan named Miss Parthenia. She was actually the woman who rented us the cold house. She helped my mom get a job with the government, and I guess shortly thereafter, Mommie started looking for another place to live. As a kid, you never seem to know how difficult your circumstances are—or at least I didn’t. When we moved, I thought we had made it to mansion status. We moved to Tasker Home Projects, and we lived in Lanier Court.

Lanier Court was an area where the elderly residents resided. Mommie later told me that she could have moved sooner to some other housing

authority resident, but she had to consider her little girl, so she patiently waited on the Lord. You do know the Lord was in the projects, too, right? So we lived on the second floor in a one-bedroom apartment, which was two doors away from the housing authority police station. You know, in the projects, you didn't have to pay for utilities, so that house was always hot. I was an easy kid to please.

My mom was always a proud woman, so the apartment was as clean as a pin. When she became tired of cleaning, she paid a nice teenage girl to clean for her.

It was just us, and we didn't care who knew it. We shared the same bedroom. I am sure we always slept together, but that is my first memory of us sleeping together. I was always a kid who kept to herself. I would open up around a select few, but really the only person who knew how much I talked was Mommie. I was a shy kid. Not with her. Boy, I would keep her up all night talking. She would try to make me go to sleep, but truth be told, she loved talking to me as much as I loved talking to her. Don't let the weekends show up; she was toast. I had a million questions, and she answered them all.

I guess I asked all the questions to satisfy my imagination. I've always had a vivid imagination.

Keitmo is another name we called Carol. I will always remember the time I kept her on the phone for two hours easy, giving a blow-by-blow description of a fight that never occurred. Maybe she didn't know I lived in the seniors area of Tasker, two doors from the housing authority police. How could such a fight ever take place? I got Kietmo there.

I have some fond memories of Lanier Court. Some of my best Christmases were spent in Lanier Court. I would have so much stuff that Mommie said my dad told her she was crazy, but she didn't care. The toys and gifts would take up the entire living room sometimes. Then there were the prettiest clothes you had ever seen in your life. She was working for the government and only had to pay rent; I guess we considered ourselves loaded.

I had a bad memory in Lanier Court as well. I was a kid who took chances. For some reason, I liked playing with matches.

Mommie was in the living room talking on the phone. She had just finished cleaning the house. The floor had been scrubbed and waxed. I did

that night what I had done many times before. I loved starting fires and putting them out like the firemen, but something went seriously wrong that night. I started the fire in the bedroom, but the fire would not go out. The curtains caught on fire. Mommie smelled the smoke, and she came running into the room. She grabbed the bucket used to clean the house that day and threw water on the fire. My mom, thank God, was able to contain the fire; the flames eventually diminished and disappeared.

Then she ignited another fire—on my behind. That night was my first encounter with the extension cord. I landed myself a visit to the emergency room. My mom said she was scared to death that they were going to take me away from her. See, that whipping I was getting, I didn't receive well, and I started running on the shiny, newly waxed floors. I slid into the coffee table and busted open my head, not to mention, the welts that were all over my body. I had to get stitches, and to this day, I still have the scar to prove it. I should call it "my badge of love."

When we returned from the hospital, Mommie and I got in the bed. She explained to me what could have happened. I was so sorry that I made her so angry that I never started fires again. Lessons.

I learned so much while living in Tasker. I'll never forget Mommie teaching me to ride my new bike. It was a pink Huffy girl's bike with a white basket. She purchased it for me from Blair's on my most favorite Christmas growing up. I still have pictures to support my memory. Mommie held the back of the seat of the bike and talked me through the process. She started by saying, "Okay, baby, pay close attention," and then the instructions began. Before I knew it, her voice was in a distance and I was screaming, "Look at me, Mommie!" I can never forget the smile on her face.

Later in life, I learned to drive quicker than I learned to ride a bike. Mommie started giving me driving instructions, but before she could finish, well, I was safely driving. All she really had to teach me was how to parallel park.

She always asked, "How did you learn to drive?" I would answer, "I was watching you, Mommie." She was the best driver ever. My dad taught her to drive.

Mommie taught me another lesson I'll never forget. This lesson was in a game of jacks. At age forty, I still asked, "Mommie, why in the world

would you beat a little girl so bad in a game of jacks?” I always asked this same question throughout our life span, and her answer never changed.

She would say, “Your face said it all. You never liked losing. Each time we played a game of jacks, you always showed up for the challenge and played harder each game. You always played to win. I never let you win for a reason. Knowing the challenges that faced you, I wanted you to know that no one will ever give you anything. You will have to work hard for anything you want in life. I taught you how to play life in a game of jacks. You’ve done well, baby.” Mommie, my girl!

Somewhere between the cold house and Lanier Court, my mom purchased a sporty piece of transportation. It was a used, black Mustang with red leather interior. My mom was really good-looking and dressed very smart. Guess what; I dressed just as smart too. That’s another thing Mommie said my dad would tell her about, that she spent too much money on our clothes. She didn’t care what Daddy thought. We styled ourselves for the places she believed God would take us. I know this because she later shared that she was dressing us for the places we were going. She always said, “Just because you are poor, you shouldn’t look it.”

If you look good, then you will feel good, and people always take notice of people with pride. She was smart, but what I learned later was she operated on vision from the Lord. She didn’t have to tell me that. I figured that one out for myself.

Well, back to that Mustang. Mr. Sonny had the car more than us. Mr. Sonny was Mommie’s mechanic. A friend of hers from the VA, where she used to work, recommended him, and every time I turned around we were giving the car to Mr. Sonny and catching the bus home. Even I got sick of that car.

Mommie worked for the Veterans Administration Regional Office on Wissahickon Drive. She would get off of work and pick up my cousin Darrin and me from Miss Marie’s. Darrin would wait at our house until his mom got off of work. Darrin and his mom lived in Tasker too. They lived in Patton Drive. I loved visiting my aunt and cousin, but there were





some bad kids over there. I guess I had just become used to the tranquility of Lanier Court, but anyway, this was our routine: My mom would drop me off in the mornings at Aunt Queen's house and Aunt Queen would take us to Miss Marie's. Miss Marie would get us to school, which was around the corner from where she lived. We used Miss Marie's address to get to go to that particular school. Mommie would pick us up and take us home. I would always talk her into the scenic route. We dreamed a lot. That was one of the things we had in common. We always wanted more for each other.

Then one day, my mom came to pick up Darrin and me in a white Plymouth Duster with a green vinyl top. The interior was green, and all it had was an AM radio, but I thought I was riding in a Bentley, I guess. The smile on her little girl's face made the payments easy to make. Every time we went to that car, we were always going somewhere good. My cousin Darrin was always in the backseat.

My mom's motivation was always me, and her strength came from the Lord. On Sundays, that AM radio would give us the sounds of Tramaine Hawkins as she sang our song. Mommie and I could not help but agree with Tramaine that it would be worth working for Jesus until He returned. I know everyone remembers "Change." We loved that song!

Mommie had been working for the VA for sometime. To me, she had worked there so long, it was the only job I remembered. You know, if you worked for the city, state, or government at that time, you were considered to have a good job, so we always referred to her job as her good government job. I later understood that she took a loan out from the credit union to buy her Duster. As time marched on, she was approved for a house.

Mommie just came home one day and said we were moving. She said, "Baby, we're getting a house." Well, I guess I had realized by then that living in the projects was not exactly considered living in a mansion. To tell the truth, I didn't care where I lived. All I ever thought about in life really was being with my mom.



We stayed in South Philly. I lived in South Philly my entire childhood. My other cousins, Uncle George's kids, Trina and Valaida, lived in West Oak Lane. When Darrin and his mom moved, they moved to Germantown, but we stayed in South Philly. My mom was raised in South Philly, and I believe she knew anybody and everybody in South Philly. I became absolutely convinced of this fact after meeting and receiving that actor's autograph after seeing the play *Purlie*. When he showed up on a television show, I told the story every chance I had. The kids didn't believe I had his autograph, so I would put Mommie on the phone.

"Mommie, don't I have George Jefferson's autograph, and didn't you go to school with him?" She knew everybody!

She took me to see the house. It was a two-story row house on 19th and Manton. It had three floors, which included a basement, first floor, and upstairs. That's how we described it. I finally had my own room, but guess what. I mostly slept with my mom anyway. It was always our time to talk, and on the nights I slept in my room, we just yelled across the hall all night. Even those nights ended in her saying, "Come in here" or me just going in her room.

I'll never forget that Christmas she brought me my white canopy bedroom set and a color television. Then, instead of me going to her room, she just slept in mine. We were made for each other.

Friday nights, we started the weekend with television, Jiffy Pop popcorn, and a good movie. Mommie usually fell asleep early after working a long week. Carol and I would talk all night on the phone about nothing. Mommie would wake up in between nods and tell me to get off the phone. I would say, "I'm not on the phone, Mommie," and she would go back to sleep. Carol and I would continue our conversation. People shouldn't be fooled by my shy demeanor; I always had something to say, but most times I was watching and thinking.

