**Karen’s Eulogy for Mavis Blatt**

Like Pamie and David, I first met Mavis around age 16, having been unexpectedly tossed out of our house by our Mom (whom we’d probably pushed over the edge). Dad picked us up and brought all three of us back to his and May’s tiny studio apartment for the now legendary spaghetti supper that Mavis had prepared. Not until years later did we learn how nervous May was about the prospect of Dad’s three teenage kids descending on their small haven. And we had no idea of what to expect with Mavis. She was gracious – somehow – and we made it work – one giant, on-going slumber party – until we were summoned back home.

My next major life period involving Mavis was when I moved in with her and Dad in Holland at age 19. By then, she was heavily pregnant with Billy. Every morning, first thing, I watched her chug a liter of milk all at once, as ordered by her Dutch obstetrician. She hated milk and just wanted to get it over with.

I remember walking the dog Thor so he’d pull me over instead of Mavis in her condition. Afternoons, sitting quietly in the garden together chatting and reading. Sometimes I would sketch her and she never complained about the obvious big belly factor. With Grandma, we all built out a garret room for me in the attic to make room for sister Pam.

When Pamie finally arrived, there were some epic sister fights which apparently sent May into the ozone – all privately of course – while Dad assured her this was perfectly normal.

When Billy was born, I was so thrilled to have a new baby brother. I got up with him in the nights and proudly walked all over Breda with him on my hip – taking some of the pressure off of May. In retrospect, I perhaps secretly hoped that this might balance out some of her more trepidatious feelings about Bill’s two teenage daughters shattering her peaceful haven with Dad and their newborn son.

May and Dad’s love for each other was like something straight out of a romance novel – the kind of lightning bolt true love that ages well with passing decades like the finest of fine wine. As the years went by, we all mellowed together and, from our perspective, the relationship with May evolved from Dad’s new wife to having another close relative like a young aunt who better understood changing modern times to having a second Mom whom we grew to love, respect and appreciate enormously.

Over the course of our lives, Mavis stood witness to our troubles and triumphs, lending a sympathetic ear and timely advice.

Here are a few of Mavis’s favorite sayings. You may also hear some of them today from my siblings. Many of you have probably heard them first-hand.

When Mavis felt we were just sitting around, kind of stuck, she would admonish us with: “Life is not a dress rehearsal. Get out there!” When she sensed I was about to miss out on a good opportunity, she would say: “It’s when you really don’t feel like doing something (like going to a party) that the best things can happen (like meeting a great guy).” When she thought I was constantly working too hard, she’d urge: “Karen, you’ve got to take time to smell the roses” If I succeeded with something after a really hard pull (like having our son, Sean after years of trying, or losing half a person on Weight Watchers), she would proudly celebrate me saying: “when you really put your mind to something, you do it!”

And lastly, whether it was Mavis leaving England for the North American unknown, or her ending an unhappy first marriage to spend almost half a century with Bill, the love of her life, or her having their much loved son Billy in Holland, a country she never wanted to move to, or May leaving New England to spend the next 30-some years very happily in Arizona or her coming to enjoy an extended family that includes all of us …..

Mavis strongly believed and often said that: “everything has been written.” The amazing life she’s lived with Dad, all of us kids and you all here today, all of it was pre-determined and meant to be. Mavis, we love you dearly and are all the richer for having had you in our lives for so long.