

Patricia Lynn Hawk Obituary

February 10-1951-January 22, 1995

Patty was born to Theodore and Clara (McAtee) on February 10 1951 in Longview Washington. She graduated from Rainier Union High School in June 1969. After graduation she worked at Tektronix in Beaverton. This job was perfect for her as it was handling very intricate parts for computer. Patty was a very precise, detail-oriented person and loved her job at Tektronix. She married Bob Tellinghuisen and moved to Yakima Washington. Shortly after moving to Yakima In 1977 she was diagnosed with Lymphoma (a form of Cancer) in her stomach. Her marriage ended after she had surgery removing 85% of her stomach. (This required that she be fed liquid nutrients through a feeding tube which was surgically placed into her stomach.) Following surgery she received radiation and chemotherapy. When this was completed she returned to the Rainier area living with her family for support. She battled this cancer for over 2 years and was declared free of cancer. She later married Ron Hawk and moved to the Eugene/Springfield area. Due to her health she was unable to work and received Supplemental Security Income (SSI a form of Social Security). Patty loved to cook, take care of her home and spend time with her family, especially the younger nieces and nephews. Patty passed away in a Springfield hospital. She left behind her Mother Clara McAtee, 4 sisters: Louise White (Steve) Tunie Betschart (Doug) Dolly Webb, and Theresa Slape (Ray) and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her father Ted McAtee.

Life's Pitfalls

Written by Tunie (McAtee) Betschart

My sister Patty, died in 1995 after a lifetime battle with alcohol. Strangely enough it was many years after the very tough battle with lymphoma, a very deadly cancer, which the doctors told my mom and the rest of the family she **could not win**. She fought that battle with every fiber of strength she could muster. She had to have surgery to remove 85% of her stomach, eventually being fed through a tube, for a long period of time. Then she had radiation which did nothing to stop the rapid growth of the cancer that had invaded her body. She got down to 85 pounds (she was 5'9" so this was very thin). Then the doctors came to my mom and said there is just nothing more they could do. There was not a glimmer of hope and they did not want to even ask fearing it may give us hope but there was an experimental chemo they really wanted to try which they did NOT think would work; but said they wanted to try it to see how the cancer would react to it...They said "To be honest, we do not think it will help Patty but maybe what we learn will help others." I will never forget what mom said... "Well, what choice do I have? I can't quit now. That is my child in there. Please do what you can do to buy any time at all. I cannot just let her go." Amazingly prayers and chemo worked and Patty followed the doctor's orders right down to the time to take the pills. She would not take them 5 minutes before the prescribed time. After a very rough couple of years, she **won** that hard fought battle. (This was in 1977-78.)

There were times during this period when I would see her in the hospital, or at home when her stomach would swallow up the feeding tube, or when she was sitting in a chair looking like some very old bald person with skin stretched over their bones, I would wonder where she found the strength to fight this fight! I knew she was much stronger than I! Even though I always considered myself very strong, I wasn't sure I could go through this even as a spectator! She had such determination and will to live. It amazed me. Where does this strength come from?

I found it hard to believe she had it inside her. You see, I had taken her to the hospital when, after drinking way too much, she overdosed using 100 Phenobarbital; stood by her bed praying somehow she would pull through this. Her face was unrecognizable due to the pills she had taken. She had no neck. Every part of her was very, very, swollen. After pumping her stomach, running IV drip through her as quickly as possible, and many days the doctors were able to save her. Another time she was drinking and purposely drove into a lake to end her life. Again she was spared. Many times I would set with her trying to help her overcome the drinking and get her to stop. I couldn't figure out why she just didn't stay away from the alcohol. Seemed easy to me. She must be weak! Only weak people did such things, right???

Trying to understand this, I joined a support group for families of alcoholics. I gained a very **limited** knowledge of the power of alcohol over some people. Patty's struggle with cancer and subsequent win over it and her struggle with alcohol and losing that battle (ultimately causing her death due to septic shock, which is what happens when your liver can no longer function) taught me much, much more about the powerful drugs out there.

Unfortunately, there is a stigma about the use of drugs or alcohol and even death caused by alcohol or drugs. We try to "dance around" it, sweep it under the rug, and not talk about it. But by doing this we are not helping others recognize the dangers and pitfalls of these very deadly social diseases. We as a society are getting better about admitting, recognizing and treating depression and mental disorders that causes these reactions in people. We need to continue to get better and remove the stigma. Help those that need help. Encourage them to seek professional help. Walk beside them, support their efforts to get clean and sober every way we can.

I labored over sharing this story with you and then realized I am doing just what I had criticized; hiding the truth because I was afraid you may think less of my wonderful, loving, incredibly strong sister. She loved everyone and was so beautiful. I always thought she should have been a model. I certainly am not telling this to tear her down or diminish her memory in any way. But rather sharing with you that some of her actions were not healthy for her. This does not change her, or my love for her.

I pray a hedge of protection over family members and a deliverance for those ensnared in this powerful struggle. People are drawn to alcohol and/or drugs for various reasons. But once inside that net, it is so hard to find the way out. If you are there...get help! If you are thinking about experimenting with these so-called "not harmful" but-in-reality mind altering drugs, look around you...is this the way you want to spend your life? Be honest about the "happiness" drugs bring.

My very beautiful sister Patty died before celebrating her 44th birthday! Had she won the battle with alcohol she would have been 68 on February 10 2019. Sorry we didn't have more time together! I love her very much!