



This gathering is a celebration of the memory of Jean McGee Ritchie.

I'd like to talk about a few aspects of her life.

She was a Vassar Girl, as they were then called. At Vassar, she was also a Flora-Dora girl. We're all pretty sure that this activity was not too racy, and that it was at least condoned by the college authorities. At any rate, at Vassar, and especially among the Flora-Dora crowd, she made some of her oldest and most faithful friends.

She kept her interest in Vassar, and spent much time in later years working for the well-being of her college class, as president of the class's alumnae organization, and also as organizer of reunions. Although she was willing to work hard in the administrative aspects of these things, it's pretty clear that her real motive was to keep in touch with both the dear friends she had gathered, and the many friends less intimate.

After moving to Summit, she became much involved with many organizations, especially the Summit College Club. For years and years she was a stalwart worker in their book sale. In fact, there were even periods when it seemed the seasons were skewed around so that the climactic event of the year was the Book Sale, instead of the holiday season. From the College Club, and also from other activities, like the Summit Child Care Center, Jean gained new friends, and some of them became very close to her.

Through her family she made other connections. Before she was a Vassar girl, she was a McGee girl, and one of the many happy legacies of that family was the McGee camp at Pocono Lake Preserve. There is a lot of social stuffiness in that colony, but there are also a lot of real people, and Mom and they found each other, as always seemed to happen. Another group of friends.

And, of course, she met and married my father. Either through mutual college connections or through his co-workers from Bell Labs, yet another network of friends was made, especially including Jean and Al's deepest and closest confidantes, the Keisters.

I've talked a lot about friends. One thing that has become really evident in the past month is Mother's joy in making new friends quickly, and keeping old friendships alive through the decades. She was really exceptional in this.

What I haven't talked about is what was most important to her: her family. She loved an extended family: not only her sisters and brother, but the parents- and sisters- and brothers-in-law, the nieces and nephews, the cousins and aunts and uncles. Most of all, she loved her husband and children and grandchildren. She raised a hell of a family!

*Dennis*