

Beauty is Natural

Mom never wore any makeup, whatsoever. She was a soap and water girl, and she had beautiful skin! (Ruddy in the summertime.) She occasionally put moisture cream on her face and hands at night. What you saw is what you got...in so many ways.

She kept up with fashion and occasionally brought home a new dress or shoes from shopping. When she dressed up, she wore low heeled pumps with her dresses or suits. As far along as through the 1940s she always wore a hat, even for grocery shopping. Up until the early 1960s hats, or head covers, were expected to be worn in church.

Mom had lovely thick hair. She had a natural brown or brunette when we were younger. About the time she turned fifty her hair began to turn gray, and she was silver in her early sixties. She usually had a beauty shop hair permanent twice a year and then she simply shampooed her hair and frequently tied a string around it. (Sometimes a shoestring.) Otherwise, she never styled her hair. Goodness! That's why she got a perm!

Sometimes when she was out working in the barn, garden, or flower beds, she put on a man's pair of overalls. These had no waistband and were comfortable for bending, spading, and weeding. She always wore rubber soled tie shoes for working in the barn or gardens. A large straw hat was often used to keep her face from getting sunburned. Usually, Mom wore an apron in the kitchen to protect her clothes.

The real beauty of Mom is that she offered her presence to us. She was there for us. She provided the needed foundations for our healthy adult lives: a secure grounding, human connections, and relationships. She had a humble presence with everyone: showing kindness, acceptance and caring. Although Mom was a pretty lady, her real beauty was in her heart and the way it shined.



Classic Pink Rose
Watercolor 2021

Quilter

Dad and Mom had raised sheep, so we always had wool to make quilts to keep warm in the cold weather. When Mom made quilts, she would take the wool from the old quilt, send it to a woolen mill to get it washed, re-carded and possibly have some new wool added to it. The mill would process it into ready-to-use folded batts for a specified size quilt and send it in a big box through the mail.

During their early marriage, quilting frames had been made by our dad from four long pieces of wood about one by two inches and long enough to fit a quilt. Each wood section had measured and drilled holes where bolts could be inserted to hold the frame in place. These four frames were placed on four chair backs to make the rectangle needed. Mom stretched the bottom fabric and tacked it to the four wooden frames, then distributed the batts of wool evenly on the fabric, and at last placed a top layer of fabric also tacked to the frames. Then she tied the quilt with a matching-colored yarn. She weaved the yarn in and out through the layers, then snipped it between and fastened a double knot in each tie. When she could no longer reach, the frame would be rolled up and secured by placing bolts through the holes of the two boards to hold the frame in place. When the tying was completed, all the tacks were removed, the quilt was taken from the frame and the outside edges were sewn together with the sewing machine.

When we were kids, we were able to pick two fabric designs from a Sears Catalog that we wanted on our reversible quilt. I had a lot of patchwork umbrellas on mine and the reverse side was floral. Later I had a real patchwork patriotic star design made by Mom's aunt, on another new quilt. Mom ensured that all her kids had a new homemade quilt for their weddings. Since I did not get married until later, she made mine when I returned after teaching eight years in the tropics and came back to cold weather. My quilt from then is still in excellent condition, and I use it for the very cold days every winter. It is so cozy!



Bouquet of White Peonies
Watercolor 2016