

Opinion: Marjorie Springmeyer – one of a kind



Marjorie Springmeyer

By Kathryn Reed

MINDEN – I'm a firm believer people come into our lives for a reason – even if it is not immediately apparent why.

As a journalist I'm always meeting people. Some of those encounters are more profound than others and have a lasting impression. Such was the case with Marjorie Springmeyer.

What an incredible woman – and I only knew her for a fraction of the 93 years she was alive.

More than 125 people gathered Feb. 28 to remember Mrs. Springmeyer, who **died Jan. 28.**

She used to write me letters – longhand – talking about the city of South Lake Tahoe, her travels, life and a little about her family. We would converse by phone. When I saw it was her calling I would answer if I knew I had the next hour free to chat. She wasn't one who would easily get off the phone.

Mrs. Springmeyer had such wonderful stories to tell about what life was like in Tahoe before it became a tourist destination and overbuilt. Her travels made me want to pack my bags.

I miss our talks – I've missed them for quite a while. I always thought there might be one more.

Her anger, frustration and heartache toward and because of the city are legendary. During the video of her life headlines involving some of that strife were shown – proving the significance it held in her life. She and her brothers, Knox and Bill Johnson, donated land for a City Hall that never got built. Instead, it's where the police department and courthouse are in South Lake Tahoe.

Bill Johnson attended Saturday's service, noting how his sister helped raise him because their mother was busy after their father died. Bill was 3 months old at the time and Marjorie 9 years old.

"When I think of Marjorie she always had a good spirit," Mr. Johnson said.

He and others didn't gloss over the difficulties Mrs. Springmeyer had to endure in her life – spending more than two years in a hospital after a car wreck in high school that killed one person and that left her with lifelong mobility issues, having her three children and husband precede her in death, being bed ridden for the last several years of her life, and all the land issues at the lake.

She had told me the friends were going to see "Gone with the Wind" the night of the accident. It was mentioned at the service this was her favorite movie. One has to wonder if it was just the most memorable.

Her brother and others also spoke of the goodness Mrs. Springmeyer brought to their lives and those around her.

Her long, flowing white hair and penchant to wear bright colored clothes were talked about. So was her love for travel, animals and helping others.

Three Washoe women spoke of Mrs. Springmeyer's love of the tribe and how they had adopted her as a Washoe sister.

One relative talked about her fondness for donkeys.

In 2005 she told me, "I have a burro permit (from South Lake Tahoe). I pay \$30. I used to have them at the amusement park. I keep it because they would never let me have another license."

That is the spirit – some might call orneriness – which I admired about Mrs. Springmeyer. She was a fighter, a doer, a don't take no for an answer kind of woman. I respected her for all of those things.

The wind was a constant refrain during the service – her love for it. Now I will forever think of Mrs. Springmeyer when the wind blows and listen just a little harder to what it might be whispering or howling.