

Rita "Mae" Deedy
4/30/1915 - 4/6/2009

I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about my Great Aunt Mae. That sounds funny because she was never Great Aunt Mae or even Aunt Mae to me. She was "Mae", usually followed by "and Bet".

Childhood trips to Wabash Ave. meant visits to Mae and Bet on the first floor and to my Grandparents on the second floor, usually with multiple trips up and down the back stairs. If we stayed too long on one floor or the other a rap on the pipes called us to lunch or a snack or whatever else. These trips often ended with Mae folding a quarter or even a dollar bill secretly into my palm with the admonition to not tell anyone and to be a good boy.

Now, even though Mae was small in stature something told me I didn't want to disobey or disappoint her. Come to think of it my father and Uncles seemed to feel the same way. The strength of her will and quick wit made it clear that Mae could and would take care of herself.

Two similar incidents illustrate this point. The first involved moving to Shrewsbury. When it became clear that Mae would benefit from the assisted living environment, my father and Uncle Jack worked long and hard to try to convince her. Mae finally agreed to take a look at Southgate with them. After a nice visit it was time to sign the papers. Mae announced she didn't have her checkbook and promptly left. She wasn't ready and they weren't going to convince her. Four years later she bought her Condo. Last week with her health deteriorating the paramedics were called to take her to the hospital. Mae said, No, she wasn't going. That is living on your own terms and can only be admired.

As independent as Mae was for all her life, managing General Adjustment Bureau to support herself, she was devoted to her family and her religion. Whenever family needed her Mae was there. I suspect the members of her parish would say the same thing.

I have many other memories of Mae. A sports fan who followed the Red Sox, Celtics and Holy Cross. A hobby of listening to a police scanner, I never did figure that one out. All of these memories pale to the overwhelming sense of Mae's strength of character. In my family she is the last of a generation and we will miss her.