

## *Rose Ann's Eulogy*

*Good morning. Most of you know me, but if not, my name is Carole Branch. I am Rose Ann's niece and it is my honor to share my thoughts about her with you today. As I was preparing for this eulogy, I was hitting a road block in getting started. So, I went to Eulogy.com for some help. In my search, I didn't find one template I liked or worked well for what I wanted to say about my aunt. However, one site suggested you should view the eulogy as a final gift to a loved one. So Aunt Roe, this one is for you. I hope you approve.*

*Rose Ann was born to Louis and Lena Tapella on November 5, 1942. She was the youngest of four children. When I asked my mom about her memories of my aunt growing up, my mom said she was much older and moved out of her parents' house shortly after my aunt was born. In fact, my aunt was flower girl in my parents' wedding. My Uncle Chuck responded, I don't remember much except that I had a "bratty sister" 5 years younger than me. However all mentioned the comment my aunt made about my Uncle Jim. Growing up they had a dog. At one point my aunt announced she "wanted to keep the dog, but wanted to get rid of Jim" (her brother). Recently, Uncle Jim has recorded all of the sibling's memories of*

*the family growing up. What a gift this is for all of us especially now for Jen and Scott. The siblings all eventually grew up and remained close in spite of being separated by thousands of miles. I heard stories of the trip they made to New Jersey to help my aunt relocate to St. Louis. That must have been quite an experience. My aunt has been a tremendous support and companion to my mother after my father passed away last April. In spite of the difference in age, they were not only sisters but good friends as well. Roe attended Epiphany of Our Lord grade school and St John the Baptist High School. She remained active in alumnae organizations of both schools. My aunt kept in touch with many of her grade school and high school friends even after living in New Jersey for many years. She had that unusual ability to not only make friends, but keep them forever.*

*After high school, Aunt Roe “worked her way up the ranks” starting as a secretary and progressing to executive assistant at Monsanto. She was efficient, organized and could type like no one I knew. In fact, I am convinced she actually ran the company. She was unusual for women at that time in that she had a career, not just a job. However that all changed when she met her husband- to- be, Fred Becker. Aunt Roe, a fan of the Blues and Fred, a rabid Philadelphia Flyers fan were introduced at a hockey booster club annual conference held in*

*Philadelphia. They managed a long distance relationship and eventually married. In fact they married each other twice. As Fred was Jewish and my aunt, Catholic, they had both a Catholic ceremony at St. Joan of Arc church presided over by the late Bishop Koester and a Jewish ceremony in Philadelphia, blessed by a rabbi. In spite of theological differences, Fred's family was much like our Italian family in St Louis....they were good people, close-knit and liked to have large, fun family gatherings. It was soon after that my aunt started her most treasured career, that of being a mother to Jennifer and Scott. She was so proud of both of them and didn't hesitate sharing their successes with you. Jennifer attended Washington University on academic scholarship and graduated with a degree in Civil engineering. She remained in St Louis after graduation and has worked for MoDot since then. Her most recent project is the design of the new Vandeventer exit off of Highway 40/ 64, a logistical nightmare as thousands of employees associated with the BJC medical complex travel that way each day. (Thanks, Jen) Jen is very involved with the catholic Student Center of the Washington University Campus. Scott graduated from Johnson and Wales, one of the top culinary schools in the country. He currently has two jobs, one with the University of Colorado Boulder Campus as Sous pastry Chef and the other teaching*

*baking and pastry at the Johnson and Wales campus in Boulder. I have gained weight just looking at pictures of his pastry creations on Facebook (Thanks Scott).*

*Roe was Aunt Roe to 8 nieces and nephews, 19 great nieces and nephews, and 1 great-great nephew. As an extended family we have managed to stay close in spite of being separated by large distances. We are all fortunate to have very happy memories of out of state weddings and most recently a trip to Las Vegas with the girls. My husband David, myself and our children have been fortunate to spend the past several Thanksgivings and Christmases with my aunt. Her corn casserole has quickly become a family favorite. My aunt's ability to talk and talk and talk some more was priceless. She could be very opinionated as we all know, but was always entertaining and kept the conversation jumping. On occasion there would be friends from my work who were unable to get home for the holidays. I would invite them to holiday dinners at the Branch home. Initially reluctant due to concerns about invading family time, they soon felt like they were part of the family mainly because of my aunt's incredible gift of gab. We will truly miss her at our holiday dinners but will be sure to offer a toast with a glass (or glasses) of wine in her memory.*

*What I admired the most about my aunt was her incredible positive attitude and spirit. In spite of the negative things that happened in her life, Fred's unexpected death of leukemia in 2001 and her own diagnosis of Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in October of 2008 followed by months of chemotherapy and resultant pulmonary fibrosis, I never heard her complain about her life's situation. When she moved back to St. Louis from New Jersey where she had been firmly rooted and active for many years she never looked back. She quickly became involved in her community in St Louis. She volunteered at St Louis University Hospital, greeting visitors at the front desk. She worked part time at the St Louis University Guest House. She loved her work, and by all accounts was highly regarded and loved by all. Aunt Roe enjoyed being active and interacting with people. She was a member of Epiphany church attending weekly Mass and was involved in the Ladies Guild. She loved both playing and calling Bingo. Aunt Roe was an avid reader, crossword puzzle solver, board game player and Trivia player. She never gave up her love for the Blues. She was a big kid at heart and enjoyed life to its fullest.*

*Aunt Roe was raised Catholic, married Jewish and worked as a secretary at two Episcopalian churches while living in New Jersey. She attended services at the synagogue and Fred would be a reader at their parish mass. However, it was*

*her Catholic faith that was so very important to her. My aunt would say, "It didn't matter what you believed, as long as you believed in something." Aunt Roe, I believe you are now enjoying all the glorious things heaven has to offer. You were loved and I believe, you will truly be missed by all.*