

Tribute to a Matriarch

A person who became one of the most recognizable profiles throughout Life Care Centers of America has died, and our company has lost one of its finest cheerleaders. Maxine Lemmon, the matriarch of the family featured in the *Faces of Aging* image, died on June 11 at the age of 87. Her funeral service was held at Lindquist's Mortuary in her hometown of Roy, Utah, on June 15.

Mrs. Lemmon was a true icon of Life Care. That word means "an important, enduring symbol," and that's what she represented. The *Faces of Aging* image – depicting four stages in the life of a woman – has been used to proclaim the company's mission and philosophy of caring for the elderly and others since 1989.

In reasonably good health in her latter years. Mrs. Lemmon had fallen at her home and had developed pneumonia, from which she did not recover. Through most of this year, however, she was excited about receiving – and accepting – an invitation to return to Life Care's annual management meeting this September, accompanied by her daughter, Lani Tolman Bourne, and possibly other family members.

"She just loved that role of being the matriarch and a celebrity," Lani (who is also featured in the picture) said. When Mrs. Lemmon and Lani came to the annual meeting in 2001, "she fell in love with the Life Care staff." It was the first time the two had seen the stained-glass display depicting the *Faces of Aging* image, which is in the main hallway of the Campbell Center. "She was awestruck by that," Lani noted. "She was anxious to come back this fall. She was rarin' to go."

What summed up the life of Maxine Lemmon? Well, she had some very special qualities that identified the lady.

She was noticeably fashionably attired. "She was always dressed to the 9s – her earrings always matched her outfits, for example," Lani said. "She recently even won the honor of 'most glamorous' at a pajama party of her church ward. Even in pajamas, she wanted to look nice."

Mrs. Lemmon had a special affinity for people. "Everybody she knew, she made them feel like they were her favorite. She was the life of every party."

Her hobbies were shopping the catalogs and baking, "and she loved to give what she baked to friends and family," Lani added.

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But it was her humor that particularly endeared Mrs. Lemmon to others. The Monday morning before she died, she had gotten up about 4 a.m. to go to the bathroom, and fell, hurting her elbow, shoulder and jaw on the right side of her body. She lay on the floor until 9 a.m. when her sister-in-law came and found her. "She had a lifeline," Lani said, "but the woman who cleaned the house said she didn't wear it except when family members were going to be visiting. When I asked her, Mom, please promise me that you will wear your lifeline, her answer was, 'Almost.' I knew by that response that she didn't have any intention of wearing the lifeline."

Two of her family had preceded her in death, a son, Stewart Ross Lemmon, and a granddaughter, Tracee Tolman. Not long ago, Lani asked Mrs. Lemmon where she thought Stewart is. "I think Stewart and Tracee are having tea with Abraham Lincoln," she replied. "Why Abraham Lincoln?" Lani asked. "Well, why not?" she shot back.

The story Mrs. Lemmon loved to tell the most was about the framed *Faces of Aging* poster being placed in the White House during the time that Nancy Reagan was First Lady. "I got hung in the White House," she joked.

The *Faces of Aging* image was first created as part of a calendar project by the Seniors' Resource Center in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, about 1982. Valerie Egzibher, an employee responsible for community service and marketing and the daughter of Maxine Lemmon, suggested her family for the photograph. It features, in addition to Mrs. Lemmon and Lani, Dana Judd (Lani's daughter) and Alicia Tolman (Dana's daughter). In the development stage, Valerie found the Japanese proverb, "The sun setting is no less beautiful than the sun rising," and placed it as the caption for the photograph.

When Forrest Preston saw the image in 1989, he immediately recognized the emotional impact of it. The photograph was purchased and copyrighted, and Life Care has exclusive ownership rights. Since then, it has become a nationally recognized trademark of Life Care. After the acquisition, Mrs. Lemmon first noticed the poster in its framed format in a visit to Life Care Center of Bountiful, where her sister-in-law, Zola Coleman, was a resident. As they were walking down a hallway, her husband said, "Did you see what was hanging on the wall back there?" They went back to inspect it, "and I was proud," she confessed.

In addition to Lani and Valerie, Mrs. Lemmon is survived by children Lee Harrison Nielson, Charlotte Nielson Trainor, Larry Scott Lemmon and Steven Earl (Tex) Lemmon; 23 grandchildren; 40 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren.

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And you can add to that about 34,000 associates of Life Care Centers of America, who also consider themselves to be part of her family. Her legacy of love for family and others, and care and appreciation for the aging process, will always be a part of our company's culture.

If you wish to send a note or card to the family, address it to: Valerie Egzibher, 6132 Lake Forest Road, Charlotte, NC 28227. Or donations may be made to The Primary Children's Medical Center, 100 North Medical Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84113 (telephone number 801-588-2000).

--Beecher Hunter