

# MEMORIAL TRIBUTE - A LIFE WELL LIVED

*The entire Safe Passage family was saddened by the news of Carolyn Montgomery's passing. When we reflect for even a moment on the fact that she has been a supporter and friend to our community for over fourteen years, it is impossible to describe the power of such care and love... She will always be a member of our family.*

*- Thomas Holland (Safe Passage, Executive Director)*

Carolyn (Carol) Montgomery was born April 7th, 1930 and passed away on Christmas Day, 2020 at the age of 90. Carol lived a joyful and purpose driven life, as evidenced by the personal mission statement she created for herself and which friends found hanging in a place of prominence within her home.

*"...Always have a goal to work towards...Do something to help someone else every day...Never be satisfied with myself...Use my money, time and talents to make life more pleasant for others..."*

These principles clearly prevailed and guided Carol daily.

Born in Tulsa, OK, she graduated from high school there and went on to receive a degree from Arizona State University. Carol worked for many years in the field of phlebotomy, and retired as an Outreach Supervisor at St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston, TX. Her retirement ended Carol's service to others in a professional capacity, but was just the start to many selfless and service driven adventures for Carol over the next 16 years.

In 2004 Carol left Houston and settled on 32 acres of farmland nestled between Carmine and Burton, TX. There she put her woodworking and carpentry skills to work and built her home with support from friends and community members, living in a loft studio located in a barn on the property until her home was completed. She later put that same loft to good use, and over the years she welcomed over 1,100 cyclists passing through to utilize the space through the Warmshowers cycling community; which she herself became involved with as an avid cyclist in her 80's. She provided free overnight housing and meals for folks, while making friends along the way.

## ***Carol Montgomery's Personal Mission Statement***

*Keep a working relationship with God.*

*Stay positive.*

*Always have a goal to work toward.*

*Be considerate with feelings of others.*

*Keep learning.*

*Strive to be clean and orderly.*

*Do something to help someone else every day.*

*Do something that requires physical exertion every day.*

*Never be satisfied with myself.*

*Use my money, time and talents to make life more pleasant for others.*

*Don't take myself too seriously.*

In addition to this, Carol ran a Bed & Breakfast, for about six years out of a small home adjoining her property.



The community of Burton, TX certainly benefited from Carol's presence as she became involved in numerous church and charitable organizations throughout the area. She was a founding member of the Bridge Ministry of Burton, which is a collective of churches from different denominations in the region that provides food, clothing and other resources to the needy. Through this ministry Carol leant her talents in woodworking by helping provide low income folks with ramps to get in and out of their homes.

Carol was an active member of Habitat for Humanity and traveled all over the world (China, Costa Rica, Honduras, the Philippines, and others) with them. She had a special love for Latin cultures, regions and people and taught herself Spanish while supporting two neighbors who were learning English. They met every Wednesday to collaborate and encourage one another's linguistic efforts.

Carol was also self-taught in her musical endeavors. She enjoyed church choir, and learned to play the pickin stick and the dulcimer. She had plans to take up banjo, before her passing. Carol held a strong belief in education, being kind, and in tipping your waiter well (a job which she held in both high school and college and thought everyone should experience).

She built friendships wherever she went; having an uncanny ability to immediately spot connections with folks and invite them into her life. Upon Carol's passing she left significant gifts to over 36 beneficiaries; including Safe Passage and roughly 5-6 other non-profit organizations. As well as leaving money earmarked to support the educational endeavors of friends she called family.

Carol became a long-time supporter of Safe Passage/Camino Seguro in 2004, giving on a monthly basis, after she made a trip to Antigua and visited the garbage dump neighborhood while there. She had heard about our work from a friend associated with Habitat for Humanity, and although she was never able to visit us directly, she said she had "first hand knowledge of what a wonderful organization you have." She regularly communicated with us over the years to let us know how important our work and mission was, all while sharing our story and videos with her friends, neighbors and church community.

Her consistent generosity for so many years touched countless individuals. Like Hanley's own legacy, Carol's incredible bequest to Safe Passage will continue to impact so many lives in our community and her gift will live on, long after her.