



Submitted by Mary M. in Honor of her mother, Carlyn R. – Inspired Living Kenner, LA

Carlyn R. will be 91 years young in June and throughout her life, she has been a loving and caring person who always looks out for others. She is the mother of 5, grandmother of 12, and great-grandmother of 23. As the oldest of 8 children herself, growing up in Edgard, LA, she helped take care of her younger siblings.

Even when she moved to New Orleans and married Dad, she opened her home to her siblings when they needed a place to stay. My Dad was a salesman and, on the road, quite often. With 5 children under the age of 10, Mom was able to organize our chaos with love and affection. She was always a strong woman long before it was recognized in our society as something special. I am especially grateful for her strong will and occasional stubbornness.

After 6 pregnancies and successfully delivering 4 healthy children, doctors advised her to not have any more children for health reasons. But she wanted to try for another girl and here I am today submitting this form.

She was always very active in our school and church community. Mom volunteered in the cafeteria, played piano for school variety shows, coordinated fundraisers, volunteered as classroom Mom, and served as PTO President. She played the organ weekly for Mass at St. Agnes Church, served as President of the Ladies Alter Society and was awarded the Order of St. Louis Medallion for her many years of service and dedication to St. Agnes Parish. Carlyn is selfless, supportive, and always puts her family's needs before her own. She is a woman of strong faith who fostered the same in her children. She instilled in all of us a love and loyalty to family.

Carlyn and Louis started our beautiful family almost 70 years ago as evidenced by the accompanying picture. Just as she is centered in the picture, Carlyn has been the core and matriarch of our family.

On behalf of my siblings, Paula, Neal, Brent, and Louie, I am nominating our loving, supportive, and thoughtful Mom for Mother of the Year.



*Submitted by Sheila R in Honor of her mother,
Dora - Inspired Living Sugar Land*

Dear Mom,

I am writing this essay to nominate you for Mother of the Year, and I want to tell you why I think you should win. All my successes are to be credited to you. Mom, you had a tough childhood. Your mother died when you were young, and you never had a mom to raise you and guide you in the ways of life. Somehow though, you figured out how to be a mom and figured out when and how you should guide me and when you should let me find my way.

Certainly, you raised me to mind my p's and q's, say, 'yes ma 'm', and to write thank you letters. These are the normal things most moms do. Mostly though, you took a rather hands-off approach and led by example. And wow, what an inspiring example you set for me to follow as I grew.

As a child of the Depression you learned how to do without, learned how to DO, and learned frugality and independence. This made you incredibly strong and gave you a fearlessness to tackle any project or obstacle you encountered. You were the poster child for Martha Stewart and provided my childhood home with a decorative flair and garden that even she would have envied. All this was done with very little means, lots of creativity, and a whole lot of hard work. Some of my best days were when I had come home from a hard day at college and would walk into my bedroom and find a beautiful flower arrangement, you had made for me with flowers from your garden. Somehow you always sensed when I would need a little pick-me-up. Your passion for the things you loved to do such as gardening, sewing, crafting, cooking, and flower arranging was contagious. I caught your passion for these things. When you taught me to sew, you didn't just help me read instructions on the patterns, you explained why each step had to be done and how to add my flair to the item I was sewing. I followed your lead into becoming an avid gardener and I take pride and joy from it daily. I thank you particularly for these gifts of sewing and gardening as they challenge me and steady me during tough times. And you gave me the life-long passion to pursue them with continued joy.

Finally, this essay would not be complete if I did not mention laughter. Just recently, at the end of a phone call, you told me to always remember to laugh in life and look for the happy things in each day. We have shared so many laughs and smiles during my life that it seems like a given that I would always remember laughter. But that day on the phone you must have sensed that I needed reminding. Once again you knew what I needed for a little pick-me-up.

*All of this and so much more is why I am nominating you, Mom, for Mother of the Year.
~All My Love, Sheila~~*



**Submitted by Sheryl H. in Honor of her mother, Jackie –
Inspired Living Ocoee, FL**

"Health and happiness are the most important things in life." It is my mother's motto for living and what gave her a calm perspective on things like messy rooms, broken curfews, roughhousing and dirty dishes. She was always eager to experience what made her children happy; packing snacks for an early morning trip to watch for sea turtles, overcoming her lack of directional skills to navigate miles of curving roads in Maui so we could see waterfalls, attending years of our dance, art and music lessons, and even taking care of my unruly dog when I went away to college.

My childhood was filled with Mom's singing and storytelling. My favorite was her rendition of Brier Rabbit and our car ride sing-a-longs from The Sound of Music. She always showed such expression and I never tired of them. She taught me how to pick out the freshest produce and how to cook wonderful tasting food. When I moved away from home and started a family, she visited often. She spent hours playing whatever games my children wanted and they loved her dearly. On one visit, she spontaneously taught me the polka in the airport parking lot and then marveled at the different shapes of snowflakes as they landed on the car's windshield.

She told us often how she was the first person in her family to attend college. She encouraged me from an early age and along every step of my own academic journey. If there was a subject, I expressed interest in, Mom would collect articles she clipped from the local newspaper to share with me. She was always thinking of ways to enhance our lives, as children and as adults.

I also remember difficult times when Mom showed her strength and resilience; driving my father to the hospital for migraine treatments in the early hours of the morning, keeping our family secure when my father lost his job, helping one sister with a serious health condition and the other difficult losses. She was always there. Never judging or expecting anything in return. We were allowed our own opinions and our own mistakes.

Even now as she struggles to find clarity in her mind, she looks at me and knows then does not know who I am, she is still the kind, gentle and fun-loving person I have always known. And just like old times, she invites me to dance with her. She is a wonderful mother and I love her dearly.