

Donna's tribute to Sheila

Our baptismal covenant in the Episcopal church, contains the following promises:

To see the image of God in all people, regardless of who they are, how they identify, or what they believe;

To actively seek and serve Christ in all other people, treating them with compassion, kindness, and love.

We pledge and pray these promises several times a year as a congregation. I try heartily to keep them. Sheila LIVED them in her daily interactions with people. She saw the dignity of every human being she came in contact with.

We saw it in her greeting newcomers to St. John's with a friendly smile and invitation to be our guest at the Community Dinner, and in her insistence that we had dinner, not a "feeding" program (she disliked that word), and with her team carrying on John Okerman's vision for the dinner with china dinnerware, tablecloths, and decorations. She recruited folks from her wide circle of friends to participate and contribute to the dinner, from the Court, neighbors, Eagles, and her daily bus ride to work.

I observed it most Sundays when we left church after coffee hour and went shopping at the Grocery Outlet. Sheila would buy groceries to prepare a good Southern Sunday dinner for friends who were disabled and lived nearby. She took extra care to pick up special treats, too, and engage in friendly conversation with the clerks. It is with regret that she was not in church this past Sunday to do our usual trip. (It was the day after the community dinner, and she was tired. (Doing God's work can be tiring!)) I like to think that, as usual, she was shopping for dinner for her dear friends.

While Sheila saw the dignity in everyone, she was no fool and would challenge those actions and beliefs she found objectionable, making us question ourselves.

I know that I am a better person having known her (a cliché I know) and know that she is God's hands, probably directing traffic at heaven's door.