



## Dorothy Slezsak

November 21, 1924 - May 15, 2015

DOROTHY JEAN EICHORN TOLL SLEZSAK, 90, let go of her earthly pain and flew away to Heaven at 7:45 p.m. on 5-15-2015. That's what she believed would happen, and she was almost always right. She died the way she wanted: at home in her own bed, with her beloved old dog Silki at her side, and her daughter Jan holding her hand and telling her she was loved.

For more than a dozen years, almost every day, daughter Cindy Harrison traveled from Cairo, Ga., to Havana, Fl., to serve as her caregiver, with help from daughter Jan Pudlow and her husband Mark Pudlow, who live next-door. Dorothy was also helped greatly by the caring folks at Big Bend Hospice, and she especially looked forward to visits from aide Melissa and music therapist Sean, who knew how to sing the songs from her youth.

Dorothy was born on November 21, 1924, in Flint, Michigan, the youngest child of deaf-mute parents, Andrew and Lila Eichorn, who taught her sign language, compassion and the wordless beauty of a genuine smile.

A blind date with Army Lt. Bill Toll, about to ship out for combat duty in World War II, sparked a love affair carried out by letters read in fox holes. In 1947, Dorothy and Bill won a contest and were married in Hollywood, live on the "Bride and Groom" radio show, elevating them to front-page celebrity status back home in Flint.

Their true-love marriage was tragically cut short by a drunken driver in 1955, while driving home from Detroit where they celebrated their wedding anniversary. Bill, an architect who built their custom, contemporary home with

his own hands, was killed at the scene. For nine months, Dorothy was patched together in a Pontiac, Mich., hospital, much of that time in a body cast in traction. They pieced her beautiful face back together by looking at a photograph. They told her she would never walk again, but she did. Dorothy loved to tell her story she titled, "Reduced to Nothing, I Met God," about rebuilding her life with faithful purpose and gaining the strength to raise her two daughters, ages 1 and 4, alone.

On another blind date, she met Andrew Slezsak, and they married in 1961. He adopted Dorothy's daughters and, as an avid golfer who hated Flint's brutal winters, was the driving force in moving the family from Flint to Naples, FL. in 1964, with all possessions packed in a U-Haul and no guarantee of a job. Dorothy and Andy loved their Naples home, two blocks from the beach, and would often walk holding hands to see the sun melt with orange and pink streaks into the gulf. They shared a devoted marriage for 35 years, until Andy's death in 1996. The following year, she moved to Havana to be close to her daughters.

Given a second chance at life, Dorothy lived with gusto, traveling to Hawaii four times to visit her special niece Barbara, who was like a daughter, as well as several adventures to Europe.

Dorothy loved sunning on the beach, watching movies that made her cry, baking berry pies, reading the newspaper every day, shopping the sales racks, and receiving fistfuls of wild flowers from a child as much as a dozen yellow roses delivered by a florist. A talented seamstress, she made beautiful clothes for her daughters and granddaughter, and she was a passionate scrap-booker, leaving no fun family event undocumented.

She was the office manager/bookkeeper of a Naples business for more than three decades, attended Michigan State University, and graduated with honors from Northern High School in Flint.

She is preceded in death by her brother, Harold Eichorn, and sister, Helen Strong. She is survived by her daughter, Cynthia Harrison, and her husband, Danny Harrison, of Cairo, Ga; daughter Jan Pudlow and her husband, Mark

Pudlow, of Havana, Fl.; granddaughter Cheri Wright, and her husband, Trent Wright, of Cairo; niece Barbara Howell Wood, of Maui, Hawaii; "bestest cousin" Vivian Nelson of Flint; nephews David, Doug, and Duane Strong; and nephews Harold Jr. and Bob Eichorn.

She loved her Sunday school classmates at First Baptist Church of Cairo, and treasured her many lifelong friends --- especially 91-year-old Pearl Wind, best friend since kindergarten; and 92-year-old high-school friend Vail Overholt.

Dorothy was devoted to her family and lived a good, long life that was true to her faith and true to herself.

Her funeral will be held Thursday, May 21, at 3 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Cairo, 505 North Broad Street, Cairo, Ga. Because Dorothy was such a dog-lover, memorial contributions may be made in her honor to the Gadsden County Humane Society at [www.gadsdenhumane.org/donate](http://www.gadsdenhumane.org/donate) or P.O. Box 1268, Havana, FL 32333.

Elizabeth Chambers of Bevis Funeral Home is assisting the family with their arrangements (850-385-2193, [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com))

# Tribute Wall

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“ I am sorry to read about your loss. The Bible says that a person who lives to 80 years is especially strong. (Psalm 90:10) Your mother surpassed that by 10 years, showing that she had exceptional strength and a will to live. Take comfort in God's promise to comfort and sustain you to get through not only this day, but many others to come. (Isaiah 41:13)

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**Mrs. S. Tyler** - May 19, 2015 at 10:20 AM