

A Legacy of song

By Kate McKinley

My great-grandmother Jean Heywood Donald's passion was her music. Her gift of singing was her essence. Though I knew her for less than a decade, as I grow up with my family standing beside me I have learned that her voice was powerful, and the music in her heart has carried from generation to generation. Her professional headshot represents her singing career and also displays the true beauty and vitality that radiated from her.

Jean always loved musical theatre. As president of the glee club and a performer in shows at University High School, her spark had just begun to ignite. After high school, she won competitions and was a finalist on a national radio contest, GE's "Hour of Charm." Later, her singing career and dreams held strong. She sang for weddings, funerals, and special events.

A highlight of her singing career was the Firefall at Yosemite National Park. People gathered to watch fire fall from Glacier Point, acknowledging nature's beauty. Filled with performances, the festival became a tradition for Jean. As the fire fell, she sang the song "The Indian Love Call" for Camp Curry crowds, sharing her passion with a multitude of people.

Jean's love of performing has been part of our traditions, as our whole family enjoys theatre, especially musicals. My grandfather, mother, sister, and I have performed on stage ourselves, a love we've inherited from her. I see her as a role model not only because of her beauty and gift, but also because of her strong dedication.

When I look at this picture I see not only my great-grandma, but someone that I will always cherish. Though she may be gone, her memory still stands. This picture reminds me of her commitment to singing, and how her passion blossomed beyond a dream.



Jean Heywood Donald

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