

IN MEMORIAM

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All of us in the NSPS have given our services of our own free will and would easily come under the technical definition of a volunteer. Our volunteerism appends to an organization in which we have some special interest and we are organizational volunteers. For those of us who love the sport of skiing many hours of our time has been gratuitously given to the service of others who share our interest.

Rare indeed is the individual who does not limit his services to a special interest organization but rather leads his life aiding, performing a service or answering a need voluntarily. Rare indeed was Mary Kay Twomey.

Mary Kay was affiliated with NSPS and Cataloochee Ski Patrol for 19 years. She was an Auxiliary the entire time and was serving the system as National Auxiliary Advisor. For her, patrolling did not include skiing or that exhilarating rush as you speed into the wind and seem to merge with the outdoors. To her the descent from a snow covered hill under a bright sun and blue sky was just a part of the past, the memory too removed to savor. She caught her gusto in smaller puffs as she provided a sympathetic ear, an assessment of injuries, a careful treatment or a reassuring smile. She gave the warmest gift, the gift of presence.

Mary was trained as a nurse and was regularly called upon to assist in first aid training and annual refreshers, and was the acknowledged authority on matters relating to first aid. Her willingness to be counted gained her responsibilities from the patrol to the National level.

Mary provided the example and inspiration to two sons who shared her love of skiing and became infected with her enthusiasm for service to others. John Twomey served the Cataloochee Ski Patrol from 1969 until his death in 1973. Bob Twomey is in his 14th year of service to the same Patrol.

She gave a special gift to her family and friends in her last illness. It was the gift of sparing them the grief of her suffering and the hurt in knowing her terminable prognosis. As "The Prophet" spoke to us as receivers: "...assume no weight of gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives."

There was another layer to this profile and it didn't go unnoticed. She was a person who carried miniature candy bars in her purse and waited for children to appear hungry for a burst of energy. She was a person who carried an extra pair of socks because she knew yours might get wet and a dry pair would be warmly appreciated. She was the signator on the box of cheese or nuts that came in the mail at Christmas time. She was the person who showed up at your daughter's hospital room on a Christmas day and sent you home to spend the day with the rest of your family.

This sensitive, caring person dealt with everyone as a giver. The list of services to others would be legion. Thanks for being a part of our organization. Mary Kay didn't ski but she could sure handle the double black diamonds of life. She left us on April 7, 1987. She earned the rating of an Expert.

Bob Riddle

Dear Friends,

It is with much regret I tell you Mary K. Twomey died on Tuesday, April 7, 1987 at approximately 8:30 a.m. Since the Fall of 1986, Mary had knowingly been diagnosed as having a form of cancer which affects the function of the liver. Her health began to drastically decline after the Christmas Season. During the first three months of this year, Mary underwent chemotherapy in an effort to deter the rapid growth of the disease. She became incapable of remaining at home during March and was confined for the remainder of time in St. Joseph's Hospital in Asheville. The week prior to her death, it became evident she was ready to stop her battle against the cancer. Her last hours were very quiet and calm - she passed away as she slept.

Mary K. is very special to all of us - as her family and friends. Bob, myself and many of her friends checked on her daily. We shared our feelings and concerns with her frankly and honestly as she maintained her mental faculties. Mary acknowledged each letter we read her with a smile, occasionally a chuckle and often a tear.

As you share in our "loss" please remember Mary, the "Dignified Lady" and her undying faith and strength. Also, we ask you to pass this information on to anyone who shares in our love for Mary.

*Very Sincerely yours,
Regina S. Twomey*