



Irma Schuler

March 31, 1918 - February 1, 2013

Irma S. Schuler completed her baptismal journey on February 1, 2013 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She had extravagant and boundless love for her husband and soul mate of 70 years, Col. (ret.) Richard (Dick) Schuler, her daughter, Alison Schuler, and her grandson, Theodore Schuler-Sandy, (all of whom loved her equally) and for her extended family and numberless friends. She was born on March 31, 1918 in the small farming community of Saunemin, Illinois, and was among the first of its citizens to graduate from college. She met Dick on a blind date at a military ball at the University of Illinois. They were married on April 4, 1943 and continued to dance through life. During the many years of Dick's military service and in the many places they were assigned, she taught in elementary and middle schools, caring for her students as she cared for her family. In all of her endeavors, she was passionate about life, intrepid, determined, adventurous, and fearless, living fully and without reservation with a deep and abiding faith in the goodness of God, the rightness of life, and the making of all things new. That passion for life led her in many directions. She expressed her considerable artistic talent by studying under the painters Siegfried Hahn and Howard Wexler, producing treasures of paintings, and volunteering for many years at ArtFest to support her friend Mary Ann Weems. She gave many others the gift of health and vitality by starting her own Shaklee distributorship, which she continued to conduct until her death. With Dick, she hiked mountains and deserts and traveled the world, luxuriating in the beauty around her. Thirteen times, they

hiked into the depths of the Grand Canyon, one of her favorite places on earth. Flowers grew abundantly under her care, and the wild birds came to eat from her hand at her call. Every week, she affirmed life in her worship at St. Luke Lutheran Church in Albuquerque. Music gave expression to her joy in life as she attended and supported the symphony (volunteering every year at the children's concerts) and Chamber Music Albuquerque. Most of all, she cared: for her family, for others, for abundant living, for beauty, for creation, for God, for the gift of life. She leaves Dick, Alison and Ted (of whom as an Eagle Scout and PhD electrical engineering candidate she was particularly proud), as well as her brother and his wife, Elton and Bernie Sancken, and her cherished nieces and nephews, whom she loved as her children. Irma has gone on to the next Life, rejoining her parents, Theodore and Eleanore Sancken, her sister, Almita Harms, her brother and his wife, Paul and Edith Sancken, her sister-in-law, Maxine Sancken, and her son-in-law, Lyman Sandy, who made the journey before her. A service of celebration of her life will be held at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 9100 Menaul NE, Albuquerque, NM on Saturday, February 9, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. A memorial concert will be held at a later date. Those wishing to honor her life may, in lieu of flowers, make contributions to St. Luke Lutheran Church in Albuquerque, Chamber Music Albuquerque, or the Great Southwest Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Tribute Wall

“Sermon for the Memorial Service Remembering Irma S. Schuler February 9, 2013 TEXTS: Sirach 34:14-20 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 John 2:1-12 ...Rev. Charles R. Exley It may seem a bit ironic, but the best scriptural texts for a memorial service are ones about life not about death. Especially for a person who has spent her entire life trusting in the possibilities of life and the goodness of God, it is the stories of life that help us remember and recall what she meant to us. Now, were we thinking about someone who had lived in doubt, who faced each day with uncertainty and fear, it might be different. Words of comfort and encouragement would be in order. But, for one who boldly trusted all the possibilities she had been taught, who cheerfully looked ahead to each new experience... this would be someone to whom we look for encouragement and hope. Remembering her would be about joy and thanksgiving. That's how we remember Irma Schuler. That's the kind of person I knew her to be. This is the Irma Schuler for whom we thank God today. Irma was the kind of wife, mother, grandmother and friend who made good things happen. Maybe you wouldn't know that right away, but, "trust me, all will work out" seemed to be her method of operation. This is why my thoughts were drawn to the story of Jesus and his mother Mary at the wedding feast in Cana as a text. It was the relationship between mother and son in the biblical story that brought Irma to mind. See if you don't recognize her in the interaction that's recorded in John's gospel. For example, in verse 3 Mary goes to her son and says nothing more than, "They have no wine." Jesus replies, "Woman, what concern is that... to me?" His mother says nothing more to him, but simply turns to the servants and says, "Do whatever he tells you." That's it. Nothing else. And, even more... notice that Jesus doesn't say anything either. No argument. No rebuttal. No alternate suggestion. He knows better. He simply does what she wants. And, it was exactly what needed to happen. And we still read the story today. Scripture and history remembers the event as Jesus' first recorded miracle. It is said to have, "...revealed his glory." But, would it have happened without Mary? Who knows? Could it be something like that glory which enabled Irma and Dick's long and happy marriage; a marriage that

continued for almost 70 years. Dick told me he could not remember a single fight in their 69+ years of marriage. This only happens in marriages where there is a very high level of confidence and trust... trust in each other, trust in life, trust in God. Irma apparently learned that kind of trust somewhere in her early life. Some of it must have come from the German farming community in Illinois into which she was born and raised. Some must surely have come from her parents. Perhaps some came from the German Lutheran congregation into which she was baptized and confirmed. Put it all together and we find the confidently bold spirit we knew and loved. I used to tell Irma she was my inspiration – something I came to understand as I wrote this homily. Behind all our thoughts and memories of Irma it is God's love we celebrate today. It is God's love for each one of us and for the world that moves us to reach out in caring. And, what better time could there be for remembering this love than a time of worship when the life of one special child of God is celebrated? For it is God's own love that teaches us to "...bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things." It is God's love – and God's love alone – that can enable us to be confidently bold in our own right. Those are the words that, to me, describe Irma... "confidently bold." That's the way she lived her life. This way of life came out time and time again as I talked with Dick and with Alison. For example, Dick described a situation while Irma was teaching school in Hawaii. Two very large boys were fighting o

Rev. Chuck Exley - March 27, 2013 at 12:00 AM

AL

“Alison Schuler’s Comments at Her Mother’s Service of Celebration of Life Steel, and Beauty and Love These were my mother’s character, the character that made her energetic and unquenchable in living. Love is patient and kind, and so my mother was. But to be truly love, and not a desultory image of love, love must have a skeleton of steel. And so she did. She was born in a small farming community in Illinois in 1918 to parents of faith and vision. Of faith, she remembered my grandfather hitching up to horses to the sleigh to get to church on a bitter cold Sunday morning. Of faith and vision, my grandfather brought electricity and telephones to the community when no one else saw the need. Faith and vision there were, but not ease. Steel requires the melting together of elements and then their blasting, molding and tempering. Of that, there was plenty. My mother went to school miles from the farmhouse, in a one-room school that I remember seeing when I was young. Every day, she walked miles to and from, carrying her lunch potato to be put in the pot-bellied stove that warmed the building. You couldn’t say it was five miles each way, uphill both ways in a blinding snowstorm because this was Illinois. There aren’t any hills. But the rest was true. Snowstorms in winter, ankle-deep mud in the Spring, no snowplows, no street lights, past the neighboring farms with their escaped animals and threatening dogs. All to an abusive teacher, the stories about whom the kids would tell were not believed by the school board. Nevertheless, there were songs and dramas and lessons, and she excelled. Steel. Her mother died when she was young, leaving her to raise the younger three children. Nevertheless, she went determinedly to the University of Illinois, among the first of the community to do so, although she returned each weekend to cook for the family for the week and do truckloads of wash. Not your average college experience. Steel. She waited for word of my father after Pearl Harbor and then from the European front of WWII, never knowing, but still helping out an obnoxious landlady who believed young military wives could not be trusted, but was only too happy to ask for help when her own apartment was infested with vermin. Steel. That was the beginning of the steel that made her love and her living so powerful. Beauty My grandmother was a dress

designer and accomplished seamstress, while being a farm woman with all the daily toils. She instilled in my mother a love of beautiful design and meticulous work that in my mother's case became the art of painting. Beauty Those of you who knew her know that my mother was elegant. She cared how she looked. Fortunately for me, she also cared how I looked much more than I did, and kept a close watch on what my father and I were about to head out of the house wearing. He always has a pants leg in his sock, and I am always in need of an update or reformation of appearance. She would haul me off on a shopping trip whether I wanted to go or not when she deemed it necessary. Beauty And she painted. Oh, she painted. And collected paintings. She had one of the best eyes for art of anyone anywhere. Just ask Mary Ann Weems. That discerning eye led her to be frank in her criticism of works she considered beneath the talent (or reputation) of the artist. She never would allow anyone to be less than they were able to be, at least not without persistent efforts to encourage, cajole and exhort. Beauty. Flowers, birds, canyons, mountains. She and my father traveled everywhere. They hiked the Grand Canyon 13 times, and hiked in countless other remote and wonderful locations. She loved the outdoors. She loved nature. She loved geology. She grew flowers abundantly. I did not inherit that talent. She loved music. For as long as I can remember, she and my father went to the symphony and the Chamber Music Albuquerque concerts. She loved hearing all of Fred Frahm's new works. She talked to the wild quail and they came when she called them. They knew the steel in her would allow them to be beautiful with her in safety. They knew they

Alison - March 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

KS

“College Years Several years ago, Walt and I had the pleasure of taking Aunt Irma and Uncle Dick on a tour of their alma mater, The University of Illinois. Each shared many memories with us. Aunt Irma explained that she did not have a typical college experience. Since her mother had passed away, her father would drive to the college each weekend to bring her home. The drive currently takes a little over an hour, but undoubtedly, without modern highways, it was much longer back then. Once home, she would spend the weekend cooking and cleaning. Since she was the oldest, the entire family depended on her. Each weekend she would cook enough food for the family to eat the following week. Family duties, along with schoolwork, left her little time to socialize. She said she never resented her situation, she just did what was needed. Eventually a friend introduced her to her boyfriend's friend, Richard Schuler. The friend and her boyfriend eventually split, but fortunately Irma and Dick have a long and wonderful history together. The Sorority Next Door There was a sorority house next to the dorm Irma lived in at the U of I. She said the sorority girls were always dressed in expensive clothes and looked down on the girls who lived in the dorm. As she said, “They were NOT NICE.” On parents' weekend, Irma was surprised to see the sorority girls' parents arrive. Not only were the parents not dressed expensively, most had cars older than the one her father drove. Irma thought the girls' behavior and their pretenses to be terribly shameful. Every Object Has a Story Have you had a tour of Irma's art and other possessions? If so, you are lucky indeed. Each object she surrounds herself with is there for a reason. Some are beautiful artwork, some have fascinating stories, all are treasured. I will sorely miss her tours. Pie for Breakfast Against all notions of healthy eating, Irma would just laugh as Uncle Dick and Walt would enjoy leftover pie for breakfast.

Kathy Sancken - March 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

WS

“ Aunt Irma is hard for us to imagine a world without Aunt Irma. She has always been such an important part of our lives. Empowering us with enthusiasm and curiosity. Always caring about all of us. Always interested in the farm and the crops. Always wanting to know when we could come for a visit. She instilled in us our love for art and travel and music. Especially the beauty of New Mexico. Her love for the beautiful blue sky and the fleeting glimpse of the watermelon colors on the Sandias as the sun went down. And her love always for a good glass of wine. She was impeccably dressed for any occasion. When there were outdoors involved there was always a great hat. There was love for the Indian culture and heritage. Especially the art. And of course the jewelry. She was a great shopper. We had the best of times at Richardson's and Weems. And she was always on the lookout for Indian bread. She walked with purpose and speed. We admired that. She was healthful. Always mindful of eating a healthy diet and the importance of Shaklee. That is until recently, when I requested pie for breakfast instead of amaranth. She relented and Uncle Dick rejoiced. Her artwork was her treasured possession. Paintings and Indian rugs, pottery and jewelry, and collections from around the world. There was a story attached to each one and she loved to tell it. She had an intuition for seeing a talented artist before many others. She really had an eye for art. Her spirit for life and caring for others will long be missed. However, she has given all of us this gift and we need to carry it on. We will miss Aunt Irma. Love, Walter and Kathy
2-03-13

Walter & Kathy Sancken - February 18, 2013 at 12:00 AM

CY

“ Dear Dick, Alison and Theodore, We were so sad to read Irma's obituary. You have our sincere sympathy. She was a wonderful person and will be missed so much by so many. We recall happy times over many years when she shopped for gifts at Tellmans for you and her extended family. We always looked forward to lovely cocktail parties at your home showing her paintings and those of Siegfried and Howard. She was a terrific hostess and so kind. In June 2011 at Carol's retirement/half birthday party, she shared her most fun trip and that was the cruise you all took to Antarctica. Sending Peace Love and Blessings to you all, Carol and Bill Yarnall

Carol and Bill Yarnall - February 08, 2013 at 12:00 AM

TA

“ Alison - Know that you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. FRENCH is honored to serve you during this time. Tom

Tom Antram - February 08, 2013 at 12:00 AM

EN

“ Dear Dick, Allison, and Ted, We are saddened by your loss, and also gladdened by the memories we retain of our shared enjoyment of gatherings in the past. Irma was a valiant and refined woman with great talent. We send our sympathy to all of your family. Affectionately, Mary and Ed Nelson

Edwin B. and Mary C. Nelson - February 08, 2013 at 12:00 AM

NJ

“ My condolences on your loss. My thoughts are with your family as you celebrate and remember Irma's life.

Nathaniel Johnson - February 06, 2013 at 12:00 AM

WK

“ Our deepest sympathies to you and your family, Alison. We're sending up prayers for comfort and strength for everyone.

Walt and Karen - February 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM

RD

“ I am so very sorry to hear of Irma's death. It has been a joy taking care of her and getting to know her a little. I will have some wonderful memories of her always.

Robin Doll - February 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM

HH

“ On behalf of the French Family of Companies, we express our deepest condolences.

Harold Hamilton - February 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ We feel so privileged to have known Irma and to have shared the beauty she saw in the world. Dick, Alison, and Ted, you have our deepest condolences.

The Eickhoff family - February 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM