

23 August 2020

It would be an understatement to say the past 8 days have been chaotic. I just wanted to chill out. Instead, our daughter, and grandson came to clean house before school started. In hindsight it is good that they came.

A formal obituary is attached, but I know her many friends will appreciate a casual narrative. Last summer, Cathy and I spent two wonderful weeks in Hawaii. We walked on the beach and swam in the surf. I went sailing; Cathy made 7 or 8 watercolors. One evening at a restaurant we had to stop eating to dance when “our song” was played. I asked her what she wanted for our anniversary. She replied, “Fifty more years”. But our dreams of a long retirement together were clouded by puzzling symptoms, especially with her voice.

It took another 2 months of tests to get a diagnosis. Cathy had ALS also known as motor neuron disease. Famous victims include Lou Gehrig and Stephen Hawking. No one knows why, but the nerves carrying signals to the muscles stop working. The condition progresses through the body. We visited many specialists who prepared us for the next phases.

Cathy kept busy painting and going to art club meetings until the virus and “shelter in place”. The last couple of months, Cathy pretty much sat on the sofa propped up by a variety of pillows and needed help when she wanted to change position. Caring people from hospice came almost everyday to check on her.

Through the whole ordeal, Cathy was amazingly calm and accepting of her situation. As speaking became impossible, she would point to a board with letters. And she would smile and draw little hearts with her fingers and smile some more.

At the end, she had a comfortable day, slept through the night and took her last breath without waking. That was Saturday, August 15, one day short of our 51st anniversary.

Cathy liked painting landscapes, especially sunsets. We had several amazing sunsets before and after her passing. Maybe heaven was welcoming her.

The Pacific Art League, where Cathy was a teacher and long time member has tribute to Cathy on their website. Start at <https://www.pacificartleague.org/exhibits-1> and look for her name in big letters.

A virtual service will be held Saturday August 29. Details below. If you wish to share something, contact me ahead of time.

Some of you have asked about making donations in Cathy’s remembrance.

The ALS Association is dedicated to both promoting research into the causes and possible cures of this dreadful condition. They also provide much support to the victims and family members. To donate to the ALS Association go to alsagoldenwest.org and click on Donate. Cathy was an active member of more art clubs than I can list. Her artist friends are encouraged to donate the groups you were both in.

At a future time, I will be working to find new homes for Cathy’s stock of art supplies and portfolio of paintings.