

*Butterflies,
Possum & Laughter*

Butterflies, Possum & Laughter

A Bird's Eye Look At An Enduring Friendship That Knew No Bounds,
And How It Affects The One Left Behind.

C D Swanson



Outskirts Press, Inc.
Denver, Colorado

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Outskirts Press, Inc.

<http://www.outskirtspress.com>

ISBN: 978-1-4327-7085-3

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To My God and Savior

Lord , I thank you for so many things; for creating this earth, for creating my mom and dad—my family and me. For providing us with your unconditional love and strength, and for your words in your book that will never go off the best-selling list! It is a main staple of my life, and through it, and within it, lies my heart.

For small things of beauty, like a babbling brook in the woods, a beautiful sunrise coming up, the reflection of the sun dancing across the moving water. Or, for a small brown rabbit that bounces across the grassy meadows as it chases its mate during a playful outing. For children and their infectious laughter, and for the medical marvels of today, that only through your grace and goodness has been discovered while using doctors as vessels to work your miracles. And for modern conveniences and technologies that have your handprints all over them—and for always being there for your children, no matter what. In good times, in bad times, and in all times!

Lord, I would like to take this time to thank you for allowing me to bring this book about a special friendship that existed only because of you—because you needed a team caring for your children who needed a voice in their homes (nursing homes)—and who needed a team to be strong combined with compassion and love—And it was all because of you, Lord—You get all the glory and honor.

My friendship with your daughter Barbara allowed us to do things on a stronger and higher level—providing an outlet for your Word to be administered through righteous acts of caring, love, understanding, and empathy. Lord, thank you for those years of allowing us to provide this in the spirit of kindness, which is what you are, Father.

And, Lord, thank you for so many things—of which I could go on and on—and all of which I am, and have, is only through your good graces. But most especially for the following: for my family. And for my dad who was so strong and loving, and provided for us every day of our life, with your daily help—for my mom, who is a kind and generous lady, who is as meek as a lamb—for my siblings—for my incredible loving and amazing hubby, Ron—for my pets—and for my current boy, Max.

And, having had the opportunity of knowing Barbara, my sister soul mate, my very special, kind, and loving best friend.

For all of this and more, Lord, my God—thank you. I love you, Lord. None of this would be possible without you.

JOHN 1:16

“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

Forward

Butterflies, Possum & Laughter. (A look at 18 years of friendship)

With very special and heartfelt thanks, first and foremost, to my Lord, my God, through whom I turn for all things, in good times and bad—thank you, Father, for always being there and always having my best interests at heart. I love you.

With special mention and thanks to my husband, Ron, whom I am blessed to have. God sent me the right man, at the right time. I love you, Ron; always will.

With thanks to my dad, who helped make me the person I am today, who was always there and knew what to say all the time; he was so wise ... I have always loved my dad so much. He was the best. To my mom, who has always been there for me and is a kind, generous soul—I love you, Mom. And to my siblings: my sister Josephine, and brother Andrew, and their family—and to my family in general.

And to all of the friends I have made in this lifetime along the way. You know who you are; all of you are unique, and you're so special to me.

And to my dog, "Max"—I love you, pup. Thank you for the joy you bring me every day. The Lord put a lot of detail into you and your complex, yet loveable ways!

I love you, Lord. Thank you for all of the above and so much more!

This is in memory of my sister soul mate and my best friend, Barbara, who is reading this right now, smiling while sitting on a cloud in heaven.

JOHN 15:13

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

With Special Mention to:

To All of the friends I made at **Bel-Air Manor**; it was an amazing place to work, with such a wonderful array of professionals. From the Nursing Department, to the staff in the kitchen, Housekeeping, Accounting and Administration.

Kate Funari – I couldn't have asked for a better Director of Nursing to work alongside of, you were the consummate professional-you were so easy to work with, and so funny!

George Booth – my mentor and Administrator that taught me so much about the industry.

Marie Leclerc who remains a dear friend to this day.

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Introduction

Butterflies, Possum & Laughter

This is for anyone who has ever had a special friendship with someone, and who has had to go on after that person died ... It is for anyone who has memories of that special someone, who knew them better than anyone else in the world, and with whom they shared so many good times with throughout the years ... And it is for anyone else who just wants to laugh, and at times, cry, or just to enjoy the antics and adventures of “two best friends” that bonded from day one.

Thank you for all of the fun, laughter, zany adventures, and for being there at all times. You were the kindest and most unconditional person I have ever known; as well as the most honest and trustworthy friend. Heaven rejoiced the day you arrived.

To the heavens above, I want to say thank you for “loaning” us this strong, classy, beautiful woman who worked her undeniable magic here on earth ... And now that the Lord has called her home to continue her work in heaven, the angels are singing more readily, and the stars will no doubt shine brighter as you smile down at all of us Thank you, my God.

Barbara loved to laugh ... This is my way of ensuring the world still keeps laughing, as she would have wanted. Plus, it is my way of coping with this significant loss ... I want to share some of our adventures together ... Just my way of telling the world how very special she was. I hope I can do justice to who she was and to the strong, unconditional friendship we shared ... I will try.

See you later "B-Head," and try not to get thrown out of any movies up there ~

JOHN 15:14

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

1990—So It Begins

During an employee/resident picnic while outside on a patio during a very hot summer day, Barbara and I were helping to fill the plates of the residents who lived at the nursing home where we both worked. We smiled as we did our thing and ran back and forth to take care of the residents, first, filling their plates, as was the custom, before the employees could eat. After what seemed like an eternity, we finally sat down at the only two seats available and started talking ... It felt as if we had known each other for years. We ate our hot dog and potato salad, while chatting with the residents who were at our table.

I had just begun to do my internship there and had only been there for about 1 week, while Barb had been employed for about 5 years already. We had been introduced, but never really had the chance to speak until now ... And talk was an understatement that day. We really just started speaking, and there never was a moment of silence between us. We just chatted about everything and anything we could think of.

Finishing up our main meal, we both looked over at the “cook” who was standing by this huge three-layer cake and noticed his dingy apron was brushing against some of the icing. We both screamed in stereo, “Hey!” while jumping clear out of our seats! Then, we both ran to the cake to slice our own pieces from the opposite side of where the cook stood, making sure it was well away from his food-stained apron and protruding belly. After we completed our task, we then went to sit down. We looked at each other and immediately—I mean *immediately*—started to laugh our heads off ... Not just laughter, but deep, out-of-control belly-hurting-oh my gosh-I cannot-breathe laughter ... Who knew that this was going to be the beginning of the best of times, and just

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the first of many, many, many hours of that very kind of laughter for over the next 18 years.

And, thus, the story of our friendship and bond began ...

JOHN 15:11

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”