

*I would like to thank everyone for being here today. It means a lot to our family, and speaking for mom it means a lot to her.*

*The night before she passed away we received an urgent call that her older brother was dying 150 miles away in Rapid City. When I told her she looked at me with tears in her eyes and said "I wish I could go, tell Donald I love him and I'll see him soon". She wanted to go see him one last time but her health wouldn't allow her to. I know Donald understood.*

*Our family and friends are getting older and some who wanted to be here couldn't. I know TOOTS will understand.*

*I could start by telling you all the things my MOM was ---- like kind, gentle and caring. But I won't ---Id rather tell you all the things she wasn't. She wasn't MEAN. She would always say "IF YOU CAN'T SAY SOMETHING NICE DON'T SAY ANYTHING" She believed that and was the happiest when she was saying something nice.*

*Every family and extended family has that one special person that everyone loves, admires and trusts. Wanda wasn't just magically awarded the position. She was taught it and earned it. Her mother used a lot of love and patience while grooming her for it. Our Grandmother Clark was the magnet that pulled the family together and when she passed so did that responsibility. It's not much responsibility or work if that's what you were taught and love doing.*

*A few week ago my wife Kathy was playing and talking with our 3½-year old grandson Aiden, and she called his dad Paul her baby boy. Aiden promptly corrected her by telling her that his dad was not a baby but very big. When I was younger I remember asking my mom why she called me her baby boy. I can't remember what answer she gave, but I saw my mom's answer in my wife's eyes as she talked with her grandson Aiden. It was a sparkle in her eye that only someone who really loves you has.*

*Toot's eyes were always sparkling. I remember them twinkling as she hugged and kissed so many babies and kids that she cared for. I also remember them sparkling as she cut up a scrap of material to make an Easter dress, shirt, bonnet or something for a child. She would keep the scraps from bigger projects in anticipation of making something for someone she loved.*

*I saw the sparkle in her eyes mixed with tears a month ago when her 2 year old great granddaughter Ella came running by wearing a dress my mom had made. As Ella ran out of the room Mom looked over at me with a sparkle in her eye and told me that was probably the last dress she would ever make.*

*No one gets to know their allotment of time on earth. We only get to choose how we spend that time. Toots spent hers doing what she loved, playing with babies, teaching, mentoring and caring for others. A positive attitude, a kind and caring disposition and an uncanny ability to play cards were what she was born with and she only became better as she aged.*

*Born in Oklahoma to a young farming couple everyone pitched in and helped with the chores. Being the oldest girl she helped take care of the boys, her older brothers Stacy and Donald and her little sister Karin. One afternoon when TOOTs was about 7, her parents hadn't come back in from the field yet, and the boys were hungry so she promptly whipped them up some biscuits. Everything went according to plan until Donald tasted them. The only thing he could say was "What recipe did you use?" She proudly opened up the cook book and showed him the page. After studying it for a short while he found a pencil and crossed out the recipe and boldly printed on top of it in capital letters DO NOT USE NO GOOD !!*

*I'm glad that she got to hone her skills on someone else besides me. I only remember delicious pies, moist cakes and golden fluffy biscuits... Mom could be found flipping and serving pancakes to us and all the cousins during a weekend pancake eating contest. She could also be found at midnight in the bathroom taking care of her nephew Tippy who was suffering from an overdose of home made Chocolate chip cookies. I'm pretty sure it wasn't her cookies; because, I ate just as many as he did, and I slept just fine that night.*

*Toots was a not only a daughter, sister, wife, mother, aunt, grand mother and great grandmother. She was a friend. A friend who could see the good in anyone and if she didn't have something nice to say she didn't say anything. But she was never at a loss for words because she always had something nice to say ---- because she was the happiest when she was saying something nice.*

*Jeff*