

First Place



MaDot

By Emily Gibson, Medical Laboratory Technology major

MaDot, my grandmother, was flawless in my eyes. When I was a child, she played kickball with me, taught me how to make Barbie clothes, and even let me help with the chores around her and my grandfather's small farm. MaDot made everything fun and informative. After I would argue with my parents, I would sneak out the back door and run down the hill to her house crying. MaDot's sweet tea and a hug would make everything alright. My grandmother took care of everyone. She never said a harsh word and was always there for me. She was the closest thing to a saint I have ever known.

Sunday dinners were a big deal to my family. The food and fellowship that happened at my grandmother's house every week was a treasure. Southern staples such as macaroni pie, chicken and dumplings, and biscuits filled a long table. Conversations were about our weekly activities and accomplishments. Ma Dot was always so proud of me. I remember her reaction when I got pregnant before I got married. I knew I had severely disappointed my parents, but she did not share their feelings. She told me, "It may not have been the best time for you, but I know you will be a wonderful mother." Her caring words and homemade chill beans got me through the most difficult time in my life.

In a twist of fate in the winter of 2000, she found out she had ovarian cancer. The doctors performed surgery and chemotherapy followed. Our Sunday dinners dwindled down to once a month. MaDot still kept her head up. She was a church every Sunday with her wig on. I prayed for a miracle that would never happen. She endured chemotherapy for five years, but it could not stop the inevitable. On July 5th, 2005, MaDot's nurse told us time was running out. The night before she died, my cousin and I stayed with her. It was one of the best nights of my life. MaDot was unable to talk but she would squeeze our hands in response to all the stories and memories

we shared. It was wonderful spending that last night with her. MaDot left this world surrounded by her family, but a piece of me died that night too.

I think of her every day. When life gets too much for me, I just remember how she never complained and still managed to keep a positive attitude throughout her life. I keep her memory alive by telling my kids stories about how much fun I had at her house when I was little. Yet somehow she is still with me. I hear her voice telling me I am doing the right thing by returning to college after 13 years. I know she is still proud of me. I hope if I get into heaven she will be there waiting for me with sweet tea, macaroni pie, and her arms wide open.