Chapter 20: Margaret With Us — A Life of Joy and Family Love

When Margaret came to live with us in Howell, we welcomed her into our home. I enrolled her in the TMI (Trainable Mentally Impaired) program in the Howell Public Schools, where she was warmly received. On weekends, my siblings took turns driving to Howell so Margaret could visit their homes. This gave Tom and me time with our children, Barbara and John, while Margaret enjoyed seeing her nieces and nephews.

Margaret brought innocence, laughter, and joy to our home. During this time, she faced her hardest challenge—leukemia. Witnessing her treatment was heartbreaking, but my siblings and their spouses were supportive. Each of us offered love and care, so Margaret was never alone. Sadly, she passed away on May 14, 1980, at the age of twenty-one. Her loss was painful, but our time together remains deeply meaningful to our family.

Years later, I shared Margaret's stories with the Starosciak family. When my niece Emily asked me to recall memories, I was grateful for the chance to commemorate Margaret.

As a young teen, Margaret cherished a stuffed monkey she called "Sam." While visiting Mary and Bill's home, she used their baby's expensive disposable diapers on Sam, changing him frequently and tossing the diapers. Mary was puzzled about the disappearing diapers until she caught Margaret in the act.

In Howell, Margaret sometimes joined Barbara's friends when they visited, innocently interrupting their games. She needed her own social experiences. I discovered events sponsored by the Livingston Association for Retarded Citizens, including dances at Howell High School. I

accompanied her, and she always lit up the room. She insisted on dancing solo with her own groovy moves, and when asked to dance, politely declined, preferring to be the star of her own show.

At one dance, Margaret took over the microphone when guests were invited to sing. Though her speech was hard to understand, she didn't hesitate. In her mind, she was Elvis—and her confidence brought that to life as she bellowed out song after song.

There were countless sweet moments with her. One evening, Tom Todd came out in his pajamas—a long-sleeve T-shirt with an emblem on the chest, similar to the uniforms worn on the TV show Star Trek. Margaret giggled and tried to stifle her laughter behind her hand. Curious, I asked, "Margaret, what's so funny?"

Pointing to the emblem on Tom's pajamas, she laughed heartily and exclaimed, "Spock!"

These memories capture Margaret's spirit—full of mischief and love. She touched each of us with her sweetness and joy. Though her life was short, her memory lives on forever with our family.

A photo collage of Margaret through the years:

Margaret at about two years old

Margaret at four years old
At Tom and his Mother's House

Margaret was ten years old and loved
to hold Barbara

Mark felt Margaret got a bit close…
How she loved her nieces and nephews

Rose and Margaret in front of the crowd at a Howell event
Silly John is in the forefront

God Bless Margaret's beautiful soul.

With love,

Rose