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## ***REMEMBERING MARY R***

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***“You couldn’t be in Mary’s airspace without learning about Al-Anon...Mary was the essence of the program...There’s never enough praise for her.” - Peggie C***

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In this issue we remember Mary R, who died in Philadelphia in August 2022 at age 102. Before her death, Mary R was the longest serving Al-Anon member in the AISDV service area. She knew Al-Anon’s co-founder, Lois W, personally. In the 1960’s, Mary co-founded the Intergroup that evolved into AISDV, and throughout her life she was a walking attraction for Al-Anon. She lived by Al-Anon principles and the service manual. She was always in service, at the local and state level, and was invited to speak at meetings and conventions around the country. She was an integral part of the committee that founded the Pennsylvania Area Convention, and she co-founded several Al-Anon groups. She poured her heart into public information work and welcoming newcomers. And from her presence and example, Black people learned that Al-Anon is for them too. She inspired and motivated all Al-Anon members to follow the Traditions and Concepts of Service, especially Concept 4, *Participation is the key to harmony*.

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A committee of AISDV members collected memories of Mary’s service, and present them in this issue of the RAP. Committee members are Carla F, Debbie R, Eric C, and Isabelle B. The committee regrets they could not collect memories from the many many others who knew, admired, respected, and cherished Mary R. All of the memories here are of Al-Anon members in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

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## ***Mary - In a Few Words***

“Mary was a firm believer that Service was a vital part of Recovery. She not only talked the talk but also walked the walk. She would say, *If you want what I got you have to do what I do: SERVICE.*” - Betty R.

“Mary was always a committed person, always impressive, even if there was an illness in the family. She was committed to carrying out her responsibilities to the program.” - Lovie M.

“She always encouraged members to do service, to take the focus off the alcoholic and put it on themselves using the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.” - Louis R. (Mary’s son)

“Mary always greeted newcomers; they were the most important people there...When we were at AISDV meetings, she would always allow people to speak and she would never interrupt them...She accepted everybody.” - Toni K.

“[When she was chair of AISDV], Mary made certain that the service manual was followed and that the service board meetings ran smoothly and on time.” - Peter M.

“Mary had an incredible sense of humor. She took her Al-Anon practice seriously, she took her service responsibilities seriously, but she didn’t take herself too seriously. She could poke fun at herself, laugh at herself.” - Diane W.

“Throughout her life she gave so many hope, friendship, laughter, and often hard truths delivered in her straight to the point way.” - Charlyn (Mary’s daughter)

“She had a presence. She was absolutely dedicated. She was always encouraging.” - Doris T.

“Around Mary, there was always laughter and fun. Always fellowship. Her home was open to everyone. All kinds of hospitality there. Mary drew people together.” - Bridie P.

“I wanted her joy, enthusiasm, and spirituality. Her love for Al-Anon was contagious.” - Maria A.

“I looked up to Mary’s experience. In her presence I was sometimes intimidated, but I learned so much.” - Linda B.

“Mary listened and gave me hope. She was the reason I kept coming back.” - Bev

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## ***By Bridie P***

I first met Mary at the Eastern AA Conference of Pennsylvania in the Poconos. Her husband was the first Black Delegate and she was there with him. Mary told her story, that she never thought Black people were in Alcoholics Anonymous. She thought her husband was a drunk; then she found out he was an alcoholic. There was laughter. It was serious, but the irony of it made people laugh.

When I next met Mary, we were both Group Representatives. We rode together to Harrisburg for Assembly. We had discussions in the car. In those days seven squeezed into the car, no seat belts. On the ride home I was asked what my son thought about where I was. I said he's too young to know. I was asked How old is your son? I said 8 or 9. Where does he think you're going? Bank, church. So you lie? That was a wake up moment. That moment in the car was life changing.

Mary's service was instrumental. She drew people together. On one occasion, she wore a sandwich board with the Traditions. It was at a Ridley Park workshop. The Traditions are the spiritual part of the program and members weren't paying attention. She tried to make sure we all knew the Traditions.

She always had a position in service. Even though she was a busy woman. She was raising her children, she taught in Philadelphia schools.

Public information was a big thing for her. Carry the message to professionals was among her goals. The Intergroup was started for Public Information. Mary was instrumental, but she was one of us: Lovie M, Joan K, Gert R, and me.

I never knew Mary not to be in service. A problem that prevented her from being a Delegate was that she was Chairperson of the PA Assembly. She did that for a term.

Mary was a co-founder of the Parkside group. Everybody looked up to Parkside and tried to emulate them. Parkside was a mostly Black group. Always one or two Whites. Whites were always welcomed there. When Parkside members came to a group in the White suburbs, they were celebrities. 4021 was a group in those days; it was well integrated, a great leveler.

Mary's home was open to everyone. Kids from West Catholic stopped by her home. Once I went to her home with Margaret, a Delegate.

Mary was one to open the door to a project and then step back. She showed up as a volunteer for booths or tables at public events. That's who she was. We all loved her!

Last time I saw her, I was invited to Parkside. Young people were there. She was 97 at the time, and she carried the box of Conference Approved Literature on her shoulder. Oh my goodness. She was fascinating to watch.

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## ***By Doris T***

I met Mary in 1983 when I started going to a meeting at Broad and Diamond in North Philly. Mary and Lovie were there and I met them.

I had been in Al-Anon a couple of years when Delegates came to LaSalle College in Philadelphia for a Public Information event. Al-Anon headquarters was in New York City at the time. I was standing near Mary when Samantha, a Delegate, said they needed help with *The Forum* in NY. Mary said, "Doris will go." I was like, "What?" At the time there was a big difference in age between Mary and me, 27 years difference. She was about 75 at the time. I didn't like older bossy women. I agreed to go but I hadn't traveled much outside Philadelphia. I didn't know how to, and Mary said, "That's why you're in the program because you don't know things." I had to take a bus, subway, and train to get to NY. I did it for 3 years with Mary's encouragement. She was committed. She was readily available to share her experience, strength, and hope.

She had a presence. She was absolutely dedicated. As an African-American, she embraced the Al-Anon program. She encouraged Diane W to be the first Black Delegate. She was always encouraging. She embraced Al-Anon's philosophy and principles.

It was at an AA anniversary when she heard of Al-Anon. Her husband was part of AA. She talked about how he was getting help and she was getting angrier. She went to a meeting to tell people where she was coming from. It was mostly White women, a few African-Americans, in West Philly. She went all over Philly to figure things out. She was important to African-American women. In Black communities self-help was not on our radar. Even for myself.

Her West Philly group was significant to her. She was dedicated to it. She was significant in Parkside too. The first group she attended was Parkside, which she cofounded in 1959 in a Church, downstairs.

She encouraged me to go to the Al-Anon [International] Convention in Vancouver, Canada in 2013. She wanted to go and her health was shaky. I wanted to go, my mother had passed the year before. She didn't want to fly alone and said, "Would you travel with me?" That prompted me, "I guess I'll go." She said, "You will." She was very direct.

It was a wonderful time to be on the plane with her. There was a boy of 8 or 9 sitting alone in front of us. She shared our snack pack with him. When a stewardess ushered the child off the plane Mary asked about him. The stewardess said, "I just make sure he gets off, nothing more." Mary said, "We'll wait for someone to get him." I had anxiety about this. We went to baggage claim and the boy called his father from a phone. Mary

said to his Dad, "Where are you?" And we stayed with the boy until his father came. That's how she was.

Mary was always in a service role. She was good at exchange meetings, keeping people on track at business meetings, and traveling from meeting to meeting.

In 1985, Mary and Lovie drove to a Convention in Canada. I had just moved to Philly. They said meet us at the church. I showed up and another member too. I asked, "Where is Canada?" I didn't know. Mary said, "You sit in front in case you're needed to drive." I didn't want to drive but I sat up front and Lovie drove the whole way. I get in the hotel and I have no room reservation. Mary says, "Stay in the room with us, you can sleep on the floor." I said, "I don't want to. I don't know you." But I slept with Lovie. Next morning I get up while they're asleep, and I leave the hotel. I go to the convention center and later I meet up with Mary and Lovie at the center. Mary says, "How dare you go without telling anyone? You don't even write a note? You can't do that." I had a history of running away from home; so this was not what I was used to. I learned Mary was very nurturing.

I saw Mary at her 101st birthday. She was still talkative and feisty.

At Mary's 102nd birthday she wanted to read Amanda Gorman's poem ["The Hill We Climb"]. She read it; she was strong. She was proud of her heritage, of President Obama, of Maya Angelou, of Diane W, and others. She had so many special relationships. She made everyone feel that they were in a special relationship with her.

Once she was asked to speak in Atlanta in the month of September. In July before that September she called me. She said, "I feel good but sometimes not. Would you go if I'm not able to make it?" I said, "No." But she went and I went with her. At this time, Mary was not walking quickly. At the airport she got a wheelchair and asked if I wanted one. I said, "No." The woman got her a wheelchair and she zipped ahead of me. Mary had a sense of humor.

She was extraordinary, intelligent, and caring. She embraced life. She showed what it was like to live on life's terms. She didn't pass through life, she did life.

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***By Claudine C***

Mary always told you the truth. I was struggling with my relationship with my son and I shared that I was fine with it. She told me that I wasn't. I did not like what she said, but after I thought about it, I have admitted to myself that she was right. Mary was a straight shooter. She gave it to you straight with no chaser.

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**By Carla F**

I first met Mary in 1989 or 1990. She was 75 maybe 80 when I met her. It was the Parkside meeting at 60th and Walnut Streets, in an AA clubhouse. I had heard of Mary through my mother who spoke of Mary and Lovie from Parkside. My Mom used Mary as a sponsor. My Mom was a sweet person and my opposite.

Mary was a strong Black woman. She didn't make me happy at first.

For example, if it wasn't Al-Anon, it wasn't OK in the Al-Anon meeting. Mary looked out for keeping it strictly Al-Anon. I didn't appreciate this at first. She insisted, "Just Conference Approved Literature," and "You can't sell Avon."

She had a bossy personality. We're a lot alike. I needed someone to sponsor me. It took me a long time to surrender. My husband was my qualifier. But when my son became addicted, I asked her to help. She had a son in AA and she'd been through things.

She helped Diane W become the first Black Delegate from Pennsylvania. She was always encouraging us to do service.

Mary's service roles included AISDV. We saw her participating in meetings above group level. When we started in Al-Anon, hardly any Black people were in it. Only 5 to 10 Blacks at the Gettysburg Convention. In Al-Anon, I've learned it's OK to be who I am. I was 19 years old at Gettysburg and maybe there were 6 Blacks out of 1,000 Whites. Being Black is different now. People know us better. I was kind of fearful of Whites then.

Once I took a bus to Bok, and White kids said, "Go back to your own neighborhood." In Roxborough, a car of Whites shouted racist remarks. But in Al-Anon everyone was so nice. I was surprised. I was not used to White people being nice. Color is not always the thing. I didn't like White people once upon a time, but Al-Anon changed me. I spoke up for myself. It happened to me at AISDV. I was in it so long with different positions. I learned to speak up. When I was secretary I said, "You want minutes? Then slow down." I saw more and more Blacks doing service, on committees. It was growth.

In West Philly there was an Al-Anon group called 4021. It folded for non-attendance. Mary asked us to support it. In the 1990s Mary, Lovie, and others brought it back as West Philly. People from Parkside and North Philly helped. Originally 4021 was a White group. I didn't feel comfortable there as a Black. I was one of two there. Now West Philly is pretty even Black and White. It was open to all cultures.

We met at Mary's house for anniversary committee meetings: we went over guidelines, we planned months in advance for speakers, flyers, etc. We ran big anniversaries.

She opened her house to anybody. You could stop by anytime.

She was a school teacher. I met her when she retired.

At Al-Anon meetings, we'd have a sign-in sheet. We asked newcomers to put an N next to their name, and one of us would keep in touch with them. Mary kept on top of it. "What are we doing for newcomers? Are we calling them?"

When I was in the hospital, Mary called my mother and took the info to Parkside. I was in a medically induced coma. When I got well and went to Parkside I got a standing ovation.

My son is 36. He was 4 when I started. Mary was the boss, the Mom of the group. At our business meeting, Mary would speak up. Like a coach, she'd ask people to do service. I was Group Representative (GR). Mary helped me to be GR. She cared.

She was open and honest about personal things.

Mary was instrumental in taking us to exchange meetings. We'd meet at Mary's to drive to other groups. She took us to workshops too. She had a bossy exterior, but in service she rotated out. Sometimes we argued at business meetings. Mary's position was "the Al-Anon way." She was a force to be reckoned with.

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### ***By Betty R***

Mary R was my Service Sponsor. She instilled in me the importance of service in the fellowship as vital to my recovery walk. When I think about Mary, the word dignity comes to mind...the right of a person to be valued and respected for their own sake.

D - Dedicated. Be dedicated to your recovery journey.

I - Inspiration. Inspiration is evident all around you.

G- God. God's guidance is present in the fellowship.

N - No. Do not say No to service.

I - Involvement. Get involved and grow in the fellowship.

T - Trust. Trust the process.

Y - You. The Al-Anon program is all about YOU.

This is the legacy that Mary R left for me.

Thank you for letting me share!

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## ***By Diane W***

Mary R loved Al-Anon. She was fiercely committed to the Al-Anon Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, and willingly applied their guiding principles to all that she did in the fellowship.

Whether chairing the Pennsylvania Area Assembly, helping to plan Pennsylvania's first Al-Anon Convention, or navigating a discussion topic at her home group, she'd practice *placing principles above personalities* with her constant refrain, "What does the [Al-Anon/Alateen Service] manual say?"

She had an incredible sense of humor. With a well-timed quip she'd remind us of the importance of laughter for our personal recovery.

She was a gifted leader, embodying the qualities expressed in Concept 9 including responsibility, judgment, and vision—especially vision.

Recovery through service was her mantra, though she rejected the notion that she was paying Al-Anon back. She maintained that was an impossibility, she just wanted to stay willing to do her part.

She was known, respected, loved, even revered throughout the world-wide fellowship of Al-Anon. On a personal level though, I'm most grateful for her willingness to constantly extend her hand to the newcomer, sharing her experience strength and hope, paving the way for the miracles to come.

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## ***Helen V Remembers***

Helen remembers seeing Mary R chair a meeting one Monday evening at the West Philadelphia AFG. Helen was in awe of Mary's strength, confidence, and knowledge about the Al-Anon program. It was a message of hope and encouragement. Helen sat quietly hanging onto every word Mary said, felt like Mary was speaking directly to her.

After the meeting they sat together and talked for a while. Mary made her feel so comfortable, like a coach, asking questions and encouraging her to share her feelings. Mary said that sharing at meetings and doing service would help her feel better.

She looked forward to seeing Mary and learned to work her program, which included service at group level. Mary was an inspiration, always willing to help anyone, especially through love and service.

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## ***Peter M***

Peter remembers that in the late 1980's/90's, Mary was Chair of Al-Anon Intergroup of the Delaware Valley (AIDV), the predecessor name for AISDV.

Mary shared her history with Peter when he was Pennsylvania Area Archivist. She told him she tried unsuccessfully to become Delegate early in her history. She believed that certain groups opposed her because of her race. Mary was pleased and very proud when Diane W from West Philly became the first African-American Delegate from Pennsylvania. After this Mary and Lovie put all their efforts into starting the first Pennsylvania Convention.

For a time, Mary took it upon herself to keep in contact with longtimers, so she started calling Peter monthly to check on him. The last time Peter saw Mary was in 2021 at a fellowship luncheon in Delaware County. She was 100 then and noticeably not the way she was before, yet, "She was just so happy to be there, and it was so nice to see her."

*Peter said:*

"Miss Mary R began her journey in recovery three months before I was born. We met in service to the AIDV board, she as Chairman and I as Assistant Treasurer. She made certain that the service manual was followed and that the service board meetings ran smoothly and on time. The books were scrutinized to the penny. All points of view were allowed and expressed. Differing points of view were expressed, sometimes loudly! The gavel was louder! Personalities were strong. Opinions tightly held. After the board meetings, Miss Mary taught me that the Program is more important than personalities! Everyone hugged, greeted each other with love, and let go of any resentments."

"Years later, I attended a workshop with Miss Mary. I will never forget our conversation about a program topic. I have long forgotten the actual topic. What I remember is how at the beginning of the conversation I held a strong stance. Mary argued for the direct opposite stance. Our conversation was lively and sometimes heated. Give and take, thinking about the other side and being open to new ideas continued throughout our conversation between sessions."

By the end of the conversation they ended up swapping positions. Peter says this shows her thoroughness in considering all points of view could change her own mind.

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## ***By Maria A***

Mary R and I were very close. We traveled together many times to Al-Anon and AA Conventions at which she or I was a speaker or we simply wanted to support and participate in the event. During those rides Mary told me many stories about the beginnings of Al-Anon and how the AA journey of her husband inspired her.

Mary was Chair of the Assembly in the 1960s when Al-Anon was in the early stages of creating the structure of the Area World Service Committee (AWSC).

Mary's husband Louis R was the first Black Delegate in AA and when he and Mary arrived at the AA convention of about 1,000 attendees, they were the only Black couple. Bill W walked up behind them, put his arms around both of them and whispered, "Hi, you must be Lou and we're glad you're here." Mary didn't turn around to see him, but she knew it was Bill W. Mary and Louis were very proud to have started Black AA and Al-Anon groups here in the Northeast. A photo of Bill W with Mary and Louis, as well as a photo of Lois W with them hangs in Mary's kitchen.

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## ***By Tonya R (Granddaughter-in-law)***

I have many fond memories of Mary. My first is when I joined the West Philly AFG. Mary was one of the founders. She was happy about my decision but direct about her intentions for me. She said, "And don't ask me to be your sponsor!"

Another fond memory was when Mary and I traveled to the Eastern Area Convention Area 59. This is where Poppop was elected the first Black Delegate in AA. I drove and we talked as we traveled up Lancaster Avenue through Wayne on up to Lancaster, PA. One of Mary's attributes was she had a vivid memory. She shared how the convention center used to look and the changes they had made. We checked into our separate rooms, relaxed, and met up later for the formal banquet. Mary was dressed beautifully and elegant as always. It was a beautiful evening and they treated her like the queen that she was, royalty. The next day we went to breakfast and walked the grounds for a few; then went back to our rooms until it was time for the Convention.

Watching others greet Mary and extend the hands of AA that came from the different parts of PA was delightful. They paid homage to Mary in such a way that you could see the spiritual connection of the fellowships, AA and Al-Anon. The next day we got up and ate a little breakfast and journeyed back to West Philly to Mary's home. We gave our kisses and hugs and said our good byes until the next time. As I journeyed home to King of Prussia, I shared with my husband how special of a time that I had with his grandmother who will be forever mine too.

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## ***By Louis R (Mary's son)***

I don't know if it was her 20th or 30th year when she became an Al-Anon member. I just knew she went to Al-Anon, and she'd been in Al-Anon for a while. I never paid attention.

Service positions? She had several! First of all, she was a group member. She went to Parkside, West Philly, and North Philly. She founded the Parkside group, with others, not by herself. But she was the last surviving original member of the Parkside group.

She also helped support other meetings in Al-Anon by attending their meetings and doing things like serving snacks and getting speakers. And she shared her experience, strength, and hope.

She was also a Group Representative, a District Representative, and I think the first Black State Chairperson.

She and Gert R put that Intergroup office together at 4021. Her purpose was to be available for Al-Anon members, to get literature to them and to groups.

She would have sponsees come to the house. She was always using the literature, like *Paths to Recovery*. She sponsored Diane W, the first Black delegate from Pennsylvania. She also liked *Came to Believe* and *ODAT*. She used the Al-Anon tools in conjunction with her experience as a person affected by alcohol. She always encouraged members to do service, take the focus off the alcoholic and put it on themselves using the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.

I believe because of Al-Anon, the principles, it enriched her relationship with God as she understood God.

As an Al-Anon member she helped me understand the importance of the Traditions, especially Tradition 11, *attraction not promotion*.

I saw the impact of Al-Anon on her. How much it affected her, her life. And, as her son, seeing the impact of her life on other members. At the back end of her life, members brought readings to her. They were there for her. When she was sick she asked me, "Am I dying?" It was a question out of the blue, a surprise to me. I said, "Well, yes, we all are." Then she said, "I'm going to enjoy living till then." This way of life, in Al-Anon, provided joyfulness even to the end. This is what we experience as members of the AlAnon family. It was a poignant moment for me.

I was able to honor her because of AA and Al-Anon. It was a privilege to serve her.

I had a moment the other day, going through things. I broke down and wept. Because of AA and Al-Anon.

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### ***By Linda B***

How I met Mary? When I came in, in 1981, I went to different anniversaries and meetings where she was asked to share. That's how I heard her and met her at these meetings. Over the years, I saw her at conventions. Mary spoke at anniversaries and conventions.

In the late 1990s, I became a Group Representative and saw her at Assemblies. I also saw her at the Parkside group.

When I got into AISDV, Mary was the chair and Claire was Mary's co-chair. I stood for co-chair in September 1999 and was voted in. Before January 2000, Claire died and I became the new co-chair briefly. Because Mary's term was ending, I instantly became chair. I couldn't believe it. But Mary was helpful. Lovie and others helped too. Sue B became co-chair. Together Sue and I went to Mary's house and talked about the manual and how not to take things personally.

Once I said, "Al-Anon's changing." Mary said, "No, the people are changing." When I got into service in 1994-1995, service was strong. It dropped off after that. Today there are seven districts without a District Representative. That was unheard of when I got into service.

It was in AISDV where I got to know Mary better. I was afraid of her and I loved her. She had a calming voice but she had an aggressive way. I remember one ride where Lovie was in the car, and that was good. Lovie was a peacemaker.

From Mary I learned the importance of the using the manual. One time she got out the manual to end a disagreement. My AISDV committee had four men on it. When I'd get the manual out, they'd say "There she goes again with the manual." I always had the service manual on the table as I learned from Mary.

I was not close close with Mary, but she was involved in things that I was involved in. Parkside anniversaries, West Philly, and North Philly. I grew up in SW Philly, a huge White neighborhood. I looked up to Mary, Frances, and other Black women in Al-Anon. I looked up to Mary's experience. In her presence, I was sometimes intimidated, but I learned so much.

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### ***By Lovie M***

I met Mary at open AA meetings before either of us knew about Al-Anon. My first AlAnon meeting with Mary was at the Parkside group. I can't remember if they had an

Assembly that first year or second year, but I do remember that we had another woman who encouraged the group to elect a Group Representative. If I remember correctly that first GR was Mary. When Mary [first] went to Assembly I can't be sure. I believe it was the second or third year before there was an Assembly, but I'm trying to remember if it was called an Assembly. The best I recall, the groups were meeting at the Northeast clubhouse. If I remember correctly that is where we were having our first large gatherings. I can't remember the year we began to go to Harrisburg (which we considered to be about the middle of the state) and when we actually began to call it an Assembly.

I have a feeling Mary may have been the first District Representative. I don't remember when the area became divided up and we [Parkside] became a part of District 2.

Before Conventions, the first thing we had was an All Day Workshop. We had it out in Ridley Park [PA] towards the end of the 1960s.

I think the first [PA] Convention was in 1972. Mary and I were very involved in that. Mary served in many positions on the Convention Committee but not as Chairperson. But Mary served as Chairperson of Assembly at one point. Now, you see, we deviated from the guidelines of the handbook in that the former Delegate would become a candidate for the Chairperson. That person would almost always be elected the Chairperson. Somehow, we elected Mary as the Chairperson of the Assembly. We realized it was not following the guidelines. We had to take an Assembly vote to go back to following the manual. At the time we were planning the PA Convention, Mary was serving as Chairperson of the Assembly. I was the fourth Chairperson of the PA Convention.

Mary shared at several Internationals. I can't say if at luncheons or as a Saturday night speaker. She was a speaker for the World Service Conference at the 60th anniversary.

The AISDV began as a small operation. Our first thing was an answering service. Mary and I made arrangements for it. We went to this small company downtown in the late 1970s. Can't remember where it was.

I can't remember if Mary held any positions in the AISDV, but she was instrumental in the organization of the fundraising committee. We met at our homes to organize that committee. We became aware that we would have to have fundraisers in order to fulfill the functions of the AISDV. Luncheons were always in Roxborough; dinner dance someplace different.

Mary and I were a part of a group of members who started the North Philadelphia group. Mary, Fanny, and I along with others saw a need.

Mary saw that the Al-Anon group at 4021 [Walnut St.] was struggling. They were trying to have a beginners meeting and a regular meeting but there were so few members that

they just couldn't do that. So they made it just one group and named it the West Philadelphia group.

We used to go down to Family Court on a Saturday, probably once a month. There was a man there named Mr. Steinbocker who had a unique way of dealing with people, and AA was just starting to go down there. Mary and I used to go and have meetings with family members of people with drinking problems. That was a way we could sometimes get new members.

We also talked with a Dr. Kissing, who I believe was connected with the Department of Health. Sometimes even go to his office about our concerns for family members and drinking problems. He could sometimes get people into the hospital for a couple of weeks for a little more extensive treatment.

Mary and I [were so close we] once had keys to each other's house. It wasn't nothing to come home and find one of us at the other one's home. Mary and I used to disagree virulently. We used to disagree so much in business meetings that somebody once said she thought we had broke friendship forever. And then when we finished we would hug and say good night.

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### ***By Cecilia S***

To my dear friend Mary R,

You were at the meeting I stepped into on Labor Day 1995 at 4021, the West Philadelphia AFG.

We've been through it all - good, bad, and indifferent! We fellowshiped at conventions, local and international, AISDV meetings, workshops, birthdays, and so many more events. So many trips we've shared over the years especially the last two AA conventions in Lancaster in 2019 and 2021 at your age of 101 years young and still traveling. They treated you as royalty. You impressed us to always dress up at all of the banquets.

We've traveled together a lot. So grateful that your family trusted me enough to know we were in good hands - God's hands and good fellowship! God blessed me to have you in my life; forever grateful to have known you and loved both you and your family! Heaven has embraced yet another Angel. We All love you and you will surely be Missed! Amen.

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## ***By Peggie C***

This is how I met Mary: I was in Al-Anon 2 years when my group was looking for a Group Representative. Someone said to me, "I'll take you to a GR meeting to observe." I believe it was held in a hospital in the Northeast [Philadelphia]. Mary was there. She was super organized. She had name tags. She organized the meeting like a business meeting. She brought the meeting to order. She was polite and welcoming. She explained how the meeting would be run. She was straight forward.

Mary didn't brook anything outside of Al-Anon. For example, once we were discussing love gifts. We talked about a card with the Serenity Prayer. I said I could get them for free from the Sisters of Charity. Mary explained how we don't bring in stuff from the outside. She ended by asking, "Do you understand?" I was violating an Al-Anon principle without knowing it. I was bringing in the outside and something religious. She was polite. She was kind, and I felt OK. I went back the next time, and I thanked her!

Mary could tell you stuff in such a polite way I didn't ever feel threatened. On the other hand, when other people corrected me, I didn't want to come back.

Mary could teach without being threatening. You could also call her and ask for help on anything anytime.

She was speaker at workshops and meetings. She was a walking attraction for Al-Anon. You couldn't be in her airspace without learning about Al-Anon. Mary was an educator. I learned depth from her; she did deeper dives into the program. She could stand on her own feet and talk at an old age. I can't do it at my younger age. She was a force, a presence, just incredible. She wasn't a specialist on anything. She gave clarity on the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. She always brought up the 4th Concept, *Participation is the key to harmony*. Every voice counts. If you don't participate there's no harmony.

My last encounter with her was at a luncheon in Glenolden, Delaware County. It was during the COVID pandemic. There were about 80 in attendance. As luncheon guests, we said, "Hello," and "It's great to see you again."

Mary was the essence of the program. At that luncheon, we were with family again. There's never enough praise for her.

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## ***By Charlyn F (Mary's Daughter)***

Throughout her life Mary gave so many hope, friendship, laughter, and often hard truths delivered in her straight to the point way.

Mary was my Mom but also served as my service sponsor for many years. She freely shared with me an understanding of Al-Anon principles and how to be in service while paying close attention to my recovery areas while serving. No matter what service position I held, she was the first person I called to give a "report." She was my Al-Anon travel buddy and I traveled with her to many fellowship events throughout the country.

Mary left so much for all of us to use *in all of our affairs* that will last us for lifetimes. Thank you Mary for who you were, the service you gave, and the lives you touched. I'll love you forever.

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### ***We Remember Our Al-Anon Legacies***

STEP 12 *Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

TRADITION 12 *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.*

CONCEPT 12 *The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference , Article 12 of the Charter.*

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#### **AISDV Officers:**

Chair - Brad S

Assistant Chair - Debbie R

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THE RAP COMMITTEE THANKS EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS TRIBUTE  
EDITION POSSIBLE