

A brief overview of Wanda D. Keefe interests and activities,¹

No doubt, she was adventurous, enjoyed travel, meeting, helping people, especially the less fortunate, even the unborn, always having strong moral convictions.ⁱ Wanda's children and friends didn't always agree with her stand on things and yet forever admire her spirit and conviction on doing what she thought was right. In short, Wanda wasn't one to sit on the sidelines, she always loved to engage and question. In many ways she led by example.

Some things she likes, if not loved to participate in are:

- nature, plants, gardening, planting,
 - She was born in log cabin and raised for the first (11) years on an Alberta, western Canada farmⁱⁱ;
 - All the Keefe familyⁱⁱⁱ residences had shrubs and small gardens with a wild variety of flowers, fruits and vegetables. Many of which even survived the rambunctious trampling of 9 children in the same yards.
- Cooking and Baking
 - Homemade breads and pies and even ice cream
 - Big oatmeal-raisin or Peanut butter cookies that she would make by the dozens and put in a big crock in the kitchen. ("I knew you would snatch them between meals so I made with the best ingredients"
 - Hearty meals that could somehow stretch for many extra mouths (Leftovers for "Never the same Saturday Soup" was always a big favorite)
- Design, sewing, dress making, embroidering & sharing her knowledge. Her children especially remember:
 - Individual embroidered towels with names and astrological signs;
 - A special sewed cloth book that would survive being dragged all over the property while also teaching simple words to read.
 - A series of "cow boy" shirts to match her 3 young son's enthusiasm;
 - When one grown son received a spiritual name, he was presented a blue blanket the following Christmas, with the new name embroidered in big letters.
- all kinds of arts and crafts, puzzles, woodwork, picture frames,
 - Remodeling many residences, Freeport, Seaford and Manorville
 - Reupholster or fixing up old furniture. (She was "re-cycling" and "green" way ahead of her time & didn't like to see anything wasted. She felt there was nothing wrong with "garbage picking" if something could be fixed – and often then given away.
 - She was the original "fixer-upper" Woodwork, tile work, wallpapering, and of course let's not forget painting :-) (Where many including GCK got a good intro to the work world).
- Pets :
 - All the farm animals of her Canadian childhood including chickens, pigs, cows and horses;
 - Then in NY many dogs and cats, with a special personality, stories and place in the family history – and even the turtles and goldfish...,
 - Several of the pets taught many of the family members to care and be responsible for something other than ourselves and that animals can be especially loved but do die...
- Conversation: from the silly to the sublime
 - Her appreciation of the variety of human and divine experience is reflected in the love of animated or quiet discussion about all of God's creatures, their foibles and aspirations.
 - Hours flew by at the kitchen table or in the car - chatting after a shared event or confiding dreams.

¹ This overview relies heavily on initial notes provided by G.C. Keefe to family members via e-mail on 2008-apr-21 "Mom's likes throughout my time spent with her" and added to by other family members. See also end notes.

- She won over a tough NY crowd with a sweet, quiet but self assured manner. The discerning eye cut to the essence, a look said something was just “not right”. Proud Jack, story teller Donald and Professor Uncle Frank who loved the sport and took any side in an argument were supportive fans.
- Laughter had place of honor. (As long as it was not at some other group or persons expense).
- At the foot of her bed, many “big lugs” sprawled - 9 + spouses and friends stopped in late for a quick hello - extended for practical advice and a presence that washed away our concerns with assurance, wit and sayings from the “school of hard knocks”.
- Certainly “disagree but don’t be disagreeable” and most all have an “Attitude of Gratitude” for no matter what happens “God loves you”.

Early Employment:

- Farm Hand and domestic assistance at various locations
- Hospital in Edmonton - worked to pay off Family bill (received \$60 a month over the year and a half: \$20 went for mother’s hospital bill, \$20 for room and board, and \$20 for other expenses).
- Banking - Treasury Department bookkeeper. Everything by hand - Ledgers for surrounding towns.
- Trans-Canadian Highway construction: office in Edmonton, then Whitehorse. Company worked under the United States Engineer Department (USED). (In charge of the files for the payroll department including all personnel files and ran the Canadian payroll (500 employees). No adding machine - everything manual.
- USA Look Magazine, in NY; Assistant to Office Manger (who was also Head of payroll department).

Businesses she started and was involved during and after raising 9 children:

- Clothes design, Sewing and Dress making Independent Business (begun with her dear friend Marie S.)
- Bestline, cleaning products;
- Bon Del and other water filters
- Vitamins and Dietary supplements;
- Healthy diet projects : Slender Me

Religious and other Charities, non profits and volunteer activities:

- Catholic Church - All activities and organizations related to the children and adult religious education. When Latin had to be memorized by altar boys or they wanted to go early to serve mass; when a multitude of costumes for plays and pageants were called for or the girls had special dresses for drum and fife parades, she was always supportive, reminding , transporting and picking up all the pieces.
 - Sewing (and teaching others to make) dress “habits” for nuns in a neighboring parish
 - Neighborhood home prayer rosary sessions
- Worked with and sat on the board of directors of Maryhaven branch (nonprofit on long island) coordinating events for fundraising.
- Organized and hosted neighborhood morning coffee and sewing circles for the women in area.
- Invited single pregnant young women to live in her home.
- Working in a soup kitchen feeding the hungry for thirteen years.
- Other Volunteering of all types:
 - Neighborhood fundraising for local charities or activities.
 - Independent research, letter writing to civic leaders and elected officials on wide variety of subjects.
 - Right to life activities including protesting locally and in DC, getting arrested.

Other interests

- Took classes in calligraphy, financial investing, public speaking, theology.
- Home work sessions recreated her one-room school house. Supported hours of dance classes, recitals, twirling, campfire girls’ cookie sales, boy scouts, paper routes and little league events.
- Encouraged overall the improvement of any situation, tangible or intangible.

ii For some further Background:

- Link to the letter Wanda sent all 9 children in June of 1977 when she was 55. Now 30 yrs later the children are between 40's and 60's and the letter has even more meaning
http://www.adhiratha.net/www/oral-history/MAThesis/4pub_hm/Transcripts/wk77jn24.htm
- WDK note - 1956 drive back home with her 6 children, her sister Gwen and her children all in station wagon.
http://www.adhiratha.net/www/oral-history/MAThesis/4pub_hm/Transcripts/WK00fe14.htm
- For more details on travels and early work life see also excerpts from Oral History:
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http://www.adhiratha.net/www/oral-history/MAThesis/4pub_hm/Transcripts/JW00au14.htm
for Jack & Wanda Oral History Interview: Aug. 14th 2000, & begin Sept 04, 2000 including:
Marriage 1944, Not Back To Alaska ; Barracks Life for 3 Years: Trinidad, and British Guyana, Brazil, Yukon ; First Grandchild for Keefes, Neighbors: Commuting – work life; Standard Car Shift and Jacks adjustment for Leg;. Wanda Grandfather Cabinet Maker & Great Aunt Athabaska Trail Driver; first Granddaughter; Wanda's One Room Schoolhouse work: threshing crew, Hospital to Pay Family bill. Trans-Canadian Highway and at Look Magazine

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http://www.adhiratha.net/www/oral-history/MAThesis/4pub_hm/Transcripts/JW00se04.htm

Oral History Interview: Continued Sept 04, 2000 Parallel Lives: Jack and Wanda, Wanda and Jack; including: One room schoolhouse to city /school,. High School & Wanda Basketball, Selling family furniture to survive; People moving around, taking odd jobs, Jack in Whitehorse; Accommodations men & women; Plan children?; Jack's chilly fall;. Soldiers in Yukon: American, Canadian, Russian. Working cold Yukon; foreigners entering USA; 1944 war result not certain; Friends lost in World War 2, Canadian Forces in Battles; Atrocities on both sides; farm tools 2 Centuries

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http://www.adhiratha.net/www/oral-history/MAThesis/4pub_hm/Transcripts/JW00se30.htm

Oral History Interview: Sept 30, 2000; Parallel Lives : Jack and Wanda, Wanda and Jack; [Subtitled: A Davis-Keefe, Canadian-American Experience] including:

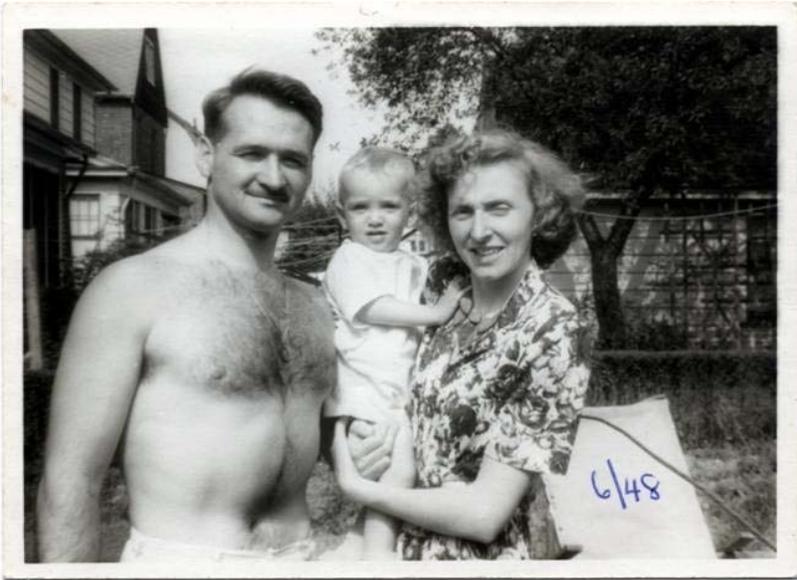
Wanda Dressmaking & Business ; Sewing Club, Circle; Small Businesses for women & war changed things; GI Bill, Consumer Goods, College and Mortgage Loans; Possible Subjects for future interviews

For Photos see: http://www.adhiratha.net/www/oral-history/MAThesis/4pub_hm/MAT2_D01.htm

ii Wanda's parents and siblings: Mother: Wilde (nana), Father: Stanley (papa); Brother: Fred; Sisters: Wilde? (dede), Gwendolyn (gwen) and June (babe june)

iii Wanda Married John J. Keefe Jr. (jack) in June of 1944 in Canada intending to only visit NY for a Honeymoon trip. The trip was extended and 9 Children were part of the journey: John Joseph, (jack) - May of 1945, Adhiratha (kevin kenneth) -May 1947, Thomas Stanley (tim, tom) -Mar 1949, Elizabeth Catherine (beth) -Apr 1951, Donna Theresa – Aug? 1952, George Charles Nov (1955), Moira Bernadine (s..) - July 1957, Michael Vincent –Aug 1958, and Mark Steven (Feb 1960?). Grand children / great grand children numbers continue to increase, details on these (and other relatives including spouses etc.) can be filled in by request to parents. ☺





Dec 1961 Wanda, Jack and 9 Children at Alan Drive Seaford NY.





Wanda's 60th Party Aug or Sept 1981: 8 Children [missing Donna] with 5 Partners, Uncle Tom and 3 Grand Children

