

The Jane Book

The Life of

Margaret Jane Weaver Toronto

1940 - 1987

Compiled and Edited by E.C. Weaver Shaeffer
May 2003

Dedicated to Carrie, Amy, Cindy and Will



Jane in 1964

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: MY SISTER, JANIE



I was only five years old when my sister Janie came along, but I was old enough to know that she was the cutest, brightest, most remarkable baby ever to grace the human family. What a gift she was!

Early in 1940 we, the Weaver family, moved into a brand new house at 6612 W. Melrose Street, Chicago, Illinois. It was in the new Schorsch Village subdivision just off Belmont Avenue near Naragansett Street. At the end of our block was the Kimball Candy Company, which made, among other things, the original Almond Joy, a chocolate-coated coconut bar. Our whole neighborhood smelled like chocolate, and it was into this sweet

setting that a brand new baby came to that brand new house. Her birth took place October 22nd at Ravenswood Hospital, assisted into this world by Dr. Ariel Williams, our family physician and friend who was also the bishop of our church—the Logan Square Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



The new baby was named Margaret, after grandmother Margaret Duncan, and Jane, after grandmother Sarah Jane Godfrey. She was Margaret



Jane Weaver. Daddy called her “Sweet Petootie,” Mama called her “My Pet,” my big brother, Gary, called her “Jane the Pain.” Uncle Snow called her “Duckie,” but I just called her Janie. She was *my* baby Janie. Sometimes Mother would call her “that little character!” When I heard Mom tell other grownups the most recent thing Jane had done to entertain us, I knew early on that “cute” and “character” were interchangeable words used to describe my little sister.

I was so pleased with her that I wanted everybody to know that I had a sister who was so notable. I never recall even the slightest envy of her. After all, she didn’t replace *me*. My place was secure. I had been the baby for five full years and now I was the middle child! I thought I was the lucky one.

When Janie outgrew her crib we shared a bedroom with twin beds. This continued throughout most of our school years. Sometimes Mother would make us matching outfits. One time Daddy block-printed designs on fabric that was made into dresses for all three of us—mother and both daughters.

I adored Jane as a baby and we became best friends after college. The five-year difference in our ages separated our interests for a time, but never our hearts.



The most grief I've experienced in my life was losing my precious Janie in 1987. It was harder to say goodbye to her than to Mother or to Daddy. After our parents' deaths we became mother, father, sister and confidante to each other.

Jane was blessed with a unique and charming personality from the earliest days of her life. She had a natural affinity for people and was strongly attached to those she loved. Her life was always a gift to me, and has continued to bless me even beyond her years. When considering her many gifts I have come to realize how varied and numerous they were.

Jane was gifted with a fine mind, an outstanding intellect and an innate wisdom that served her well throughout her life. She was a quick student and an effective teacher. She was proficient in the language arts, and was more than qualified to teach English, which she did prior to her missionary service in Chile. She read a lot and wrote very well. In fact, in 1977 she edited the life history of her mother-in-law, Martha Toronto Anderson, and did it beautifully. She called it A Cherry Tree Behind the Iron Curtain; the Autobiography of Martha Toronto Anderson (see appendix).

When Jane arrived in the mission field she quickly became fluent in Spanish and was graced with abilities to express herself in Spanish and to read, write and think in Spanish as well. She said she even dreamed in Spanish.

Jane was musically talented, and she developed her naturally fine voice. Having studied piano from an early age, it was not difficult for her to learn to play the guitar. Al and Jane sang together and entertained others with their vocal and guitar duets on many occasions, including weddings, church services and family outings. Jane sang with the Brigham Young University a cappella choir while she was in college, and later she sang with the Ralph Woodward Chorale, which she enjoyed immensely. Next to her family, music was perhaps her greatest joy in life and she shared that appreciation with her family and others.

Jane was also a talented seamstress. She loved sewing and handiwork projects, and she created beautiful things. She made many articles of clothing for herself and for her girls, as well as numerous cross-stitched items to give as gifts. She loved gardening, and enjoyed the wonderful vegetables it produced.

Jane was bequeathed with many gifts in her life. Though she received much, she gave more. She gave the gift of friendship to many. She gave the gift of true sisterhood to E.C. whose remembrance of that is a treasure beyond compare. She gave the gift of romance to Elder Toronto

followed by the gift of love and marriage in full partnership with Al. She was in love with him, with life and with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Brown claimed that the greatest of all Jane's gifts was her strong testimony of Our Lord, and her patriarchal blessing indicated that her spirituality would add charm to her personality. It did, indeed! It was one of the things that truly strengthened her character.



Janie gave the gift of nurturing motherhood to three daughters and one son. She was an attentive and compassionate nurse when her own mother lay dying, and she rejoiced in the mother-daughter bond that was strengthened during a difficult time. Jane was always a loving and devoted granddaughter as well.

Jane's wit and charm were irrepressible. She had a disarming forthrightness but she always used that gift with tact. She had strong opinions, but never used them to injure another.

Above all Janie gave the gift of love. She was known for the quality of her love, the intensity of her love and the honesty of her love: love for her heritage—love for others—for the better things of life—for the gospel—for her precious family and even her love of Texas.

But Jane hated cancer. Cancer had stolen her dad when she was 14, her mom when she was 23 and her *everything* when she was 46. She hated imposing her illness on others, and she grieved her loss. "You're losing just me, but I'm losing all of you," she lamented. Jane rejected the notion that her death meant that God "needed her." "Who can need me more than my children do?" she asked.

As adults she and I had a wonderful relationship even though we never lived near one another. For a time, the Torontos lived in San Marcos, Texas. That was only an eight-hour drive from Clovis, New Mexico! So we managed to get the families together from time to time. One of the happiest days of my life was canoeing with all the family down the San Marcos River. Jane, who was pregnant with Cindy at the time, was waiting at the end of our ride for five canoes loaded with Shaeffers, Irwins and Torontos with a huge picnic lunch. I hope Jane has a picnic waiting for me when I cross over the river of life!

Perhaps our best communications were the lengthy phone conversations we had regularly. They were supplemented with letters we exchanged, keeping copies for our journals during those years when journal keeping was time-prohibitive and long-distance calls were expensive. Occasionally just the two of us would escape for a respite from our various responsibilities. She and I had some lovely trips together. The most memorable was an extended weekend trip to San Diego. We had a very nice time whale-watching, shopping and relaxing. I kept waiting for Jane to tell me something—something I thought she was holding back and feared to disclose. Her secret, which somehow I had sensed, but she was not aware of, turned out to be breast cancer, and was diagnosed shortly after that trip. But I'm getting ahead of my story.



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