

The Day Mom Died: A Son's Journal Entry

by Tim Scott

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Mom went home to be with the lord yesterday...

It was 3pm Tuesday the 15th. I was leaving stone fruit day at the convention center. All seemed normal. Just a day with friends and co-workers waiting for pesticide credits when I received a text message from Dad. Mom was inbound to the ER with a heart attack. I hustled up there and beat the ambulance.

I was standing outside when it arrived. Shawn Ballard was in charge! When they opened the ambulance I could see my mom. There was a big bearded man doing chest compressions...helping mom cling to life. He was soaked with sweat. He was fighting the good fight. I had this strange sensation that I wanted to jump in and save her somehow, even though I could see they were better trained than me.

Shawn was calm and in charge. He saw me looking lost and came and gave me the calm, matter of fact truth. Mom was in cardiac arrest, but they had seen her "go down" and that was good because her body had not likely been oxygen deprived. He explained that she was only able to maintain a pulse on adrenaline and that it was likely a blood clot jamming up her heart that was causing the problem. The ER staff worked frantically but efficiently. They were giving it all they had.

Shawn again kept me up to date, and by that time the family was abreast of the progress. They were going to administer APT, the clot buster drug in order to relieve the strain on her heart. They did, and it worked. It saved her life. Doctors and Shawn began to filter in and explain what was next. She indeed had blood clots now in her lungs downstream from her heart. It was a major problem, but manageable.

They began to hint at the downside to APT was that it works really well as a clot buster, but that can have side effects....like uncontrollable internal bleeding. We would have to hope for the best. Mom was stable, in a drug induced coma and resting.

They wheeled her up to ICU. We all waited to see her in ICU. We were surrounded by loved ones, Becky, Chris, Adam, Dad, Sean, Gregg, Jenny, Pete, and Gala praying telling stories, loving one another. Hoping and praying for a favorable outcome. By around 7 pm all seemed calm and I thought that maybe she would live.

Dad wanted to stay with her and everybody else went home to wait and get some rest. At 1:18 am Wednesday the 16th I received a text from Dad. "Please come back....Severe brain bleed....Need your council". "Ok Dad.....on my way".

Becky and I headed for the hospital while our kids slept. When we arrived, the nurse Auxana showed us the new CAT scan and explained how her brain was under severe pressure and how it had been contorted from its normal shape from 2 significant bleeds. The Neurosurgeon came in and said it was massive irreversible damage. It was too much damage to save her. He was as caring and compassionate as anyone could possibly be in that situation, but everybody understood...

That was followed by tears, questions, and the decision that no one should ever be asked to make..... Is it time to let her go? The answer to that question had been written hours before when that clot broke loose from her newly repaired broken right leg. The circumstances to dire, too unforeseen, too powerful to overcome despite fantastic care, diligent response time, and modern medicine administered at the highest level of competence, love, prayers and hope.

The only thing that stood in the gap between this earth and eternity was the machines supporting her life. The time had come to say goodbye...to a lab manager, business partner, a care giver, a farmer's wife, a mother of two boys and grandmother of 5...for now.

Family was notified of the decision. They all headed wearily to the hospital and upon their arrival each said their goodbyes. Dad, Chris, Paula, Becky, Grace, Cole and Tess all circled the bed holding hands with each other and mom. With heavy hearts we each said a prayer; our final goodbyes. It was sad and beautiful at the same time. It was the purest expression of love possible in this life.

The machines were switched off and unhooked except for a screen that monitored her vital signs. We all stood in silence as her heart slowed and eventually stopped.

A life well lived; that will forever be etched in my memory. The woman who gave me life, cared for my every need, laughed, cried and celebrated with me. The woman that supported my dreams and calmed my fears was gone.