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“Pathfinder,” “trailblazer,” “charmer,” “gatekeeper,” “advocate.” These are just a few of the words I think of when reflecting on 30 plus years of knowing Gladys Hundley. She was a wonderful and talented woman who loved her family; Southern California; and Mom Hearst, the U.S. Senate Youth Program, and the U.S. Senate Youth Alumni Association.

I will never forget the summer of 1999. With Mrs. Rosalie Hearst (Mom Hearst to the thousands of former delegates who knew her between 1963 and 1999) in failing health, I asked my wife to somehow get in a call to then Vice President Albert Gore, Jr. Vice President Gore had served as a Co-Chair for the U.S. Senate Youth Program when he was a senator from Tennessee, had met Mom Hearst a number of times, and had addressed prior classes of delegates when requested by Program Director Rita Almon. My wife, then serving as a Political Appointee with the U.S. Department of Housing and Development (HUD), and a 13 year Gore staff member in both the House and Senate, contacted the Vice President’s Office. I thought it would be a great idea to ask the Vice President to call Mom Hearst to cheer her up. But I knew I needed to check first with Gladys, who knew all of us. Gladys said the following words which I will never forget: “You know Mom Hearst would love a call from Vice President Gore!”

The following day, Vice President Gore made the call, and Mom Hearst was so pleased. In fact, Gladys told me they spoke for quite a while, and it was a bright spot for Mom Hearst who died a couple of weeks later. But that was the kind of person Gladys was, a true friend ‘til the end. And if Gladys had told me Mom Hearst was too weak to receive the call, I never would have pursued the matter because I respected Gladys’ opinion so much!

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association (USSYAA), let me say to the entire Hundley family that Gladys will be truly missed. Her kindness, wit, and wisdom will never be forgotten, and will serve as a source of inspiration to all of us for many years to come. —*Robert R. Middleton (DC 1966)*

Although I am one of the members of the board who has known Gladys for the shortest amount of time, it took only one conversation with her to understand how deeply she cared about Mom Hearst, the program, and most importantly, the students who come to Washington every year as part of the USSYP. All organizations need people who maintain focus on the most important part of the organization; for us, this most important piece of the program is the children who will be the future leaders of our country. She had that focus and she will be missed. —*Erin Butler (FL 1997)*

Gladys was one of the “angels here on earth.” She knew how to lift your spirits when you were down, made you laugh when you needed to be cheered and gave all the wisdom she had to help solve your problems. She will be greatly missed! I miss her wonderful e-mails. —*Jim & Roseann Molloy*

The heart of the matter is, I am still filled with a lot of emotional anxiety and pain concerning her death. Personally, I still need more time to pull myself together about her departure, because I was so extremely close to Mrs. Gladys S. Hundley. Since 1976, I spoke at least once a week with Gladys for counsel and advice. Gladys was like a mother, sister, friend, running buddy, teacher, counselor, adviser, business associate and praying partner, etc., to me. —*John Selmon Blakley Sr. (MI 1976)*

I’ll always remember Gladys’s laugh. Alone, it made you feel like the funniest person on the planet. With others, it always stood out as the most joyous in the crowd. I really missed it during our last conference call. —*Dan Brown (MS 1987)*

Gladys was always a class act. She always exhibited sincere caring for the USSYAA organization and its members. —*Norman Fortenberry (LA 1979)*

Gladys was there at the beginning and every step of the way for thirty-five years of my association with Senate Youth. I loved her dearly and miss her greatly.

In 1969 I took my first airplane ride, from the old Municipal Airport in Kansas City to the amazing Dulles Airport outside Washington. I had no idea what to expect from the Senate Youth Program. When I walked into the Mayflower Hotel, the very first person I met was Gladys. She, too, was from Missouri, and the bond was made! She introduced me to Mrs. Hearst. She checked on me throughout the week. She found a typewriter when I needed to write an essay. Not only did I have “Mom” Hearst; the kid from Missouri also had “Aunt” Gladys.

And on the last day of the Program – Saturday as all of the kids were leaving – Gladys and I had an adventure. My plane had a late schedule. Gladys walked by as I was sitting near the front door of the hotel. She looked around, eyes sparkling, and said, “Let’s go for a ride. We’ve got plenty of time.” So outside we went to Mr. Hearst’s limousine, which took us to Garfinkle’s Department Store, the grande dame of D.C. shopping. It was great, although Gladys caught more than a little flack for the “breach of security.” (Even in 1969, a platoon of military escort officers accompanied the delegates.) After starting in that big Boeing 707, the week ended in the Hearst limo, thanks to Gladys. Quite a trip for a little suburban kid from Raytown, and Gladys was a big part of it.

Luckily, Gladys returned to D.C. every year at the time of the Super Bowl. Her Super Bowl parties were wonderful. How she made, stored, and served all that food from that tiny kitchenette, I’ll never know. But I surely enjoyed it, especially the oyster stew. When Doug Williams had his glorious first half for the Redskins, it’s a wonder they did not throw us out of the hotel. The really rowdy bunch was in Gladys’s small bedroom, and it was incredibly noisy. Since the Senate Youth schedule moved to March, I have not attended any Super Bowl parties. To do so somehow would seem disloyal to all the work that Gladys put into those fetes – and to all the fun we had – all those years.

We are all very happy that Gladys came back this year, just as Mrs. Hearst was able to come back not long before she left us. As always, Gladys was jolly and interested and sharp as a tack. We should all do so well for so long! I found a picture from the evening and will send it along. It captures her perfectly – in between Jim Molloy and John Blakley, smile beaming and eyes still sparkling with the same glow I saw 35 years ago as I climbed into the limo. –*Mike Sundermeyer (MO 1969)*

I remember Gladys Hundley very well. I did not have many years to know her as I was a delegate in 2001. I always remember her bright and radiant smile that filled the room. I could tell how happy she was to see the alumni every year when we returned, and the joy it gave her to work with the USSYAA. I only wish I would have taken advantage of the many opportunities that Gladys gave me to visit her at her home in California, or even to spend a few minutes of Arrival Day evening visiting her in her suite at the Mayflower. Gladys Hundley will forever live in my mind as a true example of a fine woman that truly loved the USSYP and the USSYAA for the many alumni and future alumni in their ranks. –*Chad Robinson (DE 2001)*

A few years ago, Gladys invited several of us on the USSYAA board to her hotel room. I took her up on that offer, even though I didn’t know Gladys or the other board members very well at that time. But far from feeling alone in a crowded room, Gladys brought me into the conversation, and by the time the gathering broke up, I felt like I was with an old friend. In hindsight, that was so typical of Gladys. Through a warm, gentle pressure, she was always able to break down even the largest barriers. –*David Zavatsky (WT 1990)*

Gladys will always be a vital and tremendous source of positive thought for us. Gladys remains with us each time we think we can’t and then DO. I cannot think USSYAA without memories of our first organizational meeting at the Mayflower Hotel and Gladys’ gentle presence and strong guidance.

I always think of Gladys smiling or laughing and making me feel good to be with her. I had the opportunity to exchange emails with Gladys when inquiring her expertise and thoughts about a possible record of Mom Hearst’s correspondence and again about our scholarship revisions. Gladys always made a mundane communication on business into a pleasant experience through the warm, caring comments she included.

Example from a communication about Mom’s book, “We may just as well take an enormous project and turn it into fun.” So typical of her. My favorite sign off from Gladys, “Hope all is well - love and hugs.” Indeed, Gladys was always concerned for others’ well being.

Gladys was so proud of her USSY kids and their achievements. She wrote in response to a request for help with the scholarship, "It is the expertise and dedication of all of you that makes the USSYAA such a success. You have every right to be very proud! With love and best wishes always." And Gladys did make us feel proud of USSYAA.

My sister, Cheryl, returned to one reunion with me and thereafter Gladys always asked about her and vice versa. Need I say more about the warmth that radiated from her presence? Through my husband's illness Gladys prayed for us and made us feel near to her heart.

I hope this small sample describes the love we have felt and the extraordinary woman we have lost. —*Connie Britner (MI 1966)*