

Eulogy for Virginia Gorna by Maurice Forsythe

Ladies and Gentlemen, that was a lovely tribute which Robin paid to her mother.

Now before I launch into my prepared text, there are a couple of stories I would like to relay to you.

Zara, a young lady of about nine, who always had discussions with Virginia, was inconsolable when she heard that Virginia passed away.

My youngest grandson, Idris, wanted to know how he should address me as he always said Grandpa and Nonna.

When Virginia left the London Borough of Brent to work in Ealing, she worked all over the Borough as she was responsible for all the Community Centres.

Later she was responsible for Action Acton where she was responsible for regeneration work in South Acton Estate. She was a very good fundraiser and she came up with loads of projects.

Although she had a busy schedule she found time to attend various community projects. These include Somali Projects, Afghani projects, Armenian projects, Caribbean descendants project and numerous others I can no longer remember.

In the late 1980s she went to School of Advanced Urban Studies (SAUS), at Bristol University on a fortnightly basis (Lunch time Thursday to lunch time Saturday) . She achieved an M. Sc. in Policy Studies . Her claim to fame is talking about Implementation of Policies.

During her studies at SAUS, a group went to Budapest, Hungary. Virginia was asked to do a five KM run which she completed in good walking style.

I joined the group after the trip and we went on to visit Maribor, Slovenia. This was just before the break up of Yugoslavia.

In 1988 Virginia and I had the pleasure of meeting Queen Juliana of the Netherlands at Kensington Palace for a William & Mary tercentenary event. Her mother, Muriel, was ecstatic about this.

During her time in Acton, Virginia got me my allotment which I still hold, and have had since 1999.

Virginia was invited to attend the Queens garden party in the 1990s. This in my view was to acknowledge her community work contributions in the London Borough of Ealing – something she was extremely proud of.

Before closing, I must say a bit about Virginia lung Cancer. She felt some pain while we were in Paris in

2007, her GP sent her for a test and we have spent 14 plus years dealing with treatment for pneumonia, visits to Clinics and doing various tests. etc.

Virginia was always concerned about patient involvement and the patients' experience in what happened to them outside clinical assessments.

She was the Co- Chair of the Cancer Patients User Group. They were also part of the Cancer Implementation Group and attended the full Board Meetings.

Various other Cancer Involvement Groups sprung up and Virginia played a part in the NHS London Health Improvement Board.

Virginia worked in the Chief Executive Office for a while. She also worked at Voluntary Action Camden on a European Project delivering Project Management to community groups in seven Councils for Voluntary Services in the Central London Area.

Although she was active throughout her life, she felt a bit left out of certain things and she longed to meet up with friends for a chat. She loved human contact, to have friends close by that she can speak with. Alas this was not always possible and she spent a lot of time talking to friends who lived afar.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I close I must say that Christmas 2019 was particularly poignant for Virginia, Robin and myself. In early December, we met up with Arun and Jovin, just before Arun went to Bali on work experience. Virginia was always fond of telling them to do their best and if one did not achieve his particular goal he should press on.

On Boxing Day, Virginia and I went with the Day Family to see Matilda – our first outing with Isaac and Idris, at a matinee show. The next day we met Caspar, Sophie and the girls (Delilah & Tabitha) for a family catch up. The following day we went off to Lerici, Liguria, Italy, for the New Year festivities. Robin came to Italy but because of flight scheduling problems, she had to stay in Nice on New Year's Eve and take the train to Italy. Robin was heading for a writing retreat in Liguria.

Lastly, I must not forget that Fabian came to meet up with us to go to some wine tasting in Maida Vale. He even promised that he would bring his sister, Jassy to the next wine tasting.

2020 was a horrible year in a number of ways. I still cannot believe that she has gone-Virginia, please rest in peace.

M.F.