

August 2009

Dear Pauline,

Congratulations on your 98th birthday. I wish I could be there to celebrate with you. I think of you often and wish I could see you more often. I have always enjoyed our times together during my visits to Clay Center.

Do you remember the time I packed you and your walker into my little Miata and we took off for dinner at the country club? I may still have had that little car when we drove to the cemetery for the graveside service for Bernice Kocher. And then you convinced me that we should also attend the lunch afterwards at the church. We had a rather conspiratorial conversation as I recall.

Music has been an integral part of my life. I credit you, Wayne and Jim Martin for helping me find this joy in my life. You were my choir director at church and you assigned me my first solo ("What Child is This?") My mother was SO shocked to learn I could sing, because, and she told you, "She just shrieks around the house!" As you know, I have continued to sing barbershop harmony and was baritone in the 1998 Sweet Adelines International Champion Quartet. I look forward to singing for you again for the Arts Council with my new quartet next spring.

Instead of babysitting to earn money like so many other girls, I gave drum lessons to kids, including Davy, for years – thanks to Wayne. How many other girls got to play a trap set with a stage band? Or accompany an artist like Buddy DeFranco in a jazz combo? What fun memories!

I look forward to a nice long visit in the near future. I have always loved your sense of humor and adventure and sage advice. There is one particular talk session we had that I will remember forever. My mom was no longer there for me but you were.

With love and admiration,

Sheila Olsen Martinez