

JUNE 1, 1973

My Dear Wife,

As you know, our lovely daughter Tammy and I have been exchanging notes for some time. Occasionally I also write individual letters to each of our several children. With our approaching thirtieth wedding anniversary I'm going to make a feeble attempt to somehow convey my love to my sweetheart and eternal companion and helpmate by way of this letter. I know your husband doesn't possess the eloquence to completely express his feelings, but please bear with me as I attempt to describe how your husband feels about you.

As I look back on our thirty years together, a flood of memories come to mind. I remember well our providential meeting at BYU. You, a striking freshman and your husband a pompous senior and student body leader. A passing casual greeting on campus during some student body activity brought about our first meeting. Later, a matinee dance once again brought us together, and then a date during the Christmas holidays, which almost proved to be a disaster because I wasn't aware that you were the daughter of the State Prison Warden, and thus residing in the quarters at the State Prison.

Time passes, which finds you in a nurses training program and me in an officers training program. I remember so well my fervent prayers at midshipman's school, pleading for direction in the selection of a wife. Graduation and a commission as an Ensign seemed to increase the urgency to find my eternal companion. More fervent prayers for guidance led me to a good warm and peaceful feeling about Afton Harris. Further confirmation came as we walked around Temple Square. Another confirmation came as we visited your bishop, who's name, I believe, was Bishop Parker. With that sweet assurance I proposed during a hurried five day leave, and miracle of miracles, sweet Afton readily accepted. With the heavens giving such complete and beautiful sanction, a long engagement was not necessary. Only five days served our purpose for the engagement period. You were the first girl to wear my Delta Phi Sweetheart Pin. You will remember, our hasty engagement and marriage did not provide sufficient time for the ring to be purchased. That purchase resulted in the first debt in our marriage. I said we didn't have an engagement, nor did we have a honeymoon, as generally observed by newly married couples. But our engagement lasted for several months during a blessed period of duty in San Diego.

1942 LaJolla Avenue certainly brings back a treasure of cherished memories. If you remember, the sea duty was 24 hours on and 24 hours off. Each 24 hours was an extended beautiful honeymoon. Twenty-four hours aboard ship seemed like an eternity. I remember so well anticipating my 24-hour leave and running from the bus up the hill to find my sweet wife waiting. You will remember, I wouldn't let you out of my sight. I even took you to Priesthood meeting with me. I insisted that our bishop, who understood so beautifully our hopeless, blessed plight of being completely and insanely in love, allow you to be my home teaching companion. The stake president then called us to serve as the stake M-Men and Gleaner leaders. Bishop Hawkins, bless his heart, used to smile and chuckle at our affectionate antics together in Sacrament meeting.

I want you to know the passing thirty years have not altered my intense desire to be reunited with my lovely wife and companion when trips have taken

me away from home. Over the years, particularly during the last ten years, where my work has required considerable travel, no husband, or lover has yearned more for his wife's sweet embrace than your husband who has always been completely and hopelessly and gloriously in love with his wife. Our long distance phone bill has always been high because seldom a night goes by but what you and I don't exchange affectionate greetings on the phone. But, back to San Diego. After nearly a year of an extended, glorious honeymoon, filled with a treasure of beautiful memories, your husband then did something which may have hurt his lovely child bride. I say child because of your extreme youth, and my mid-twenties. I volunteered for an over-seas assignment because I felt some urgency to do my part over-seas during the war. When I left my wife was expecting our firstborn.

I'm sure I was the only man aboard ship going over-seas that received a letter every day from his wife. Thoughtful Afton made certain that every shirt pocket and every pants pocket had a note tucked away somewhere. Each day I would frantically look for the note from my sweet wife. Once over-seas you would write me each day, as I would you. Mail call was the most memorable beautiful experience of my long over-seas assignment. Our ship participated in the Philippines campaign which delayed the mail for many weeks. Finally mail call was issued and the captain sent me in the motor launch to get the mail. Bag after bag was given, ear-marked "USS Silverbell". Frantically I went through the mail to find the letter telling me about our first born. A letter from Grandpa Felt announced "I've just been to the hospital where I visited your lovely wife and young son Paul, Jr."

Memories, memories, blessed memories. I can't begin to recount them all. Each memory reflects my complete love and devotion and loyalty to my sweet companion. Finally the war ends. Arrangements were made to meet my lovely wife and young son whom I had never yet met in San Francisco, just a few days before Christmas. You will remember a little confusion because of our arrangements to meet at the Fairmont in Oakland. Neither of us realized there was a Fairmont in San Francisco. Prayers and our great love for each other finally brought us together for a glorious reunion. What a home coming! I can't begin to reconstruct the feelings that filled that precious hour and the next few days. Remember our search for a Christmas tree? Decorations were not available, but no tree looked more beautiful than ours Christmas morning. I not only had a lovely wife to whom I could return, but also a 15 month old son. No serviceman ever had a more glorious home coming.

Together we gave prayerful consideration for professional pursuits. With our wonderful memories of San Diego, you will remember, we thought we would go there and begin some business. The Lord prompted us otherwise, though, and led us into Church education. That was another providential direction that has marked our life together.

Logan, Utah, another blessed sacred period of our lives, marked by a call to a High Council, a Ward Bishopric for your husband, and the arrival of another choice son and a lovely daughter. For these births and each birth since, I have been present. My lovely wife has always been beautiful and heaven to be around, but never is she more beautiful than when she was expecting one of our children, and as she cared for them in their early weeks and months. Again,

the years in Logan bring so many happy memories. Remember our regular trips to the Temple, our wonderful association with neighbors Perry and Elmo, and members of the bishopric and their wives?

From Logan we went to Salt Lake, again under an assignment from Church education. Here our lovely New Year's Eve daughter was born. Remember our false runs to the hospital during some heavy winter season. Salt Lake, like Logan, was a haven and treasure of happy memories because of Church involvement. Once again, a call to a bishopric, regular trips to the Temple with dear friends -- and then another adventure that took us to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Two blessed wonderful years made beautiful because of the Church and the Gospel. There we came to know intimately our Branch President, N. E. Tanner, also Hugh B. Brown. Little did we realize then that one day these Brethren would be in the First Presidency. Again, wonderful friends and marvelous students made life abundant and full.

You will remember among some of our great experiences was our square dancing group. Yes, Edmonton was good to Paul and Afton and their family. We have always responded to whatever call came to us, be it in the Church, or professionally. After only two years we were beckoned to Cedar City, Utah. In Cedar City we faced and enjoyed again three blessed beautiful glorious years because of our complete love and devotion to each other and because the blessings of the Lord and the programs of the Church so abundantly blessed our lives. Here our son O'Larry was born. Today, as I dictate this letter, I'm driving to Roswell for a Zone Conference. Just two hours earlier it was my privilege to be with our son O'Larry as Patriarch Bushman gave him a most beautiful blessing. Our son O'Larry, like our other sons and daughters, is a source of matchless joy. I learned today that he has mastered more discussions than anyone in the Mission.

Another significant call in the Church came which further blessed our lives in the form of a counsellor to President Corry. Each of us will remember the Sunday I was sustained when we frantically searched for Paul and John to hurry off to our meeting and found them in the bedroom praying for their Dad in his new and important assignment. Today these great sons serve in bishoprics and stake presidencies.

Before accepting our next call which took us to BYU our blessed son Ronald was born. He's one of our miracle youngsters, as you well know. It was here a servant of the Lord assured my wife in a special blessing that if she would "allow the children to come that the Lord has for you, there will be no complications in child birth". We have remembered that admonition, which recalled to us that early in our marriage we determined that the Lord willing we would have a large family.

Provo and BYU, like each area has brought us a multitude of joys and pleasures, the greatest of which is Jesse, Kathleen, Tom, Tammy, and Mildred. Through all these many years of Church service my wife has also served in important positions such as teaching and Primary and MIA executive positions. Our many children never prevented you from important Church calls. Each of us have been happily involved in many Church assignments.

Among the many heavenly experiences and memories of Provo, I single out only one or two. My BYU assignment called for many extended trips. The excitement and joy of coming home and being reunited with my family compensated for the loneliness of our separation. You remember when we learned we were going to have twins? I should qualify that because you knew long before the doctor that this was a different pregnancy. You predicted twins long before the doctor made his confirmation. With our large family and with twins seven months along, tucked away in Mommie's big tummy, we all went to Disneyland. Many pictures make it possible to relive that family outing. We also, as you know, have a vast treasury of pictures.

Dr. Webster took such good care of my wife -- the experience of the delivery brings back chuckles. Remember, he called down the hall to tell me and all the other waiting patrons, "Paul, Number One is here, and it's a whopper!" and then a few minutes later, "Paul, Number Two is here, and it's jumping out of the crib!" My sweet wife is always beautiful under all circumstances, but never is she more angelic than when she's in the hospital bed with a new-born youngster on her arm and shoulder. Needless to say, the twins are certainly a double bonus for both of us. It was in Provo where we completed our dozen through the sweet adoption of our Lamanite daughter, Mildred. Each of our daughters reflect and mirror the beauty and angel-like qualities of their dear Mother.

As I look back on our thirty glorious years, sweetheart, I often ponder the great blessing and promise that President Lee gave us on the occasion of our memorable marriage. Remember, as he had his arms around each of us, he kissed my lovely wife on her cheek and said, "Paul, you love this sweet girl, don't you? I can promise you in the name of the Lord that if you will honor the covenants you have taken in the Temple today, each year will be happier than the preceeding one." The intervening years have confirmed and made a beautiful reality of that promise.

Among the glorious things that have happened to us, I'm sure one of the greatest is the call to preside over a mission. You will remember, as I pondered this sacred opportunity, we determined that we were going to make it a family affair. And this it has proven to be. Our son O'Larry is fulfilling a noble mission. His brother Ronald will be with him this summer. Each of the children are happily involved in so many great programs in the Church and in school.

Dear, this letter is getting rather lengthy. What I have mentioned is such a mere capsule and thread of what our thirty years have been together. You've heard me say, with all the sincerity of my heart, that I know what heaven is going to be like. You have brought heaven into my life in so many many ways during the past thirty years. Being faithful and true to my wife is one of the easiest and most glorious things that I have done. Never, at any time, have I been unfaithful to you in thought or deed. You have so completely possessed me and met every need and brought about a beautiful fulfillment in my life, that at no time has there every been the slightest temptation to wander. Perhaps that needn't be said. Our love and loyalty and integrity to each other has

always been perfect.

When I look back in retrospect on thirty years and see something of the joy and peace and completeness that we have enjoyed, I look forward with heavenly anticipation for the next thirty million years plus -- an endless, timeless, beautiful eternity. With you by my side, it's heaven every day. As you can see from this letter, and what you've learned over the thirty years, your husband is completely and totally in love with you. However, I point out, dear, that the qualities I see in you are very apparent to all of your sons and daughters and to all of the people who really know you. Our scores and scores of friends and neighbors and the hundreds of discerning missionaries readily see in you what I see in you -- a perfect wife, a perfect mother, a perfect handmaiden of the Lord. Because of your inner beauty, and complete integrity and natural faith, the Lord has blessed you with an external beauty and radiance which remains with you even in your fiftieth year. It is always a source of great pride and joy to me to have you by my side and for all my friends to know that this is my wife. If I were a poet, perhaps I could express my love as did Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, -- I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! -- and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

The scriptures perhaps describe my wife more beautifully than a poet, or certainly a faltering husband could ever do. It is found in Proverbs:

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.
The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall
have no need of spoil.
She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.
She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.
She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her
household, and a portion to her maidens.
She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands
she planteth a vineyard.
She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.
She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not
out by night.
She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.
She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth
her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

Proverbs 31: 10-29

Dear, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you. You will be hearing this throughout all eternity.

Most Sincerely,
