

# TRANSGENDER TAPESTRY

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Side of Gender Journeying •  
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# Never Give Up ...

## A Word from the Editor



**W**hen my family learned of my intention to transition gender roles, my mother sent word via one of my sisters that I was not to phone or visit anyone in the family. That was in 1989.

I honored my mother's wishes. I didn't visit or phone, although I did write regularly for the first four or five years. I even got Christmas presents and a note or two back from my mother, mostly to the effect that "Any doctor who would do that operation should be put to death." After I published an article about my relationship—or rather, lack of relationship—with my family and sent a copy to my mother, there was no further contact.

One of my sisters got back in touch around 1996, and we spoke on the phone on occasion. In 1998, when the Tennessee Vals asked me to be the speaker at their Christmas banquet in Nashville, I took the opportunity to visit her in nearby Franklin.

In the Spring of 2000, my father became ill with lung and liver cancer. He died in May—fortunately, with a minimum of suffering. My sister in Franklin phoned to relay a message from the family: I could come to the funeral if I wouldn't wear women's clothes. She and I both laughed at that, for my presentation as a woman isn't dependent upon artifice; I typically dress in khakis, pullover shirts, and sandals and wear no jewelry or makeup with the exception of some slapdash lipstick. I sent

back my reply: I would not compromise who I am. I did not go to the funeral.

Within two days of my father's death, my other sister had arranged for the sale of Mom's house and moved her lock, stock, and barrel from Alabama to an apartment close to her home in Douglasville, a suburb on the west side of Atlanta. I live on the east side. I soon received word from my sister in Franklin that Mom was calling her daily in tears, telling her how lonesome she was and how much she hated Georgia. Mom, who no longer drives, was miserable in her new location, unhappy with my Atlanta sister for not looking after her as she had promised, and lonesome for the man with whom she had lived for more than 50 years.

One Saturday afternoon in late July I was wakened from a nap by the telephone. It was my mother. By the time I was fully awake, we were chatting as if it had not been eleven years since we had last spoken.

Two weeks later my Franklin sister brought Mom to my house for dinner. Two weeks after that, Mom and I took off for a weekend trip to Asheville, North Carolina. Suddenly, after eleven years, I am back in the family.

Which just goes to show: one should never give up hope.

