

Lorraine Mall Haslee

When I first met Lorraine, she was working at the Avon Library and asked me if I would like to do a children's concert there. She was tall and willowy, with large intelligent eyes—lapis lazuli set in a pale face. Her head was wrapped in a beautiful scarf, the first of many I would see, with wonder at her loveliness in them. She was just undergoing her first rounds of chemo for her first battle with breast cancer. We didn't, however, talk about it. Her focus was completely on the children's concert, an event for 2-8 year olds; a widespread age group, but manageable, we thought, expecting perhaps 30-40 in the library setting. Her enthusiasm was so contagious. What she had on her head, and perhaps carried in her heart, was secondary to her work and the children.

Over the years that encompassed trips to Sante Fe, hut trips, growing children, Swift Eagle, book discussions, parties and politics, who she was grew and deepened around this initial impression. The eyes that took in everything let you know there wasn't much from which she'd back down. Discussions were always intense with Lorraine and it was a rare topic that didn't find her passionate and informed. Ruminare is an old fashioned word, but I believe her brain had a natural tendency for it. As it did for fun. The twinkle in the eyes, the amusement, the big laugh that drew you in. She remained willowy. One of my favorite mental pictures is of her and Fred dancing, long lean bodies so well matched, moving in sync, knowing they looked good.

There was a succession of beautiful scarves. More than we wanted to see. But as at the very beginning of our friendship, they remained a silent badge of courage. She held her fear and sadness in her heart, and let her light shine out through her work and the children to the very end.

And I still remember her laughing joyous amazement at the Avon Library turnout. Not 30-40 children, but 400. A true testament to that incredible light.