

LORNA McLACHLAN TRIBUTE

Richard Simpson

Today I stand before you to speak of a person that was loved by many. She was a real person.

I first met Lorna when she worked for the Salvation Army on Kingsway and Fraser. It was a Friday afternoon around one o'clock. Not knowing the rules about appointments they said to come back on Tuesday. I explained my situation to the receptionist Jennifer and she said, "Wait a minute." She went to an office beside the reception desk and came back. She said, "Have a seat."

In a couple of minutes Lorna appear from behind a door. I sat in her office and told her my story for over an hour. She sat there and listened. All the while I watched people walk in and out with bags of groceries. I started to think I got the wrong lady. The food was in a different office.

Then Lorna said, "Wait a minute. I'll be right back." She came back empty handed and started to tell me about the house she lived in and how every Sunday they have a hot meal and me and my kids were welcome. As chance had it, it was literally blocks away from where I lived. It was called "Partners in Hope." I then started to get up to leave. Out from the back came more groceries than I could carry and a bus ticket to get them home.

I told Lorna then I would see her on Sunday around one o'clock. Little did I know she had hooked me and was about to start reeling me in.

I went to this meal and lots of people, lots of kids were all having a fun time. I sat playing skip-bo with her and others and we were all laughing and joking. Then Lorna told me that all the people here went to church before they came here and that she would be happy to pick me and my three kids up and drive us there and back. The hook was set and in deep.

This awesome kind person just wanted to help and was offering more.

So I went to church for the first time in my life. I sat in the back and listened. She sat in the front surrounded by people, many of you who are here today, and sang up a storm.

The part me and my kids love the most about Lorna and Sundays was the trips to the Dairy Queen. Sometimes I think she used us to justify her Dairy Queen addiction. On rainy days you needed DQ to brighten up your day. On sunny days it was to cool down. And then there was the time it was just for a special occasion. Every Sunday she bought Dairy Queen. I saw Lorna do this and many more things for a lot of different people.

She always had time to listen. She also said in a nice way, "I've heard this before." Then she would share with me her life experiences as a way to help. She never forced anyone to do anything but when you asked for help she would go the extra mile. When I fell she would pick me up and not with a disappointing look but with one of care and concern. Not to say she was an angel – far from that – but she was my friend.

She showed me how to love, to laugh, and to cry, how to hold your tongue and then to let it fly. But the most important thing Lorna taught me was how to be the real me and I was OK – that I couldn't rely on her or anybody else, that Jesus was the only person that would and could. She loved Jesus with all her brokenness, with all her heart and was willing to share that with anyone that would listen. Lorna is the first person that introduced me to God.

My life has changed for the better even despite all the adversities. So our only hope is in Jesus, for Jesus said, "I am the way, the Truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Thank you, Lorna, my friend.