

Kathleen Anne Barbour and William Pirie Barbour

A Tribute by Ed Barbour

I knew them as Grandma and Grandpa. I can't remember them ever being apart. They were always together. As a child they often looked after my sister and I, and we always looked forwards to our many holidays with them. They were always patient, always kind. Even though the food and the house that they lived in were a different style to that which I was used to in Belfast, I felt the kind of comfort in their presence that a child can only feel when they are truly loved and cared for. By them I was taught many things which I will never forget, and I have many memories, which I will not let go.

They were always incredibly active. I can vividly remember walking with Grandma and Grandpa up and down Slieve League, or along the forest of Lough Navar, along countless beaches in Donegal and trying to out-dig Grandpa in the garden, a feat which I didn't manage until about 3 months ago.

By them I was taught my first card games, games which my sister and I still play with joy today. I can remember Tara and myself endlessly trying to stop Grandma from going to the kitchen to cook dinner so that we could have one more opportunity to try and beat them. They helped me learn to take joy in simple things, and in being outdoors. It was also largely through them that I inherited a love of cold water. I can remember them swimming in conditions that even now I would consider big waves and biting cold in Donegal.

Grandma was always incredibly sharp on the uptake; you couldn't risk stepping into the house with muddy wellies, or afford not to wash behind your ears, even if you were Grandpa. This was a trait that was taken from her in her last years.

He was honest and sincere, as was she. I can remember people telling Grandpa that he could get much more rent money, and him shrugging and smiling. The acquisition of money was to him not a worthy cause. I hope that I can live with the same honesty and sincerity.

He was a good man, and she a good woman.

In a world that is just, the good man and his wife can pass away peacefully in their sleep without tragedy or judgement. But few get that Privilege.

Between them was perfect love, a love that keeps on forever, keeps no record of what we in this world perceive as right or wrong and respects all promises. A love that was greater than life.

When I remember them now, I remember them laughing and smiling, sitting with Tara and I round the card table, after Grandma having swatted playfully at Grandpa for winning the previous trick with his Ace, before herself doing exactly the same thing in the next turn.

We'll miss you.

November 2009