



Nayereh Vaziri Tabatabai

May 25, 2009

A Tribute to Nayer Joon In Arabic, the name Nayer means “giver of light.” No name could have been more appropriate for this beloved sister, wife, mother, aunt, and grandmother. In our family, her name has always been “Nayer Joon.” In Farsi, the word “Joon” follows one’s first name as a sign of reverence and love. It simply means “dear”. Nayer Joon, our “dear giver of light”, we honor you and all that you have done for us. Nayer Joon was born in Zanjan, a beautiful farming town in northwestern Iran. She was raised in this idyllic setting and many of her fondest memories were of her time there. It is from its soil that Nayer Joon became who she is, and the morals and values that this small farming town instilled in her have been passed on to her children and grandchildren. Through the years, Nayer Joon would spend her summers in Zanjan with her children visiting not only her parents, but also a plethora of cousins, many of which were her age and had children the same age as her own. This extended legion of honorary brothers and sisters, would serve as a breath of fresh air for Nayer Joon. In fact, Mahmonir, her beloved cousin, is a living reminder of those days. Once in the United States, Nayer Joon and her children have been able to replicate the chaos and fun of that time in their own large family gatherings, and Mahmooneer has been able to share in some of those gatherings most recently. She has been a guardian angel and a constant loving companion of Nayer Joon’s, especially during these final difficult years. We will never forget her calming presence and compassion toward our entire family. It is our hope that the next generation of cousins will

be able to continue the legacy of family and love that started in that small farming town over a century ago. Nayer Joon's mother, Iran Ziai, was from a prominent family. Nayer Joon's father, Mohammad, was the eldest son of the notable Vaziri family. His father was a vazir, which meant that he was the town mayor in those days. Nayer's mother and father fell in love as teenagers and their wedding, according to family stories, lasted seven days and seven nights as was the custom for Persian weddings at that time. Nayer Joon started school and reached the highest level of education available in Zanjan. Her older brothers moved to Tehran to continue their higher education while her and her sister, Ashraf, stayed behind. Nayer Joon pursued a career in academia, despite the fact that many of her female contemporaries were not career minded at the time. She began her career as a teacher at a girls' school and few years later, she was asked to serve as head mistress. It was in that same school, just outside of her office, that she met her future husband, Dr. Tabatabai Yazdi (Dr. T). Dr. T., a young dashing doctor, was assigned to Zanjan to complete his military service. Two of his best friends and colleagues, Dr. Hassan and Gholam Hossein Vaziri introduced Dr. T. to the entire Vaziri family in Zanjan including their sister, Nayer. Through the years, Nayer Joon and Baba (as he was referred to by his children) have shared stories of their courtship and subsequent marriage with their children. It's safe to say that these treasured stories will stay in our family for many years to come. Nayer Joon and Dr. T. were married in a small ceremony in Zanjan. They lived together for 55 years until Dr. T's passing in January of 2000. The newlyweds soon left to start a new life in Tehran, where Dr. T. had secured a new position working for the Ministry of Health. This was a time of a great adjustment for Nayer Joon. She was used to a multitude of servants to do the housework, shopping, and cleaning. In Tehran, all the help she had came from a trusted housekeeper that she brought with her from Zanjan. A year and half later, their first child Zari (Zahra) was born. Several years later, another daughter, Mariam, joined their family. Mariam was a little over a year old when Dr. T. was given an assignment in Paris. At the time, Nayer Joon was

pregnant with her third child, and the prospect of taking care of three young children in Paris was overwhelming to her. After much consideration, they decided to leave Mariam in Iran with Nayer Joon's mother (Iran Khanoom). Nayer's third child, Ali, was born in Paris. Soon after his birth, Nayer returned to Iran while Dr. T. stayed behind in Paris to finish his assignment. Over time Mariam was reacquainted with her family, but remained close to her grandmother forever. It was a special bond that endured until the time of Iran Khanoom's death. Nayer Joon's fourth child, Shirine, was born a few years later. Shirine was a welcome surprise to the family and fell nicely into the role of "the baby." She and Nayer Joon were very close as a result, and often shared the same temperament and outlook on life. To get a glimpse of what Nayer Joon was like as a younger woman, one can look to the woman that Shirine is today. In 1978, a year before the Iranian revolution, Nayer Joon and Babasee (as the new grandfather was being called) accompanied Mariam, her husband, and her young daughter, Narguess, to the United States to help them get settled in their new country. Soon after, the political situation in Iran started deteriorating at an accelerated pace and the prospect of returning to Iran was not encouraging for Nayer Joon and Dr. T. At this time, three of their children lived in the United States. So, Nayer Joon and Babasee made the heart wrenching decision to stay in the U.S. although they knew that it meant leaving their extended families and siblings behind in Iran. Nayer Joon's father was still alive and living in Tehran at the time. Nayer Joon found herself in a foreign land; thousands of miles from her father, her brothers and sister, and the country she loved so much. Thus, the next chapter in Nayer Joon's life began in the town of Stamford, CT. Nayer Joon and Babasee lived with Mariam and her husband, Farhad. Since they both worked, Nayer Joon and Babasee helped to care for their daughter, Narguess. In fact, for most of her life, Narguess and Nayer Joon have lived under the same roof. This has allowed them to develop a unique bond, just as Mariam had developed with her own grandmother as a child. In time, Ali, Shirine, and her husband,

Shahrokh also decided to live in the United States permanently. Soon after that, Zari, her husband, Youssef, and their young daughters, Leila & Sara, relocated to the United States and found a home in a neighboring town. As a result, Mariam and Farhad's home became the new center point for the family and everyone would gather there for special occasions. Life in America for the aging couple was not easy. Being away from siblings and lifelong friends, and replacing the daily hubbub of Tehran's life with the quiet seclusion of Stamford, was a big adjustment for Nayer Joon and Dr. T. At times, they felt very isolated from the outside world because their English was limited and there were no Persian television or newspapers for them to stay connected to Iran with. Still, they worked to make the best of it, and continued to raise their grandchildren with the same values and morals that they would have in Iran. Nayer Joon and Babasee were able to see all of their children get married and start their own families. In time, four more grandchildren joined the family. A few years later, they were also able to visit Iran together and see their own families. While in the United States, Nayer Joon and Dr. T developed a closer bond with Dr. Hassan Vaziri. He had always been a confidante to Nayer Joon and a respected colleague to Dr. T. She was closest to him among her brothers, and as a result their families were more intertwined. Their frequent visits with each other set the foundation of our family as it is today. Their children and grandchildren have emulated the example of their bond. Dr. Vaziri's passing took a palpable toll on Nayer Joon, and she often remarked that being with his children and grandchildren warmed her heart and made her feel close to him again. A sentiment that is still apparent by the happiness that seeing Dr. Vaziri's children, their spouses, and their children continued to elicit in Nayer despite her inability to speak. Nayer's warmth, sense of humor, selflessness, piety, and love of family are exemplary. She has touched so many lives and brought happiness to so many hearts. Nayer Joon and Dr. T always put their children ahead of themselves and put family first. In addition, they truly believed in the importance of helping those that were less fortunate than they were. For example, at one point in her career, Nayer Joon

commuted two hours a day to teach in a very poor area of Tehran, and donated nearly her entire salary to the families of her poorest students. Working within their limited budget, Nayer Joon and Dr. T. sacrificed whenever possible so that their children could receive the best education possible. Nayer Joon did not indulge in expensive jewelry or new dresses. Instead, they used the money for piano lessons, horseback riding lessons, and private school tuition. All four of her children are college graduates, and many have gone on to get graduate degrees, some have acquired even more than one secondary degree. All four have been successful in their field and publicly recognized for their professional accomplishments. Nayer Joon's children owe a debt of gratitude to her, and to their late father, for raising them to be who they are today: independent, resourceful, and loving human beings. As parents, there are so many of us, in this family, that try to emulate their example. While it would be a great feat to do as well as they did, we are humbled by all that they had to overcome, and strive to honor them in the way that we choose to live our own lives. Nayer Joon is survived by her three daughters: Zari Malekzadeh of New Canaan, CT, Mariam Moasser of Emeryville, CA, and Shirine Mafi of Worthington, OH, as well as her son, Ali Tabatabai of Cupertino, CA. She is also survived by her brothers Houshang and Shahpour Vaziri, her nephews Asghar and Isa Ehteshami, Arvand Vaziri, and her nieces, Homa Keynejad and Ava Vaziri in Iran. Also, by her nephews Reza Vaziri of Sweden and Ali Reza Ehteshami of San Francisco, CA. She is further survived by her three son-in-laws, Youssef Malekzadeh, Farhad Moasser, and Shahrokh Mafi, and her daughter-in-law Zohreh Bakhtiar Tabatabai. Nayer Joon will be greatly missed by her seven grandchildren, Narguess, Leila, Sara, John (Nema), Nick (Ramin), Neeloufar, and Dara. In addition, she is survived by The Shoemaker Family of the Charlotte, NC area, The Vaziri Family of Jamaica Plain, MA, and The Vaziri Family of New Albany, OH. As well as, countless relatives and friends in the United States, and abroad. In lieu of flowers, Nayer Joon's family has asked that donations be made to the Vaziri Tabatabai Memorial Fund. In order to make a donation,

please go to the following website: www.otterbein.edu/makeagift . Once there, please complete the fields for your personal information and donation amount first, and then scroll down to the bottom of the form and select the “In Memory Of” field. Please type: vaziri in the “first name”, and tabatabai in the “last name” field. This will ensure that your kind donation will be allocated correctly.

Tribute Wall



“ *Nayereh Vaziri Tabatabai*

January 28, 2023 at 10:24 AM