

## **Introduction**

Think of a single word that describes Pat McKenzie. What would be your word to describe her personality? Probably without exception it would be something like: Positive, Upbeat, Optimistic, Happy, Energetic, Cheerful, Encouraging and Inspiring.

Pat McKenzie was all of this and more rolled up into one dynamic lady. And that one lady impacted more lives than most of us can imagine. Pat McKenzie was a lady on a mission and that mission was to inspire and encourage everyone with whom she came in contact.

Looking across this room, I want to say to Pat McKenzie, “**Mission Accomplished!**”

No doubt, our Lord has already said to Pat McKenzie, “Well done my good and faithful servant.”

## **Content**

### **1. Pat McKenzie was an Inspiration to her community**

From her days of teaching and substituting to driving a bus for 30 years, Pat McKenzie touched the lives of many young people. Always quick to give a word of encouragement, she inspired children and teens with her wisdom and humor. There was no circumstance from which she could not find optimism and encouragement.

While others might see the negative, Pat always saw the positive. Pat found much to love about her community. She loved the landscape, arts, music, opera and most of all; she loved the people.

No wonder she was previously honored in a school yearbook and now the school has announced they will establish a garden on the grounds in her memory.

May God teach all of us to view our community with the appreciation exemplified by Pat McKenzie.

### **2. Pat McKenzie was an Inspiration to her church**

Those who know Pat from church know that she was a faithful servant to our Lord. Pat taught Sunday School for many years and right up until she was hospitalized. Pat had a class full of people who faithfully came to hear her well prepared words of inspiration each week.

My wife attended Pat’s class. Pam shared with me that Pat always opened with something funny or something inspirational that she had read, heard or experienced.

By no means was Pat’s impact limited to her Sunday School class. She inspired an entire congregation with out-spoken words of joy and celebration of her Savior Jesus Christ. She was always looking for opportunities to use her humor to lighten or enhance the moment.

Illus: I recall a recent Sunday when I was baptizing with our new portable baptistery. It is an attractive unit much like a jacuzzi or miniature swimming pool. It sits right on the floor in front of the congregation and has a great impact by bringing baptism so close to the people. I was wearing waders but without the boots. The tight bands around my ankles were supposed to keep the water out. As I was baptizing, I could feel the water rising up my legs all the way to my waist. When the baptism was complete and I went to step out with the first leg, a sudden gush of water came pouring out of the waders on to the floor. The congregation gasped and I froze. I was stuck there with one leg out and one in. I was scared to bring the other leg out for I knew it would do the same thing. In the eternal silence, Pat yelled out, “You gotta let the water drain out of that leg first preacher.” The entire congregation roared with laughter.

What Pat did that day was rescue me. In a single moment, without regard to her image or reputation, she broke the silence and embarrassment. She returned the congregation to a spirit of celebration.

Illus: On the day the church voted to call me as pastor, it was Pat McKenzie who eagerly shouted out, “When can you start?” She made me feel wanted and needed. She had a way of doing that for everyone.

### 3. Pat McKenzie was an Inspiration to her children

I know Pat’s six children (Brenda, Steve, Lyn, Jeff, Julie & Mitch) have heavy hearts today as your loss is great. However, your gain is much greater. You have so much for which to be proud and thankful.

Just last Sunday, I preached a message on Parenting. In that message I stated, “Parenting must be done with purpose, intentional, effective and in accordance with God’s instruction.” Pat McKenzie was a parent with purpose. She instilled her values, her love for life and her faith in God in all six of her children.

Pat loved her children with high expectations and strong discipline. From her turpentine cures for everything to using her children as examples in the classroom, she knew how to dispense tough love.

Illus: Her children shared with me how she would insist on a hug when they came in at night. Though the hug was genuine, it was also a ploy to smell them and question if they had been around smoke or alcohol. I must admit to having used this trick myself on my own children. Pat understood the importance of guarding her precious children from the dangers of life.

Pat McKenzie loved her children with laughter, optimism and support. If they had a ball game or other event, she was always there. She loved sports which probably grew out of years of support for her children’s activities. Pat loved to roll on the floor, tussling with her children and laughing so hard she could not stop. She knew the therapy that came from pure laughter and she made sure there was plenty of it in her home.

Illus: The children shared with me that Sunday’s were what Pat called the “Special Day.” She would get up and cook something sweet such as cinnamon rolls for the family. This is something they will never forget. Even today as adults, it seems that it has never occurred to them that she was making sure they were up and ready to go to God’s house.

*“<sup>25</sup>She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.” Proverbs 31:25 NIV*

Someone once said, “Mothers write on the hearts of their children what the rough hand of the world cannot erase.” **You have been launched into life with the inspiration and blessing of a godly mother.**

### 4. The Source of Pat McKenzie’s Inspiration

So, what is the source of all of this great inspiration given by Mrs. Pat McKenzie? What was the source of Pat’s enormous love for life? I believe Paul explains it well in his letter to the Thessalonians.

*“<sup>3</sup>We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 1:3 NIV*

The answer is rich, but not complicated. The answer is found in her faith in Jesus Christ as Lord of her life. Her faith in Christ was so deep that it produced an enduring labor. Her love, her humor, her optimism, her encouragement, her inspiration; it all came from her relationship with Jesus Christ.

Pat McKenzie believed God’s Word with all of her heart. More than just believing, she experienced God’s Word on a daily basis. Pat knew her Creator and she knew Him well.

You and I can see God in creation. We see creation when we slow down and look at the trees, mountains, ocean and flowers. But Pat McKenzie’s source of inspiration was so strong that she had one big secret to life that we all need to learn. **Pat could see God’s creation in the faces of everyone she encountered. And, when she encountered them, she inspired them.**

## **Conclusion**

When I think of Pat McKenzie, I am reminded of the words to a wonderful song.

When peace like a river, attendeth my way  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

I visited with Mrs. McKenzie on Sunday afternoon, the day before she passed away. When I went to her bed side, she greeted me with that warm smile and we held hands as we always did. I leaned over and quietly asked, "How are you doing." I will never forget her answer even though it was completely predictable and classic Pat McKenzie. She raised her eyebrows to produce her trademark smile and struggled to find the breath to give me her answer. Proudly she said, "Wonderful!"

Rest assured that answer was genuine. She was "Wonderful" right up to her death because all was well with her soul. **Know that at this very moment and for all of eternity, Pat McKenzie is doing "Wonderful".**

## Graveside

This is where our faith must be strong. At death, there is no room for wavering faith. Just as Pat McKenzie had unwavering faith, so must we. God's Word says:

*In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. John 14:2*

*<sup>55</sup> O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?"... <sup>57</sup>but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Cor. 15:55, 57*

- There is no soul here today
- Only a worn out body
- There is no ending here today
- Like Paul, Pat McKenzie says,
- Oh death, where is your victory?
- Oh death, where is your sting?
- With Christ, death can hiss but death cannot harm.
- Like Paul, Pat McKenzie says Behold I die, yet I live!

Prayer:

Oh God if it were not for your grace, if it were not for your amazing love through Christ Jesus, we would be a pitiful people. We would have no ability to deal with our losses. Death would be our enemy to fear every waking moment. But in your wisdom and love, you provided victory for your children through your son Jesus Christ. Plant that understanding in the heart of all here today. Thank you for your grace through Jesus Christ. Thank you for the life of Pat McKenzie and her inspiration upon each one us. Enjoy her presence in eternity.

Amen.