

**“Gerrard!”**

**Here we were, both 78-79 years old and still acting like we were in high school where I first met that girl – a bundle of personality and energy. My friend. She was an energetic cheerleader who would lift your spirits at Camelback and would help the Coconuts make song choices. After graduation in 1960, she managed to keep up with most of our class because she knew so many of you since 1st grade, and cared.**

If Gayle was ever unhappy, I don't know how you would ever know it. She had plenty to be happy about marrying Ray Meyers and two wonderful boys who always looked out for their “mom” and grandchildren that would make any grandma proud: and, gardening, gardening, gardening! You always knew and heard about those things.

She also had plenty that would drag most people down--- Ray's sudden death taking away her wish for them to grow old together and a cruel case of Parkinson's disease which affected her speech (making her ability to communicate at times impossible), her gait and balance. It was the latter two combined with gardening that caused a fall and a subsequent deterioration in her condition and more time that she would like at Barrows. She had been on one of the new anticoagulants (which you can't reverse quickly) for a couple of years for a condition I can't recall enough to tell you about with certainty. Doing her thing, gardening, she had fallen and hit her head, something all of us with Parkinson's disease, fear. It caused her to have bleeding in her head fueled by her anticoagulant, It increased the bleeding not only in her scalp and perhaps her brain as well. It resulted in several hospital stays. Through it all, she was upbeat, happy and couldn't wait to get back to her garden. And joked often about her condition.

Every month or two we would call each other, “Gerrard!”, I would say. She would answer: “Alsever” and then would commence jabbering away. I would have to tell her slow down. She would laugh. Tell me the latest on her Parkinson's and what was going on with classmates. She would ask a few questions relating to it and then ask how I was doing with my Parkinson's. And, any drug changes for it. We laughed thinking about something in the cafeteria at Camelback that must have caused a small cluster. Now we knew why Mr. Datson was saying, “...ummmm...I wonder...” Gayle and I were therapy for each other - the Parkinson's Pals. She always made me laugh. But this time I was panicked when she didn't answer her phone and her phone mailbox was full, and a new message from one of the boys had been left. No one seemed to know what had happened. And, she had missed our monthly call.

Every class has got to have an Inspector Clouseau and lately that has been Rod Moyer, bless his heart. Rod, who knew how special Gayle was, called me with the rest of the story: she had been unable to manage at home (but I'll bet she tried harder than most), was put in assisted living and died about 2 weeks later.

I loved Gaye Gerrard Myers who had been so much in my life in ways I would never would have guessed. She was the “cheerleader” for Camelback and the “cheerleader and producer” for the Coconuts. She was my Parkinson's Pal.

**“Gerrard!”**

**“Alsever”**