

You may think this is not how it was meant to be...

We were meant to all be together to mourn Nan's passing and celebrate her life

We were meant to be gathered in a church.

I was meant to be speaking to you in person, not through a recording made on the other side of the globe.

It would be easy to feel sad about this situation. That somehow this is not doing Nan justice. That it is not what she would have wanted.

I would like to offer you an alternative view... Nan's view...

She wanted her funeral to be simple, straightforward, uncomplicated. No pomp, no ceremony... It doesn't come simpler than this.

She wanted people to be together. Through technology, we are all very much together.

She wanted us to make no fuss over her... I am currently sat, as many are, in the comfort of my home. No fuss made.

I hope you share Nan's view, that whilst today is unconventional, it is what is meant to be.

The lady we all knew to have a determined – some might say stubborn - streak, got her wishes. 😊

When I was three Nan moved into the family home to help my parents with the rapidly expanding Rouse Tribe. Her living with us gave us a chance to form a closer relationship than most would have with a grandparent. Today feels to me, more like we are saying goodbye to a parent. It is my privilege to share a few words.

Nan was in her mid-fifties when I was born. I knew her for less than half her long life.

I know many have fond memories of my grandmother stretching back much further than mine.

I invite you to spend a moment, pause and reflect on what you remember most about her?

Some of the words that come to my mind are loyal, sharp minded, resilient and charitable.

I remember Nan as a lady of great faith, of great interest and of great love.

Nan took great strength from her faith. She was a devout Catholic and fulfilled her dreams of making pilgrimages to Lourdes, the Vatican and the Holy Land. I remember she would attend Mass at every opportunity – when she was physically able, it would be every day without fail. I joked with Father Vincent last week that Nan's lifetime average hours in a church were probably even higher than his!

Nan was lively, interesting and interested. She loved reading, painting, travel and a lively political debate! But most of all she loved music.

Her father was an accomplished composer and performer, and she decided as a child that she wanted to play the piano in her words 'not just adequately, but brilliantly'. She became an outstanding music teacher, and achieved the highest qualifications from the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College in London.

But for me, what is more impressive, is that she also managed to teach all six of her grandchildren to play the piano. Keir, my cousin and a talented music producer, remembers fondly the piano lessons Nan gave him – he told me how they helped him immensely as a musician, though his hands still ache now from all the practice!

Nan, though a fairly private person, treasured her family and friends dearly. She had many friendships that spanned a lifetime. As an only child, she led an independent life, but when she married my granddad, she joined the Adams Family and over the years that followed became an integral and much loved member of the large but very close clan.

Nan's niece, Laraine, shared some memories from her childhood and teenage years. What stuck out was the way that both my grandparents showed their love to Laraine and her siblings at various points whilst their parents were posted overseas. Laraine also recounted how when she studied in Southampton, she and her friends were welcomed to my grandparents' house where they were treated to some legendary curries!

I remember many mealtimes around the Rouse dinner table, with Nan at the head of the table. She would always be checking everyone had enough to eat and drink, and if you ever visited Nan, you would be offered tea, biscuits, toast. Usually more than once. I think Nan's personal best was offering my wife Vic a cup of tea 27 times in a single visit!

My most enduring memory of how Nan showed her great love though, is in the way that she devoted herself to helping my parents bring up 5 boisterous boys, and to helping her son Ainsley and Grandson Keir in whatever way she could.

Nan lived a long life, but not a complicated one. Her faith, interests and love were all she needed to be happy.

She told me that her goal was to bring happiness to those around her and after she was gone, that people would remember her occasionally with a laugh or a smile.

Nan left a note entitled 'to be read once I'm gone'.

It said: I love you all very much. I would like to express the wish that my family will always care for and love each other. Whether you have a worthwhile memento of me or not, is not important- just remember that my love should be regarded as my true legacy. God bless you all.