

The Montgomery Hospice: The Beginning

I am honored to share the extraordinary, beautiful and heartwarming story of how what is now known as The Montgomery Hospice came to be. It is the story of an incredibly strong, determined, intelligent, caring, giving, and loving woman that I was honored and blessed to call friend, mentor, and family. Her name was Janet Ruth Summers Felker, a devoted wife, mother and remarkable human being who was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 1973 at the age of 38. This story is about her journey through her cancer treatment and her determination to die at home in 1979, when it was not commonly done, with her family around her, as comfortable and pain free as possible, with the utmost dignity, and how she left a legacy known as The Montgomery Hospice.

Janet, her husband Lansing Raymond Felker, Jr., and their four children lived in Bethesda, MD, in a very special community known as Edgemoor. It was the kind of community where neighbors knew each other, socialized together, had children that played and went to school together and, most importantly, were there for each other in both the good times and the hard times. After receiving a diagnosis of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in the spring of 1973, Janet reached out to ask for help from the wonderful neighborhood she lived in. This is where my mother, Sarah (Sally) Amanda Ketchum, and I became a part of this story.

Janet had been accepted into a clinical trial at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which luckily for Janet was basically in our backyard. In 1973 there weren't any real protocols for treating this still incurable disease, and being accepted into this trial contributed to Janet's lasting longer than was the norm at that time. The trial's treatments were experimental, so she had no idea what the side effects would be and how she would be able to handle her day to day life as a mother of 4 children ranging in age from 19 months to 15 years. She knew she would be needing help caring for her children, as well as some help with cooking, cleaning, doing errands and anything else that might come up. Her husband Lanse, a former Naval Officer and Fighter Pilot who made his career as a military, industrial, and international policy analyst for the federal government, frequently worked long hours, and they agreed she would need help on a daily basis. Janet was very clear that this would be a paying position and a full time job. She asked my Mom if I might be interested in taking the position. At the time I was back living at home after having to drop out of my freshman year of college while recovering from a bout of mononucleosis. I was all of 18, but had done a great deal of babysitting all around Edgemoor, and I had a good reputation. My Mom asked me what I thought about the idea of helping out a neighbor in need. I can honestly say that I didn't hesitate to say yes. I won't lie that I thought this was going to be a simple job of babysitting, but I truly had no clue that this one decision I made at 18 was to be one of the most powerful, life changing decisions I ever made. It was in caring for the Felker family and sharing their pain and sorrow that I learned the power of strength, courage, determination, unconditional giving, joy and most definitely love.

I didn't really know the Felker family very well before taking the job. I had seen them at our neighborhood swim and tennis club, The Edgemoor Club, where Lanse captained tennis teams and was later the Club President. Most of the neighbors were members, so it's where you could find any number of us on any given day in the summers. Most of the Edgemoor children were either on the swim or tennis teams or would hang out there with their friends. I knew who the Felker children were because of seeing them around the neighborhood. The oldest was Lanse III, or Lann as he was known, who was then 15. Next and the oldest of the girls was Andrea, or Annie as she was called then, who was 11. Jennifer, or Jenny, was the middle daughter and she was 5. Last, but certainly not least, was Daphne, who was a mere 19 months old.

When I first started working for the Felkers, my main job was to care for Jenny and Daphne, as they were the ones that were still home all day. It was obvious that the two little girls were not especially happy to be spending more time with me than with their Mother. Janet was so good with her children, enduring terrible treatments while doing all she could to keep things as normal as possible. Not an easy thing to do when you're spending much of your day throwing up, sleeping, and watching your gorgeous long auburn hair start to fall out in clumps. Janet worried about how her family was handling her illness and whether or not they were OK. She was careful to not to let her children see her go through the worst of the side effects she experienced.

When her hair fell out, she accepted it with such grace, as she went to great pains to see that her head was always covered in some way in order not to scare the little ones. I became Janet's right hand, and we had many long chats while the little ones were sleeping and the older two children were at school. She shared with me the things that she wanted to accomplish so that her children would remember her as a strong, intelligent, caring, giving woman. She talked to me about how, she discovered that writing in a journal helped her deal with her life challenges. She started doing this after the death of her beloved parents in a tragic car accident in July of 1972, just months before her diagnosis. It had been devastating for her not to have her parents with her as she was going through the battle for her life. She said it was the journaling that helped keep her going.

About a year after I started working for the Felkers, tragedy hit the Ketchum family in February of 1974. My oldest brother, John S. Ketchum, Jr. died from brain injuries he received in a car accident at the age of 24. It was the first death of a young person in our wonderful community of Edgemoor. Truly, every parent's nightmare. It was quite the change for my family to be the one in need; however, it was incredible to receive the care and support that we all had come to know as the heartbeat of this special neighborhood. Janet was the first one to reach out to me to let me know that she was there for me. It was Janet who talked to me about my feelings and ways to navigate my grief. In 1974, there wasn't much written about grief or how to deal with it. Janet reminded me how keeping a journal helped her when her parents died. I hadn't appreciated the power of a daily journal practice until Janet explained what for her were the most important things to write in it every day. She said that no matter how good or how awful her day had been, she would find at least THREE things to be GRATEFUL for. She added that even if that was all I wrote in my journal I had to put those three things in EVERY DAY. She said that many times that was how she was able to get up every day and continue her fight to live! That was honestly one of the most profound moments of my life. It is the main reason that I have been able to get up every morning and LIVE my life the best way that I can, because if Janet could do that, well, then so could I.

As the next few months went by I was still helping Janet out and at the same time caring for my family as well. My parents were grieving the loss of their first born son! My other older brother, Jeff, was away at college. My much younger sister, Eleanor, was just 9 when our brother died; however, she was somehow better able to cope with his death than the rest of us. I was so wrapped up in caring for others that some of that time is still a bit fuzzy. During that time, Janet was my mentor and hero. That summer her oldest daughter, Annie, was diagnosed with an advanced case of Hodgkin's disease, and began treatment at NIH. Here Janet was dealing with her own and her daughter's cancer treatments, the death of her parents, giving all the energy she could muster to her family and yet she found the time to care for me, too. I feel incredibly blessed that she was such a big part of my life at that time. God only knows if she hadn't been, what choices I might have made.

In 1975, Janet received the good news that the experimental treatments were working well enough that she was in a form of remission. Annie had also survived her cancer treatments, and Janet had started to take on more of the things she wanted to do in caring for her family again. At this point we decided it was also time for me to get on with my life, as I was just about to turn 21. Before I stopped working for the Felkers on a daily basis, with Janet's encouragement I had decided to go back to college to get my Associate's Degree. After I graduated on the Dean's List I found a good job with AT&T, where I met my first husband in 1978. I did my best to stay in touch with Janet so I could keep tabs on her progress and hear how the kids were doing. She was always there for me when I reached out, which looking back wasn't as often as I could have or later wished I had.

Sometime in late April or early May of 1979, I called Janet to asked if I could come to see her. She seemed pleased that I wanted to visit. I was getting married in December, and I wanted to ask if Jenny, who was now 10, and Daphne, now 7, would be my flower girls. She was thrilled for me and said yes, of course they would love that! As we continued to chat, she told me that she had been doing research on a fairly new concept called Hospice, which was a different way to look at the dying process. She told me that she had started this research in order to better prepare herself, and in turn her family, if the time ever came. She had always been an avid reader, so her tireless research on this topic was no surprise to me. She talked about Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, whose work really spoke to her; she reached out to Dr. Kubler-Ross and they spoke a few times. Janet contacted a few hospices that were in the process of starting up, and later corresponded directly with Dame Cecily Saunders in England, the founder of the hospice concept and the first Hospice in England. Janet

developed a plan for her own end of life care based on her research and conversations with these incredible, trail-blazing women.

The last thing Janet and I talked about during that visit was the very sad news that she was no longer in remission. She explained that there really wasn't much more the doctors could do for her. Although she hadn't quite given up hope yet, she had come to terms with the possibility that she might soon die, and had begun advocating with her doctors to be at home with the end of life plan that she had researched and developed. Janet's research and advocacy for the right to die at home was the beginning of the plan for Montgomery Hospice.

My Mother called in early June of 1979 to say that Janet was at home and wanted to see me. My Mother warned me that Janet was in the process of dying. With sheer determination and loaded with all of the information she had shared with me just weeks earlier, she was able to get her doctors to agree to let her come home to end her life surrounded by her family, as comfortable as they could medically keep her, and with the dignity that she hoped for. As a reminder here, in 1979 doctors just didn't do dying at home. The concept of Hospice care was just too out there for most of the medical community, let alone the general population here in the US. The standard of care back then was basically that you would be admitted to the hospital, usually the ICU, where they would do their best to keep you comfortable until you died. The biggest issue for Janet about dying in the hospital was not being able to see or be with her children. That was long before the time of letting children be part of the process of dying, so they were kept out of the hospital, especially the ICU. Janet was only 44 at this point, and there was no way she was going to stay in the hospital without her family. She wanted to spend as much time with her children as she could.

After I received the call from my Mother I made arrangements to go visit Janet. When I arrived I found Janet up in her room looking peaceful and happy to see me. She asked me to sit by her on the bed. She took my hand in hers and told me that she needed my help again. Of course I would do ANYTHING for Janet; however, she was asking me to be her daughters' sounding board, listening ear, and confidant. I could only pray that I would keep my ears open to hear their words and find the best words to say to them. Janet asked me to spend as much time with her girls as I could. At that time Annie was 17, just graduated from high school, Jenny was 11, and Daphne was 7. The girls were Janet's top priority and she told me that there was no one else she would rather have with her children during this time of saying goodbye, than me. Their son Lann, who was 21 then, had been away at college in Vermont and was working that summer on Martha's Vineyard. I honestly was feeling a bit overwhelmed and in over my head with her requests. Even though I was 24 then, I still wasn't feeling as adult as Janet seemed to think I was. Of course now all these years later, I understand that she asked me to be there for Annie, Jenny and Daphne because I knew the girls well and loved them almost as if they were my own. We went on to talk about how they might react to this whole concept of her dying at home and how scary it could be for them. We discussed how they might be angry and how important it would be for them to talk about that, too. The confidence she had in me was rather mind blowing at the time.

After she felt comfortable that the girls would have me to support them, she surprised me by moving on to talking about my wedding and how Jenny & Daphne were so excited about being my flower girls and how much it meant to her that I wanted them to be a part of my wedding. I told Janet how much it meant to me as well. It was right there that it hit me that she would not be there to see me get married. It was all I could do to not completely fall apart at that moment. You might be asking yourself why was I trying to hold myself together when Janet was all about talking about your feelings and not keeping them inside to fester and grow? The simple answer is, I was 24 and trying to be the big brave adult that Janet seemed to think I was! Of course now as I look back, I know for sure it would have been so OK for me to fall apart in front of her. Another lesson learned from my dear, dear Janet.

Before we ended our visit, Janet asked me if I would hang around the house as much as possible in order to be there for the girls. At the end of that visit, we agreed that we had said all we needed to say. She told me that she loved me like a daughter/sister/dear friend, was forever grateful for all that I did for her children. She struggled through tears to tell me what I had come to mean to her. I told her that I had received much more than I gave, that knowing her had changed my life forever, and that I would be forever grateful for all that she and the family I had come to love had given me. We hugged one last time and I left her as I found her, looking so peaceful, hoping that by honoring her wishes I would have at least a little part in giving her the end of life she worked so hard to create.

During the next three days I spent most of my time at the Felker house. I basically went back to doing all the things I did in the beginning of Janet's journey, cooking, cleaning, laundry, any errands that Lanse needed help with, playing games with the girls, being there for them to talk or just hang out, and hopefully doing just what Janet asked me to do. On that last Saturday afternoon, Lanse told Lann to come home to Bethesda asap in order to say goodbye to his Mom. It was also that afternoon that I encouraged the girls to go be with their Mom as much as possible. On Sunday afternoon, June 17, 1979, I arrived to hear that the girls had had a good talk with Janet. It was so nice to know in my heart I had honored Janet's wishes in a way she knew I could. The atmosphere was a little lighter and I also learned that Lann was expected later that evening. I was sure that having her Lann come home was what Janet was waiting for. I knew that she needed to see her dear son one more time, and then she would be able to rest in peace. I had already said my goodbyes to Janet the day I came to see her weeks before; she said it was hard enough to say goodbye once and she couldn't and wouldn't do it over and over. Plus, she wanted me to remember her as she was that last visit and not on her death bed, which I, of course, honored.

Later Sunday I decided that the family needed to have the house to themselves in order to have private time with Janet. There had been quite a few people in and out of the house just trying to do whatever they could to help out as that was the way of our community. So, when it seemed that things were finally quiet I went to Lanse and told him I was leaving to let them have that family time, that I was going home to see my fiancée and that I would return in the morning. He knew that if he needed me all he had to do was call. It was then that Lanse gave me a big hug that would stay in my heart for a long long time. I knew in that moment that our relationship had come a long way from that day I started helping the family during this unbelievable journey and that he now thought of me as family.

On Monday, June 18, 1979 at 8:30am my phone rang at my apartment in Rockville and it was my Mother telling me that I had "better hurry the hell up if I wanted to be there before she died!" My Mother told me that she was already there and she would be sitting outside with Jenny and Daphne playing a game with them. She also told me that Lann had made it home to see his Mom late the night before and that the doctor was up with Janet and Lanse at that point. With that information I knew the time was near. I hopped out of bed, dressed and got in my 1973 VW Bug and drove down Rockville Pike/Wisconsin Ave. like a bat out of hell to get to the Felkers' house. As I pulled up to the house I found my Mother, as she said she would be, sitting at a table outside with Jenny and Daphne playing a game, they were all laughing and enjoying the nice June day. It was just a short time later that Lanse came downstairs to tell us it was over. Janet's wishes had come true right in front of my eyes. This amazing, strong, caring, compassionate, giving and loving woman had actually died while listening to the sound of her children outside her bedroom window laughing and playing. Now if that is not the most beautiful death ever, I don't know what is. Janet's hard work and determination had paid off. She died her way and left an incredible legacy by doing just that.

The funeral was another testament to her determination and well thought out plan. Her service was held at St. Alban's Episcopal Church located on the grounds of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. My special memory from that day was that she had arranged to have the Children's Choir sing one of her favorite songs, "Morning Has Broken," a traditional song popularized by Cat Stevens. I was rather amazed to hear a current popular song sung at such an important Episcopal Church. Another perfect Janet touch. I think she would have been pleased to learn that it was added to the Episcopal Church's official Hymnal in 1982. I am pretty sure she somehow had a hand in that from Heaven. Now every time we sing it in my current church, you can bet that my first thought is of Janet smiling down at me.

In the Fall of 1979, my Mother informed me that Janet had given her all the research that she had put together about Hospice and said to my Mother, "Go, do, create, and give others the chance to die as I am going to do, at home surrounded by the people who love them, as pain free and comfortable as possible, in peace and absolutely with dignity." At first my Mother wasn't sure she could pull it off, as she had spent her adult life as a wife and a mother to the four of us. Then something changed; I believe she began to realize that this was something that she could do not only to honor Janet but to give something back in remembrance of my brother John. I think she felt moved to see where she could take this idea of Hospice. So, she read all the information that Janet had given her and put a plan together. She asked if I would be willing to come on board with her and make it happen. Needless to say my answer was a resounding YES!!!! This is where the real work began in making Janet's dream of Hospice care available to anyone who wanted to die at home on their own

terms as she did. It started with my Mother reaching out to friends in the Edgemoor community that she knew might want to support the concept of Hospice and work to make it happen. She did her due diligence and learned that the best way to begin was to create a nonprofit status for the organization that she decided would be known as The Montgomery Hospice Society. Once she had accomplished that, she knew that she needed to gather a group of friends, professionals and a medical professional who all would support this dream that Janet Felker left for others to realize.

My Mother started recruiting the first Board of Directors and I am still researching who they all were. I do remember a few of them, William A. Wildhack, Robert Braden, Dr. Thomas Goodrich and The Reverend Marian Windel. It was Bob Braden who had office space in a building on Wisconsin Avenue, right across the street from St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish. It was in that very office that Bob Braden, Sally Ketchum and I set up in early 1980 in order to be a clearing house of information for the general public. With the help of Bob Braden, my Mother managed to raise enough money in order to get us a telephone with a listing for The Montgomery Hospice Society. I was actually the first volunteer/employee as the administrative assistant/secretary. I sat in that little office every Monday-Friday 8am-5pm in order to be the voice on the end of the phone to answer callers' questions as best I could. The first worry was, would the phone ever start ringing. In the meantime, Mom and I spent the days creating a cover letter to send out to anyone we could think of that would be willing to support our cause, drafting fund raising brochures, creating our first brochure announcing that we were here, making appointments to meet with organizations that might support us and whatever else it took to get this off the ground. Mom also started reaching out to other Hospice officials in other states to learn what they had to do to get up and running. Mom visited the New Haven Hospice in CT, the first Hospice in the US. When she heard about an organization called the National Hospice Organization, she researched everything she could before reaching out to their first Executive Director/President, a woman named Dr. Josefina Magno, who was located in the DC area. My mother and Dr. Magno became fast friends, and that friendship was invaluable in speeding up the process of getting to be an officially licensed Hospice.

In those first months in that little office along with my Mother I researched and read all I could find about Hospice care. My Mother worked the business side of things and I concentrated on the concept of the care a Hospice could provide. When the phone calls started coming in, they were mostly people looking for information about Hospice care and where they could actually get it in our area. The hardest part of talking with people was telling them that there actually wasn't an active Hospice in the area YET! Some of the phone calls were from people supporting our efforts. There were calls from medical professionals looking for employment as well. There was one particular phone call that came in after we had been open in the office for several months, and it is a call I will never ever forget.

It was a Friday afternoon and I was alone in the office when the phone rang. I answered it as I always did, "Montgomery Hospice Society, Liz speaking how can I help you today?" On the other end of the phone was the voice of an elderly gentleman who told me that he was caring for his wife at home; she had cancer and was dying. She seemed to be in a great deal of pain and he was feeling overwhelmed. His voice was beginning to shake and my heart was aching for him. I asked him if his wife had a local doctor that was overseeing her care. He told me she did but when he called her doctor's office he was told her doctor was out of town and that she would have to wait until Monday to speak to him. He asked to speak to the doctor on call, but the on-call doctor said that since he didn't know his wife and she wasn't his patient there was nothing he could do for her. His advice to this sweet gentleman was to take her to an ER. He told me that his wife wouldn't go, she would not die in the hospital. At this point he was basically begging me to help his wife in any way that I could.

I had already told him that we were not licensed to offer medical care, that we were just a clearinghouse for information, but we were working tirelessly to make this Hospice a reality. He sounded so lost, scared, sad, upset and so worried that he would fail his wife's wishes to die at home. At this point I asked for his phone number so that I could make a few phone calls to see if there was anyone that would be able to help his wife. I made no promises and asked him to give me about 30 minutes to get back to him whether or not I could help him. He seemed to calm down a bit even though I reminded him I wasn't guaranteeing him anything but a call back. Before I ended the call with him I made him promise that he would go sit with his wife until I called him back. So I ended that call and immediately called my Mother, as she was the Executive Director! She told me to call Dr. Tom Goodrich, who was actually our Medical Director. I was very nervous about calling him because I didn't know him that well and I didn't want him to think I was bothering him. I actually asked my Mom

to call him but she said no, I had to call because I was the one who had been talking to this gentleman and I would be able to give him the most information.

My next call was to Dr. Goodrich's office. When the call was answered I told the person who answered who I was and that I needed to speak to Dr. Goodrich about a woman in the last stages of dying who needed help. To my surprise and relief, Dr. Goodrich came on the phone immediately and asked me to fill him in. After I had told him all I knew, he asked me for the gentleman's name and phone number and he told me he would take it from there. He thanked me for all I had done to help this man and his wife and said that I should feel good about reaching out and asking for help for them. So, I said goodbye to Dr. Goodrich, called my Mom and filled her in that Dr. Goodrich was going to call the gentleman to see what he could do. I left the office that Friday afternoon for the first time feeling like I had made a difference and that Janet would be proud of me that I had taken the time to listen to this man and give the compassion and care he deserved.

I thought about that couple many times over the weekend and hoped that Dr. Goodrich was able to help them in some way. It wasn't until Monday that I learned what had transpired. Dr. Goodrich called the Hospice office Monday morning to let me know that he went to their house and saw to it that this woman was able to die at home, pain free, with her husband by her side, holding her hand and with the dignity of dying in her own way. I cannot begin to tell you what hearing that from Dr. Goodrich did for me. Knowing that I had something to do with making it possible for this woman to die the way she wanted to without pain, in the comfort of their home, her husband by her side and peacefully leaving this world, well that's when I knew this was my calling and we were on our way to making Janet's vision a reality.

The Montgomery Hospice Society stayed in that little office on Wisconsin Ave. until June of 1980, after my Mom had approached the vestry and the new Rector, the Reverend Duane S. Alvord, of St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish, in May of 1980 to seek approval to occupy four unused areas in the basement of the church. The Montgomery Hospice Society officially moved into our new offices in June of 1980. It was in those offices that they spent the next 10 years creating the amazing Montgomery Hospice Society. It was in those early days that my Mom was the Administrative Director, and I was the secretary. Mom was also the driving force behind the acquisition of the required Certificate of Need from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in January of 1981. My brother, Jeff Ketchum, sent me a copy of an article from the Washington Post that documents how they were first denied and then on January 21, 1981 they reversed their decision and granted them their certificate. This was a huge win for the Montgomery Hospice Society and my Mother.

My Mother continued her role as Administrative Director of The Montgomery Hospice Society until after the Medicare Hospice Benefit was made permanent and they received certification to become a Medicare hospice provider and the first licensed hospice in Maryland. It was my Mother that hired the first staff members, nurses, social worker, bereavement coordinator, and a pastoral care coordinator. I am not 100% sure who the other employees were, but I do know that the Reverend Marian Wendell served as the first Chaplain. Mom also worked tirelessly to raise money, arrange benefit programs, and oversee all the employees that she had personally hired from day one. It was in December of 1980 that I in fact left Maryland with my first husband to move to Southern New Hampshire for a job he was offered with Wang Labs. At that time it was one of the hardest things I had to do to leave my family and a job I loved. However, it was my time with Montgomery Hospice Society that I went on to spend a good deal of my adult life volunteering and then working with hospices. I helped create the first Hospice in the Southern New Hampshire area, now known as Home, Health & Hospice in 1993. I also did their first volunteer training that I based on my caring for Janet. I also spent a few years as a volunteer for them. In April of 2006 I became the Volunteer Coordinator for Beacon Hospice in Nashua, NH. I stayed with that position until February of 2012, after Amedisys, a nationwide Home Health Agency, purchased the company which was my sign to move on. Actually while I was working for Beacon Hospice I was involved with the creation of a very special program for Alzheimer's and Dementia patients that won a few awards. As you can see I've always kept Hospice work in my heart.

It was after my Mother was confident that Montgomery Hospice Society was here to stay and that she had done all she could do to make that happen that she and my father, John S. Ketchum, retired to Williamsburg, VA in the winter of 1987. There is a wonderful article attached from St. John's Church Newsletter called "Saint John's At The Crossroads", dated October 29, 1990, Titled "Farewell To Montgomery Hospice Society". It is this wonderful tribute to my Mom and all that was done to make the Hospice come to life. My Mother was very

proud of how with help she was able to make Janet Felker's dream, vision and legacy a reality. Without the foundation that Janet left my Mother, I truly do not believe that the Montgomery Hospice would be the incredible caring, compassionate and special Hospice that it is today.

In May of 2008 this very hospice cared for my sister-in-law, Elizabeth (Leisa) Foran Ketchum, as she lost her 2-year battle with liver cancer at their home in Bethesda, MD. It warmed my Mother's heart to know that what she helped create, what we helped create, provided the care that made it possible for Leisa to be with her family and die with dignity just as Janet did. Sadly, just 3 months later the Ketchum family suffered two more tragedies with the loss of my only child, my daughter, Joana Rachael Dean at the age of 26 from a missed Pulmonary Embolism DVT on August 6, 2008 and just 10 days later on August 16, 2008 our beloved Mother, Sarah (Sally) Amanda Ketchum died from complications of COPD, Emphysema, and stroke. To be honest with you, I firmly believe that my incredible, amazing, trail blazing, wonderful Mother died from a broken heart. Losing her daughter-in-law and granddaughter so early and close together was all her heart could take. However, I believe they are all watching over us and still guiding those of us who were left behind.

There is one other person I want to mention that was not only cared for by Montgomery Hospice, but actually ended his days at Casey House on December 6, 2017. That person was Lansing Raymond Felker, Jr., Janet Felker's husband. I think we could call that a full circle moment. His funeral, like Janet's, was held at St. Alban's Episcopal Church. I was honored to be able to attend Lann's service and be there to say my good-byes. At the reception I reconnected with the Felker children for the first time in way too many years. In my conversations with Lann, Annie, Jenny and Daphne, I was surprised to learn that they did not know that it was because of their amazing Mother that Montgomery Hospice was founded. That inspired me to tell the story that you have just read. The entire Felker family have been invaluable in helping me tell this story. However, sadly, in May of 2020 Andrea (forever Annie to me) Felker Mackey passed away at home in Cashmere, WA. I must add that Annie and I had the opportunity to have several phone conversations in the few years prior to her death. I am so happy that in those conversations I was able to share this story with her and her input was also of great help to me.

Janet Ruth Summers Felker is the reason there is a Montgomery Hospice today, and the reason I am the person I am today! It is because of that time I spent almost 50 years ago with Janet and her family that I have been able to overcome some real hard life challenges, including the death of my only child, by finding those three blessing everyday to be grateful for. One of the biggest blessings that came into my life and has stood by my side for the last 29 years is my incredible second husband Peter Wolczko. He is my biggest champion and has encouraged me to share my story of Janet with the world. There is no doubt that without the blessing of Janet Felker and My Mom in my life I never would have been able to live my life with the courage, strength, compassion, hope, full of joy, love and too many blessings to count! Thank you, Janet and Mom for giving me that foundation and giving the world the amazing gift of The Montgomery Hospice that you helped create.

With Thanks to the following for all their time and information that was gratefully appreciated and was so invaluable in making this writing a reality.

The Felker Family members that included:

Barbara Allen Felker, (Lansing R. Felker Jr.'s wife of 35 years)

Lansing (Lann) R. Felker, III, Jennifer (Jenny) Grace Carr, Daphne Elizabeth Larkin and

Andrea (Annie) Felker Mackey

Cathy O'Donnell, Archivist for St. John's Episcopal Church Norwood Parish, Chevy Chase, MD

Jeffrey M. Ketchum

Lovingly and Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth (Liz) Ketchum Wolczko

October 2021

Attachments