Losing My Mom
A love story of sorts

By Mable Hastings

On November 18, my Mom Clarissa Davis, in her 90th year departed from this world, leaving my sib-
lings and me behind. One minute she was there and the next, she was forever gone.

In the past week I have reflected a lot on this entire experience and thought I’d write about it, as it might help some one else who has gone through or who will one day go through this painful ex-
perience. From birth through my child-
hood years, my Mom was my caregiver, making sure I was fed, clothed, that my health needs were met and that I got an education.

I remember those years as my believ-
ing firmly that this was her calling in life – to take care of me, and my seven siblings to the best of her ability. We were poor and had little, but somehow she got us through to adulthood, a little bent and bruised maybe, but still in tact. When I was older and had children, my Mom became a caregiver to them; babysitting whenever called upon. She taught my kids so much and it took no time at all before they adored her and she, them. She was there for birthdays, school plays, graduations, to listen with a sympathetic ear when there were rough patches, and to give a word or two of advice. I realize that this was true for each of my siblings and their children as well.

As Mom grew older, her needs began to surface. Her body tired and some-
times failing, she began to deteriorate physically. She went from being active and impolitic in our lives to needing us to be more active and implicat in hers. Roles reversed and we became the caregivers.

Eventually, a few months ago however, while in the hospital she had an experience that she spoke about often. She said that dur-
ing the time when she was not expected to pull through a severe heart issue, she had experienced what it might be like to leave her body and that it was like a warm light that was not scary at all. She said that it was the gathering of us, her children that brought her back from that day forward she said she was no longer afraid to die.

Many things happened in the last month of her life, but I began to make more friends at the Manoir and talked to people more than she had. She got to be in the community and even to de-
veloped a love for “her girls” that she re-
f erred to as angels.

She wanted my brother who lives in Alberta to visit and he did in September spending a wonderful ten days with her and the family making memories, tak-
ing photos and having fun. Mom would ask my sister and me to sing to her and she even got up one afternoon taking my sister’s hands to dance.

Friends she had not seen for a long time stopped by in the weeks before her death. We took her out and she spent time at places she’d missed going to in her hometown since she’d moved in. Like the Kelli House. Little did we know, Mom was saying her goodbyes. Did she know? I ask myself this often and I am not sure that she was con-
scious of it, but that is what was happen-
ing. She was happy, she looked great and she seemed to be feeling better.

On that November morning, she got up and dressed for breakfast. She put on her jewellery and did her hair. She went down and ate while visiting with all she met. It was a day like any other, or so it seemed. Returning home from the market, she put on her music and started to knit yet an-
other mitten. Shortly thereafter, with a smile on her beautiful face, Mom suf-
fered a cardiac trauma and died quickly surrounded by her angels at the Manoir. What ensued could be described as a beautiful farewell. The siblings all gathered quickly in her room with grandchildren coming in from local towns, as well as Montreal and Sher-
brooke. Surrounding her bed, holding her hands, we shared prayers and music and spent hours saying our goodbyes. Her soft white hair, her loving hands and her quiet heart now resting, she left us, just like that and we were, for the first time, without her.

Her funeral was a true celebration of family, words, music and friends. Mom may have had the means of a pauper, but she was sent off like a queen from the opening song to the ray of sunshine bursting through the clouds at the gravesite. Just like her, it came and warmed our hearts and bodies and then disappeared somewhere beyond our sight.

No lessons here or lectures to offer – only the reminder that for some time I had, I would have stayed for sup-
ner that Monday that I visited prior to her death like she asked me to. Some-
times life and all its priorities gain some real perspective when you long for a fa-
miliar hand to hold and the face of someone who loved you uncondition-
ally, only to know that you won’t get a second chance.

Letter

DEAR EDITOR:

Permit me to comment on a remark made by the Chairman of the Eastern Townships School Board, Mike Murray, in the Dec. 7 article ‘Bill proposes to abolish school board elections.’

In the article it states “A school board is still suffering from lack of understanding how public education works.”

The Minister understands very well. Let’s analyze.

In the Dec. 4, Education Minister François Blais tabled parent-friendly Bill 86, which scraps province-wide school elections, and gives more school decision-making power to par-
tens, teachers, principals and support staff.

Moreover, as promised, the bill has granted “formal rights” that should please the English-speaking commu-
nity, in particular, because they satisfy constitutionality-minority-language educa-
tion rights. This comes in the form of an option for parents to have elections for the new councils’ community rep.

Initial reaction to the bill has been mixed. Predictably, the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA), is against it. It claims it’s un-
constitutional, and is planning to go to the Supreme Court of Canada, which, so far, has given the Quebec Central Parents’ Committees (CPC) and French principals’ association are on board.

Furthermore, consider the CTQM Montreal poll, which asked on Dec. 4: ‘Are school boards important to you?’ And 1195 voters, the an-
swer on Saturday Dec. 5 at 5:27 p.m. was ‘No - 69 per cent.’

No question, the Bill will need some fine-tuning. Besides the government hearings, which will, undoubtedly, feature various groups, the CPCs of all school boards will meet to discuss the amendments and make recommenda-
tions.

Meanwhile, the president of the QESBA, and former-
long-time president, and present executive director of the QESBA, Marc-
us Tabachnick, were featured in an op-ed and article, respectively, in the Dec. 3 edition of the Montreal Gazette.

Both M. Tabachnick and Tabachnick have taken the wrong approach in crit-
icizing a majority government, led by Premier Couillard, who promised in January, to make education a priority in 2015 by revamping the system aimed at student success.

Lastly, the QESBA, which is always looking for relevance, is now for the first time in its 17-year history, claim-
ing the organization is linked to ‘stu-
dent success.’ That is not so.

The reason there is to be a fine-tuning of the ‘valued clients’ - school boards and com-
misioners. That’s all.

In the past year, QESBA was to take care of its “valued clients” - school boards and com-
misioners. That’s all.

The reason there is to be a fine-tuning of the ‘valued clients’ - school boards and com-
misioners. That’s all.

In the past year, QESBA was to take care of its “valued clients” - school boards and com-
misioners. That’s all.