

In every parent's heart rests a precious secret. That secret resides there proudly, like a long lost treasure, and it gives every parent a special definition. That secret gives them a spring in their step, a special warmth in their soul and grants them a very special, unique glory.

That secret, of course, is their children. And those children instantly become a secret, we soon discover, that can't wait to be shared again and again-and yet again- with nearly everyone, especially with folks like all of you who have been kind enough to share your own time by honoring one such glorious child in Katie, who has too soon passed from our way.

Bambi and Jeffrey and Rod know well the joy of having children but had the added blessing of knowing an extraordinary one. Katelyn Joy Derstine was given to them by some divine spirit, as is every child to every parent, and allowed them and those she touched a flicker of experiencing what we call God's grace. If every child is a miracle, then some of them like Katelyn show us why miracles often come gift-wrapped in a smile.

Katelyn had a presence that was infectious. She was bold, vibrant and, well, not always exactly quiet. The fruit never falls far from the tree, Bambi. But she could equally bring fresh air to the room and gaiety to the fog. Meet her for a moment, and one felt obliged to smile; meet her for a day, and one felt obliged to cheer. Some kids have a knack for turning the world upsidedown, usually for the better, and Katelyn stood amongst them. Her symbolic nexus to nature was the butterfly. Maybe we should have guessed. There are stages to a butterfly, all spectacular in their own right, just as there were maturing stages to katelyn. Let your imagination wander for an Alice-in-Wonderland second. Is there anyone here who could not see Katelyn gently, eagerly transforming from small-child caterpillar to fully-winged adult butterfly? In the blink of an eye, before we awaken, she was magically migrating to the sky and flirting with the stars. So it must be, always, in the nature of things.

In every parent's heart the secret that we hold most dear-our children-is the secret also that we fear the most. We know that no secret lasts forever, even our most precious one. We know well that no Butterfly can flap even its golden wings forever. But before we leave today, from this special place, a certain secret will endure. A certain secret will prevail. This garden will serve as a reminder that Katelyn will long flap her wings, as long as the butterfly flaps its wings, and beyond.

And that's a good thing, my friends.