



## Anna Reeves' Heart Remains In Hawaii

By Evelyn Beck

Seventy years after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the memories of that day remain vivid for parishioner Anna Reeves.

A native of Maui, Hawaii, five-year-old Anna had traveled to Oahu with her grandmother, who had an appointment with a heart specialist. Anna remembers waking up that Sunday morning to the first warning: dogs all over the island “howling like wolves” in response to the vibrations of the approaching Japanese planes. Anna and her grandmother ran outside. “Everybody was running every which way,” said Anna. “We saw the airplanes in the sky, so close we could see the pilots.” As she and her grandmother sought a place to hide, a bicyclist ran into Anna, leaving a scar she still carries. “My grandmother tore her dress to wrap me up. We went into the ditch and stayed there a long time. We could hear the bombing at Pearl Harbor.”

The two of them ended up staying on Oahu for six weeks until travel was declared safe. But the fear of another attack caused the school to furnish gas masks that the children carried like backpacks, with daily drills where they ran outdoors, jumped in a ditch, and made ready to don their masks. And because so much of the food in Hawaii had been imported, families had to learn to grow their own food and raise chickens and pigs. They did without rice, a staple that Anna compares to bread and potatoes in the South. And because of the shortage of meat, canned Spam became a regular part of their diet, to the extent that Hawaiians today still have a great fondness for the food and consume more than the residents of any other state.

“We became survivors” is how Anna refers to life in Hawaii after Pearl Harbor. It

could also refer to her own life. She never knew her father, never even saw a photo of him, and has had little contact with her mother. Her parents knew each other just a few months when her father died



Anna Reeves

on his way to visit from another island, and Anna’s mother left her with grandparents when the child was two. When Anna was 11, her grandmother died, and her grandfather died 11 days later—“from heartbreak,” says Anna, who then went to live with an aunt. One fixed presence in her life was Catholic school, which she attended for 12 years, and church. In fact, her devout grandmother always felt that missing Mass on the Sunday that Pearl Harbor was bombed was a message. “She always said that God was punishing us for not going to church,” said Anna.

Hawaii’s laid-back barefoot culture extended to Sunday services. Though hats were required for Mass, shoes were not. Anna remembers the sight of front porches full of shoes and her aunt’s comment that only the Pope could wear shoes in her house. Shoes were a must for school, though, and the cause of many a blister on Anna’s feet.

Anna met her husband, Dennis, when he was stationed with the Navy in Pearl Harbor

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## Illness Gives A New Perspective

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and came by the fast-food restaurant where she worked for a hamburger. She had been training to become an airline stewardess for Hawaiian Airlines, but love changed her plans. The couple left Hawaii, got a special dispensation from the bishop because of their different faiths, and were married by a priest in Chester, with the priest's housekeeper and a man doing yard work serving as witnesses. Dennis, who is retired from Pepsi, and Anna have two sons, Michael and Randy, and three grandchildren, Morgan, Bart, and Grant.

The move to the mainland proved difficult for Anna. She'd arrived with trepidation, wondering how the segregated South would treat a woman who was half white, half Hawaiian, and a Catholic to boot. "My aunt didn't want me to leave," Anna said. "She asked 'Where will you fit in?' And people had never seen anybody from 'across the water.' But everybody treated me so good." Still, homesickness lingered. "I hated South Carolina," said Anna. "It took me a long time to like it. Now, South Carolina is home, but my heart is in Hawaii." She still visits every other year, and her family knows that when she dies, Anna's ashes are to be sent back to Maui.

Now retired, Anna worked 25 years for the Singer sewing machine plant (later Ryobi) as a quality control inspector and in the insurance and personnel departments. She also volunteered for many years for Meals on Wheels and the Anderson Free Clinic, where she filled prescriptions. At St. Joseph's, she's an usher and a member of the Bereavement Committee. In her spare time, she reads and is "a nut about football."

A recent diagnosis of breast cancer, followed by surgery and radiation, hasn't dampened Anna's spirit. In fact, she views it as a kind of blessing. "What used to matter doesn't matter

anymore," she said. "For example, I was obsessed with my home. I wanted to have the cleanest house. But nowadays, I've got a new perspective. I've readjusted my priorities. If I want to read or go for a drive, that's more important than the things that 'had' to be done."



### Knights of Columbus Coat Drive

The Knights of Columbus, Council 8295 in Anderson, held their Annual Coat Drive during the first two weeks of November. Over 175 coats were collected and donated to the Anderson Clean Start Program by Frank Rothmann and Don Bader of the Knights. From left are Rothmann; Norene Smith, Clean Start director; Doris Reed, a volunteer at the center who will be distributing the coats to those in need; and Bader. Clean Start is located at 219 Townsend Street in Anderson.

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