

CAROL ANN WOODS

March 22, 1952 – March 3, 2023



“An Inn By a Mountain Lake”

*“You will call, and I will answer you.
You will long for the work of your hands” (Job 14:15)*

*“Do not be amazed ... for the hour is coming
in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice
and come out ... to a resurrection of life ...” (John 5:28, 29)*

Carol Woods was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, on Saturday, March 22, 1952, the daughter of Maurice and Virginia Mailhot. Her parents and brother Michael predecease her. With her husband Ed came daughters and a son, the families of Brenda Woods; Rebekah Barker, and her husband Scott; Joel Woods, and his wife Viktoriya; and Loree DeVinney, and her husband, Brian. Carol's grandchildren are Abigail, Colin, Nolan, Brayden, and Harper.

Growing up as a young child, Carol wanted to marry someone who loved God. Little did she know back then she would marry a man who not only loved God, but loved her down to the last breath of her life. She died peacefully at the Suncoast Hospice Center on Friday, March 3, 2023, after an eight-year battle with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease).

Ed and Carol Woods were married on May 14, 1971, in Lowell, MA – Their 52nd anniversary was coming up this May.

They were given the Catholic Jerusalem Bible at their wedding as a gift. Some years later, they started reading that Bible together. Ed's sister Cyndy Woods, who became one of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1975, knew we loved reading the Bible and encouraged us to have someone help us learn the Bible's message. The Jerusalem Bible at Matthew 6:10 really impressed us: "*your kingdom come, your will be done on earth.*" As "hippies," we loved the earth. The Bible's hope of a peaceful new world delighted us.

One Saturday in March 1976, Carol told Ed, "*I don't know about you, but I am going to the Kingdom Hall for us to have a Bible study.*" The next day, she showed up at the Kingdom Hall in Nashua, NH. As the meeting was underway, someone knocked at the front door... When the attendant answered, Carol said, "*My husband and I would like someone to study the Bible with us!*" The brother invited her into the back lobby and said, "*OK! Don't go away. I will be right back.*" That next night, Carol and Ed started their Bible study program with the Bible study

aid, "The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life." Six months later, they were both baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses on September 25, 1976, at the Natick Massachusetts Assembly Hall.

Over their forty-six years as Jehovah's Witnesses, Ed and Carol built strong bonds of love and friendship in the congregations of Nashua, NH; Fishkill, NY; Essex Jct., VT; Monmouth, ME; Kittery, ME; Dover, NH; Tarboro NC; and FINALLY settled down these past twenty years in East Clearwater, FL.

Carol loved people and regularly engaged in the preaching work. She attended the Pioneer Service School in both Maine and Florida. Carol helped organize the vacation trips to West Virginia, Ohio, and Nebraska, where the family volunteered in the ministry in what is called "Seldom Worked Territory." They always included family recreation as part of their trip. As a family, they often visited Bethel. One year, they helped with blueberry harvesting and corn husking at Wallkill, NY. In Clearwater, Ed and Carol were on the Regional Building Committee (RBC). They worked in the Safety and First Aid departments during Kingdom Hall projects.

Aside from Carol's beautiful Christian qualities, four words wrap up the description of her personality – **smiles, hugs, singing, and dancing**. Carol's smile was spontaneous and contagious. Her hugs? They were an unhypocritical, natural way she expressed her love for others. And singing? Always. It was common that when a group was driving in a car, and certain catchwords came up in a conversation, Carol would spontaneously burst into a related song. She knew so many by heart. All family members and friends would join for the fun and laugh along. This made for enjoyable trips and joyful field service.

And how she loved to dance. At weddings and other gatherings, it was not unusual for friends to say, "*Carol help us! Get up here and get us going*". Of course, Ed would dutifully join her in the couple's dances but would scurry back to his seat as soon as the "line dances" started.

But something started to slow Carol down. She began showing signs of physical and mental weakness around 2014. After numerous hospital stays and rehabs, the decline continued. Then in 2018, she was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. ALS is a rare neurological disease that affects motor neurons—those nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control voluntary muscle movement. Scientists have yet to find a cure. Thus, ALS is always fatal. But that couldn't stop Carol. She was a fighter who loved life and wanted to live to see the end of wickedness on earth. It was her hope to SEE earth-shattering events. Perhaps, just perhaps, Jehovah God MIGHT allow her to move through his great day and WALK right into the new world, the earthly Paradise he promises to bring about, hand-in-hand with Ed.

Two things, in particular, Carol said during her years with ALS. Together, they highlight the depth of her love for Jehovah and her husband. Some months before entering the hospital and being put on a tracheostomy, she looked Ed right into his eyes and said, *"I want you to know: I love Jehovah more than I love you."* Some two years later, when she could still speak through her tracheostomy, she told Ed, *"I want you to know: I love you more than I love me."* These statements align with her feelings about Mark 12:28-31, which states, *"One of the scribes who had come up and heard them disputing, knowing that he had answered them in a fine way, asked him: 'Which commandment is first of all?' Jesus answered: 'The first is, 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, and you must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.' The second is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.'"* Her closest neighbor was her Eddie Lou (as she would lovingly call him).

One of Carol's favorite scriptures reveals both her humility and the profound respect she had for Jehovah's Godship. (Job 38:3, 4) *"Brace yourself, please, like a man; I will question you,*

and you inform me. Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell me if you think you understand." She had a keen conscience for doing what was right and worked to avoid offending Jehovah.

Carol loved everyone, could never hold a grudge, and was an outstanding forgiver. These were so important to the success of her long-lasting marriage. Ed, you see, had been known to do some crazy things in life. Carol always stayed loyal, close by his side.

During the declining years of her health, Carol and Ed began nurturing a specific future hope. This hope did something for them like it did for a future hope given to the prophet Jeremiah. While Jeremiah was a captive near Babylon, Jehovah instructed him to purchase a field about 500 miles away in Anathoth. Why did Jehovah ask Jeremiah to buy a field in Anathoth when he was captive? Because Jehovah was reinforcing Jeremiah's faith that one day in the future, after his death, a deliverance from Babylon and the resulting future would occur there. Jehovah gave Jeremiah something specific to think about. This transaction would give Jeremiah a reason to imagine a time of peace and prosperity when buying and selling would again occur for God's people. Ed and Carol had their Anathoth-like hope: Not for a field to purchase, but a very strong hope to live together on a Paradise Earth. And in that new world ahead, to be stewards of an Inn By a Mountain Lake. The Inn would be a two-story building with guest rooms on the 2nd floor. The first floor would have dining and community rooms and an extensive library with exhibits.

At this Inn By a Mountain Lake, brothers, sisters, and friends from around the world could visit and stay a while for upbuilding companionship. They'd enjoy the beautiful surroundings of Jehovah's creation.

When this hope was related to our friends, some said they wanted to have a share in being part of this "Innly Hope." They would live nearby and plant vineyards and orchards, raise horses and

sheep, manage vegetable farms and gardens, or cultivate fields of grain. These efforts could enhance the joy of the guests coming from around the world to repose and enjoy their time at the Inn By a Mountain Lake. Ed and Carol (whose name means song of joy) could even take the lead in wholesome singing and dancing. All thanks go to Jehovah for the wonderful gift of life and the resurrection that allows this hope.

The possibility of this hope could be in fulfillment of (Isaiah 65:21-23): *"And they will certainly build houses [and Inns – insert by Ed] and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat [their] fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full. They will not toil for nothing, nor will they bring to birth for disturbance; because they are the offspring made up of the blessed ones of Jehovah, and their descendants with them."*

Ed made sure to talk often about that Inn to Carol. That is the hope Ed will keep. It strengthens his faith in Jehovah's promises and builds determination to live now in a way to have the assurance of being there in the future with Carol at the Inn By a Mountain Lake.

There is another aspect of this hope that Ed holds: It involves each of you who reads this Life and Hope story about Carol. It is the hope that you will be there with us in that new world. All of us could be together awaiting Carol's resurrection and the resurrection of all our loved ones. We could spend time together at the Inn By a Mountain Lake, with Ed and Carol Woods as your hosts.

We'll have to patiently wait and see what Jehovah has in store for all of us. But in the meantime, please make this your goal: To learn more about this true Kingdom hope and the new world ahead, to act in faith, and build your confidence of being there, too.

Expressions of Appreciation from Ed

*Though difficult in many ways, the last five years of Carol's bed-bound condition have been some of the **best of my entire life**. My success was way beyond any personal power I could muster up. I am grateful for Jehovah God's friendship, loyal love, and comfort. He gave me the strength I needed. Carol and I remained steadfast in our spiritual routine. This bonded our love together.*

My sister was always by our side and was unselfish with her time and energy. The continued sacrifices of long-time friends, Carol's "Apostle John," proved a strengthening aid throughout the ordeal. Added encouragement from all the other friends and family helped us endure. The constant prayers for us – worked!

Crucial to our life during these years were the various organizations that gave Carol and me the needed medical and personal help. Of these, special gratitude goes to those many nurses from the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) who became part of our family. The professional care and love they gave were of utmost importance. It allowed me time to be Carol's husband and spiritual head, NOT JUST her advocate and caregiver. The Disability Achievement Center in Largo gave us monthly support and supplies even before Carol's diagnosis. Also, appreciation goes to the staff of the ALS Association Florida for their dedication and service in supporting both Persons Living with ALS (pALS) and caregivers like me. Finally, thank you, Suncoast Hospice Center and the "Yellow Team" for your guidance, kindness, and compassionate care for Carol over these years and at the end.

May we all know that if a cure for ALS is not found before Armageddon, Jehovah knows the cause of ALS, and for that matter, of all diseases and infirmities. After Armageddon, Jesus will apply the benefits of his ransom and say to those sleeping in death like Carol, "Get up. Walk. Run. Smile. Hug, sing and dance". We will all be delighted to see that day. It's "just around the corner."

Thank you. I love you all.
Your brother, Ed ("Mr Ed") Woods