

Ramona Martin's Death

Commentary for August 23, 2023 — "The Sleep of Death" (Psalm 13:3)

Ramona Martin died Tuesday, August 22, 2023. She was 88 years old and worked until January 2023. She took over as President of ASK upon the death of Dr. Ernest L. Martin in January 2002.

Upon Dr. Martin's death Ramona phoned me and asked me to work with ASK as a contract worker. Ernest told Ramona before he died that I would know what to do. That began my working relationship with Ramona, as we spoke several times a week in the early months of our collaboration. She was under a great deal of pressure, and alone. I went to Portland from Southern California several times, but she remained strong.

Ramona and I got along very well. Ramona handled the office duties, with many of her own systems and reasons for doing things, usually as Ernest wanted them done. Her systems worked.

Anyone who phoned found someone who would try to give as much time to listen to your problems as possible. I know for a fact that more than a few times she spent 2+ hours on the phone with individuals. She was not a counselor, but she was a great listener. The problems of other people were very important to her, and she had the wisdom to give her time, even when it cut into her personal time. And she prayed.

Some people forgot that ASK is in the Pacific time zone. At times she received phone calls VERY early in the morning from the east coast. This was more problematic when she moved to an apartment with an extra bedroom that was her home-office. She operated out of that "sanctuary" of home/office for 14 years.

After my wife Robin and I moved to Beaverton, Oregon, a western suburb of Portland, Ramona and I laughed a lot as we would go over the ASK mail twice a week, review the news of the world, and reminisce. She told stories about the Seventh Day Adventists, her family background, her foster child experiences growing up, and later adoption into a stable SDA family. I reminisced about the Worldwide Church of God people and experiences, most of which Ramona did not know.

We would talk about such matters at end of each month as we "stuffed envelopes" for those we send snail mail versions of the ASK Newsletters and Articles each month.

Ramona had a great sense of humor and she laughed at my jokes, and then added to the humor with her own stories and experiences. Ramona traveled widely even before she married Ernest Martin. They also traveled after they were married. They took trips to Israel when Ernest met with scholars, particularly Professor Benjamin Mazar and his family members, at least two of whom were publicly known archaeologists in their own right.

Ramona also experienced long-term physical pain. For years, more acutely after Ernest died, she had an increasingly painful disk problem. After a decade of constant pain, she was persuaded to seek updated medical advice and she decided to take a chance on surgical techniques developed since her increasingly painful back problems began. She decided to have an operation on her back.

After her surgery and a hard recovery, she was grateful to experience a 90-95% reduction (her own estimate) in her back pain, a relief that lasted for the remainder of her life. Yes, she sympathized with others who endured chronic physical pain for much of their lives.

I know many of you have your own stories about how Ramona listened to them. Thank you for every one of your encouraging written notes and prayers on Ramona's behalf. I read each one to her.

Ramona is now in **"the sleep of death"** as the Psalmist (likely King David himself) who wrote and likely sang in Psalm 13:

"[To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.]

**How long will you forget me,
O YHWH? for ever** [Hebrew, *olam*, the age]?

how long will You hide Your face from me?

**How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
having sorrow in my heart daily?**

How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

**Consider and hear me, O YHWH my God:
lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep **THE SLEEP OF DEATH**;**

**Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him;
and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.**

**But I have trusted in Your mercy;
my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.**

**I will SING unto YHWH,
because He has dealt bountifully with me."**

**• Psalm 13:1-6, KJV and
most modern translations**

I will miss Ramona — until I see her again, rising with many of us in the clouds to meet and be with the returning Christ Jesus to help reconcile all creation to God.

Death is the end of life ... but only until God our Father brings you back to life, which He shall do for all of us. Then we all **"will sing unto YHWH."** Eventually, all humanity will do likewise.

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