Barbara Bush:

A Tribute to America’s Most Genuine First Lady, Composed with the Language of Flowers

By Contributing Writer Diane Weisbeck, 2-9-15

Cover Story

Ruth Loiseau spent over 30 years as an SBA to the White House. In those years of designing and creating breathtaking floral centerpieces and decorations for State Dinners and lavish special events, Ruth was privileged to become acquainted with the first families.

Remembering her days in the White House when Barbara Bush was First Lady, Ruth fondly recalls a truly caring, sincere and lovely person. A woman who wasn’t afraid to be herself and whom almost instinctively knew if a person was troubled and in need of help, Ruth’s admiration and regard for the Bushes is the basis for this loving tribute, crafted, appropriately, in the language of flowers.



*Allspice is for Compassion*:

Barbra Bush was quoted as saying, “Never lose sight of the fact that the most important yardstick of your success will be how you treat other people - your family, friends, and coworkers, and even strangers you meet along the way.”

*Rosemary is for Remembrance*:

Gardening and conservation are great joys of Barbara Bush. Her mother was Conservation Chairman of the Garden Club of America and raised earthworms in the basement of their home in Rye, New York, so she could cultivate compost for the garden. Barbara has carried those memories of the love of horticulture and the importance of conservation throughout her life. “Ganny’s Garden,” a tribute in flowers and trees was created in Kennebunkport, Maine to celebrate her love of nature and all beauty that blooms.

*Wild Grape is for Charity:*

Barbara Bush has donated much of her time, energy and life to a number of commendable, important charities. She has given of herself to the Mayo Clinic Foundation and the Boards of AmeriCares. She is a staunch supporter of the Ronald McDonald House and the Boys and Girls Club of America. Barbara has also been an influential champion to assist the homeless, AIDS victims and the elderly. She is a resolute advocate for many school volunteer programs.

The Bushes created the Bright Start Foundation for leukemia research in honor of their cherished daughter, Robin, whom they lost to the disease in 1953. Barbara Bush is the founder of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. Her dedication to the assistance of others remains inspiring, everlasting and has widespread global reach.

*Nasturtium is for Patriotism*:

Love and devotion to one’s country is the core meaning of patriotism. Barbara Bush’s strong sense of literacy as a means to advance the United States can be understood by this quote. “I strongly believe that if every man, woman and child could read, write and comprehend we would be much closer to solving many of our nation’s serious problems.”

*Red Peony is for Devotion:*

Fiercely devoted to the fight toward nationwide literacy, Millie, the Bush’s pet English Springer Spaniel is credited as the author of “Millie's Book: As Dictated to Barbara Bush,” which reached number one on the “New York Times” bestseller nonfiction list. All proceeds of the sale of “Millie’s Book,” as well as “C. Fred’s Story,” were donated to benefit adult and family literacy programs.

*Cinquefoil is for Maternal Affection:*

A devoted wife and mother, Barbara and George Bush had six children and seventeen grandchildren. They moved their household 29 times in the course of their lives together. While the First Lady of the United States and one global crisis and emergency erupted after another, Barbara Bush held tightly onto her family to always create a sense of calm and strength. Barbara holds the distinction, along with Abigail Adams, as one of only two women in United States history who was both wife and mother to U.S. Presidents. Her wisdom as a mother is truly amazing.

*Box tree is for Fortitude:*

During her eight years as wife to Vice President to the United States, Barbara Bush received a letter from a woman asking her if she sat at home and ate bonbons all day. To this, Barbara replied, that in the 2,923 days of the vice presidential years, 1,629 days were spent outside of Washington, traveling to all fifty states and sixty five foreign countries. Along with her husband, Barbara traveled approximately 1.3 million miles representing the United States. While in Washington, Barbara Bush hosted 1,192 events at the Vice President’s House. If Barbara ate bonbons at that time, their ingredients would have been endurance, commitment and steadfast determination.

*Rose is for love:* Who can deny that Barbara and George’s life time of love seems to be of an almost fairytale nature? George H. W. Bush was the first boy to ever kiss her and oh, has that first kiss lingered. 70 years of devotion have been the underlying theme in their lives as they lived through life’s difficulties and celebrations, working their way together to the White House and beyond, always fiercely committed to each other, their faith and their families.

And what more perfect tribute to the First Lady than the hardy, damask fragranced, delicately blossomed hybrid tea rose, “Barbara Bush,” bred by William Warriner, (United States,1990.) A blend of ivory blush petals merging into a rosy salmon pink. A glorious tribute to an avid gardener, a staunch supporter of her husband and family and the most genuine of First Ladies of the United States.

Barbara Bush, it is with great honor that we celebrate you and your momentous works to better humanity, fashioned through the language of flowers.

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