

Good Things Come From Small Packages

Susan Jeanne Wohltz entered the world tiny, stubborn, shy, talented, and a fighter with big dimples. Not a pretty baby her concerned father, Jim said, "Aren't girls supposed to be pretty?"

Well, we can all say that Susan blossomed into her own beauty. Tiny until eighth grade, the fighter in her held fast against a fair amount of teasing which she made up for later!

The stubborn Susan came at an early age. She wanted things her way. At three, she had frequent temper tantrums, which could culminate into kicking and screaming on the floor. The pediatrician told her parents that this was "normal" for a girl and to ignore the behavior. Her mother, Barbara was not going to buy into that and proceeded to spank her the next time it happened. Susan never did it again.

At five, Susan wanted to have a plant in her bedroom. Mom and Dad gave her one on the condition that she water and care for it with *their help*. The next day, the poor plant was drowning in water along with her bedroom and Susan flatly denying she ever watered the plant. The truth was expected and she was to stay in her room until the truth was told. Twelve stubborn hours later, she refused to admit to watering the plant and the room. (She never did admit it)

Growing up with her brother Mike in a neighborhood with lots of children, adventurous Big Wheel races were the norm and Susan had to be the fastest, challenging everyone. Several replacement "Big" wheels were bought by Mom and Dad.

Shy Susan? Through eighth grade at St. Pius Elementary X School, Susan was quite shy. Then the talented part started to show. Dancing all venues, ballet (Pointe), tap, swing, and jazz from kindergarten until high school dreaming of being a professional dancer. She was just as versatile in sports: basketball, softball, and soccer.

One year she was the only girl on an all boy team. Sure, she was hassled by the male teammates, but to her fighting spirit, she held her own, **again**. The hassling stopped once they realized she was a decent player.

Sixth grade brought Susan's first date (a double date).
What did she do? On her first date(double date)?
They went to a park and climbed trees! Great fun!

A desire to join band, Susan and her parents decided she would play the flute. No... Too many flutes. A clarinet was the final decision. Rarely practicing, she was terrible!

At the final band concert in eighth grade, Mom and Dad were a little nervous. Many relatives were coming to see their concert clarinetist. The band members filed on stage with Susan, sitting in the first chair position, a position supposedly given to the most talented. They thought, boy this group must really be bad! Well, the concert **was** surprisingly enjoyable.

The concert over, Susan was congratulated on her being in the first chair! She responded, "Oh, we just filed in wrong. I was not supposed to be in that chair!"

When proud comments were made to no mistakes or squeaks heard, she replied, "I sounded so good because I faked it!" She never blew into the clarinet! That was the last day of her distinguished clarinet career.

Attending Riverside University High School Susan was multi talented participating in cross-country, gymnastics, swing choir, and performing in several school plays as a singer and dancer.

College came and Susan amazed her parents by deciding to major in Interior Design, as she had not shown any interest nor participated in any similar activities. She chose Syracuse University because of the curriculum and loved it. Loving being a sorority sister in Alpha Chi Omega, she left Syracuse when the tuition grant was not renewed. Susan graduated from UW-Madison with a Bachelors Degree in Interior Design.

She then began to stitch a thread of healthcare design into her career by vying for and receiving an internship position at William S. Middleton Memorial Hospital (VA Hospital in Madison). There she had great mentoring, which she believed, helped her to achieve success in her career.

First work experience was Veterans Administration Hospital in Des Moines (Central Iowa Care System). Enjoying the job and despising the politics of the organization, Susan took a job with Saxton, Inc.(a Knoll Dealer) and then deciding Des Moines was not for her. She said, "I was not meant to live in a place where the main event of the year is the "Hog Fair"!"

Moving back to Milwaukee (about the same time her parents moved to Salt Lake City) she went to work for Plunkett Raysich Architects, working on a VA hospital project, Wausau Hospital, and First Star Bank in Madison. Ironically, she carried a

pager to be "On Call" to the *bank* not the hospital. Taking the lead, she organized the firm's move from the third floor to the fourth floor of their building and ran the Open House that followed.

Susan worked for Knoll International for five years. It was obvious from the first month that she was very ambitious and had extreme taste in hobbies, unusual for most females. Her hobby was skydiving. Doug, (her manager) liked that about her. Committed to pushing the envelope and very people oriented, Susan was *naturally* well liked by everyone. The most difficult part of her job was the transition from designer to sales. She would bring the perspective of the designer to the table. Friday, her last day at Knoll, Doug called her and told her he would be available as a resource/mentor. Not to hesitate to call at any time: the highest of compliments from a manager.

Doug, said this from his heart, he believed that one day they would work together again. "Susan was a class act from the beginning. Likeable, she was everybody's little sister."

President of the International Interior Design Association/ Wisconsin Chapter, Susan was passionate about design. She inspired students and professionals alike with her enthusiasm.

The Friday before she left us, she started a new job with Mannington Mills, Inc.

Susan loved to travel. As a student at UW-Madison, she was able to go to England, Belgium, and France for a three-week Interior Design program. She fell in love with England and the antiques! She also traveled to Jamaica and Spain.

Susan loved her family and started to document their history, to preserve it, by scrap booking.

Never satisfied with the traditional trends, always the perfectionist, she tried to be different

... and succeeded.

Here's to you Susan! Chocolatini!

Our beautiful friend Susan lived a fulfilling and giving life. God bless you.