

SOON JA McDEVITT

Soon Ja Lee was born on February 21 in 1952. Her birthplace is a small town in South Korea named Kok Sung located in the Challa Nam Do Province some five hours south of Seoul by car. The geography is similar to the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. Her mother, Mrs. Sung Choon Park gave birth to and raised five daughters with Soon Ja as her third. Her father passed away in the late 1950's. In 1964, Mrs. Park joined the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity when Soon Ja was only 12. The family of five girls and their mother lived on a small farm that was dedicated as a pioneer-witnessing center. She was raised in a warm and natural religious environment by her mother and fellow church members.

Following her graduation from High School, she studied traditional Korean cuisine. Soon Ja always spoke in a genuine and pleasant manner of the attitude of attendance while preparing even the simplest of dishes. In the late 1960's she was asked to join the kitchen staff at the Su Tang Nee Training Center serving Rev. Moon and his core leadership team. She was there when the Chung Pyong Retreat Center was launched.

In 1973 Soon Ja auditioned for the Korean Folk Ballet having had no formal Korean classical dance training. She won a position in the company and together with her sisters, she projected a radiant and graceful dynamism on stage. During Rev. Moon's Day of Hope evangelical tour, Soon Ja performed before audiences in each of America's 50-state capitals. With the company, she danced before a packed Yankee Stadium in the God Bless America tour of 1976, before some 300,000 participants at Washington Monument, and before 1.2 million fellow Korean citizens at the Yoido Plaza "Rally for Victory Over Communism."

In 1977 she returned to Korea and worked for the Il Hwa Ginseng Company as a research librarian. Soon Ja taught kindergarten at the Song Wha School from 1979 to 1980 specializing in Korean classical dance and music.

She was engaged in 1978 to Tom McDevitt matched together by Rev. Moon. They were blessed in marriage by Rev. and Mrs. Moon on July 1, 1982 at Madison Square Gardens, joining 2,075 couples dedicating their marriages with the theme "World Peace through Ideal Families."

She gave birth to five healthy sons -- Macklee Thomas (1983), Casato Joseph (1985), Joehun Daniel (1986), Patrick James (1988) and John Michael (1992). Without a doubt, her greatest joy and sense of fulfillment lived and still lives through raising her sons and loving her husband.

She was actively involved in the Washington D.C. church community serving as the pastor's wife. When her husband ran for the Virginia House of Delegates in 1993, she engaged the Northern Virginia Korean community registering voters and raising significant campaign funds. Soon Ja delighted to support the five McDevitt boys in more football and baseball games than she ever dreamed of attending while growing up in Korea. She loved America and became a citizen in 1984. She loved to teach Asian visitors about American history as a tour guide in our nation's capital.

At the age of 48 she took up aerobics and became an instructor telling her husband she did it to make him younger and more excited. Her faith was genuine, unpretentious and rooted in daily living with her family, friends and community. The first sound I always heard when she awoke in the morning was the sweet whisper of "Oboji," which means "father" in Korean.

When faced with the news of stomach cancer on July 22, 2002, she wept and then determined to climb a mountain of faith, healing and determination.

In the final hours of her friendly and harmonious life, Soon Ja shared eternally significant words with each of her sons, her mother, oldest and youngest sisters, niece, mother-in-law and husband. During the last two hours, she asked to have a profound sermon entitled "Understanding Life and Death" by Rev. Moon read to her by her husband as she lay on her deathbed. While she fought valiantly for each final breath, this precious daughter of God and True Parents was tearfully kissed by each of her sons and family. She passed peacefully into Heaven in the arms of her husband, and suffered no longer.

Her spirit is strong, present and with the Absolute God. Our gratitude for the true love, life and lineage she enabled knows no bounds, precious Soon Ja.

-- Tom McDevitt

* A note about the calligraphy seen on the inside of this program. When Rev. Moon understood that Soon Ja had ascended to the spirit world he composed a special calligraphy for her. It has the following meaning:

DECEMBER 27TH, 2002 - 2:30 A.M.
(NOVEMBER 24TH LUNAR)

CONGRATULATIONS

FRIENDLY AND HARMONIOUS SOON JA ENTERING INTO THE HEAVENLY WORLD

REVEREND SUN MYUNG MOON
DECEMBER 28, 2002