

GRIEF WILL GET YOU A NEW ADDRESS BOOK

A widow's journey

Mary Lee's 63-year-old husband Pat
Died from a stroke in 2013

BY MARY LEE ROBINSON, adapted from the book,
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Self care articles for the bereaved

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Invites had come to a halt

When my husband died, we had only lived in our new state for eleven months. Eleven months is not much time to make new friends, certainly not close friends.

There were a handful of families who lived in our new community at that time, and while a couple of them reached out, it didn't last long, and who can blame them?

Other women in the neighborhood distanced themselves from me. I was sixty and the first widow in the circle. One woman actually grabbed her husband by the elbow and dragged him away as he and I were talking.

The invitations came to an abrupt halt unless they required my wallet. You know, the Pampered Chef, Tupperware party kind of invitations. I went to one or two and then realized why I had been invited.

These folks still did couples parties, but I wasn't eligible for those.

Old out-of-state friends were not a very big help. I was out of sight and out of mind. As the first widow in our circle, I made people uncomfortable. My best friend, my matron of honor, didn't call me for four months after I called with the news of Pat's death. She said she'd been busy. I haven't talked to her since.

Another old friend did a little better but not much.

The best old friends were from high school days. While none were in my area, they did a great job boosting my spirits via messages and posts. One makes a point of stopping overnight every time she passes through. Love her bunches for that. It means the world to me.

It has taken a great deal of time and a lot of false starts and missteps, but I finally have a handful of people with whom friendships are forming. I was able to get into the volunteer program at my local hospital, and many other volunteers are widowed or divorced and about my age. It's a low judgment zone and I look forward to going every week.