

Maureen Heffernan



I want to tell you about my mother. Her name was Maureen Heffernan and she lived in Ireland where I grew up. She lived in the days when country girls in Ireland were not educated. But she was a most intelligent woman who would have loved a career.

She thought way beyond most of the people with whom she shared her world in small country-town Irish life. She encouraged her daughters into tertiary education and a profession. She was my inspiration as I developed my career in science, travelled the world and learned to understand that any true partnership I would make would be on the basis of equality rather than financial dependency.

She was a woman ahead of her time in many ways. Yet she gave so much to everybody especially my dad who was a number of years older than she yet he outlived her. The problem was that my mother developed breast cancer in her fifties and died too young. I could not come to terms with her death.

I would love you to have known this marvellous, caring woman "with the beautiful mind". These are the words of one of my school friends, Helen, about my mother. Helen's mother Angie and my mother Maureen were the best of friends. Similar people in their approach to life.

I think that our ability to love others starts with our mothers and mine certainly taught me about love. She would be delighted that this donation to The Cancer Council might help others. Let this gift honour her memory and celebrate her humanity.

Eileen Kennedy