

A Tribute to Ann Jackson - my Mother

She was not a researcher of the Shroud, nor did she give lectures, write books, or appear in documentaries about the Shroud. But I believe that without the unique contribution to the Shroud that she did make, the Shroud world as we know it today would not be the same...and neither would I.

Much of the science that we know about the Shroud comes from the five-day scientific examination of the Shroud in October 1978. This expedition comprised some thirty plus researchers, called the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) from the United States, along with other researchers from Italy and other countries. Hundreds of books, articles, and conferences about the Shroud are based on the scientific data that my 1978 colleagues collected and published about the Shroud. Even the radiocarbon dating arose from the initial efforts by the STURP team subsequent to the 1978 testing. I had the privilege of leading STURP at that time as its president and this for me has been an event that has greatly affected my adult life. Without the testing of 1978, I would, undoubtedly, have done something much different with my scientific career, but I am pleased to have been a part of that scientific event for, hopefully, the good of the Shroud and mankind.

Ann Jackson was in Turin during the testing period in 1978, but that was not her contribution of which I speak here. She was then just one of a multitude of pilgrims who came to see the Shroud that year when it was on public exposition. She also saw the Shroud in 2000 when it was on display, but, again, this was not her contribution to Shroud science.

How did the testing of 1978 come about? It certainly was due to the efforts of many fine people. But I can say that STURP, which clearly precipitated the scientific examinations of 1978, was due to the Three-

Dimensional VP-8 image of the Shroud and the inherent curiosity about the Shroud that this particular representation of the Shroud image inspired amongst many of the members of STURP...I know, because I was there.

So what, then, was Ann Jackson's contribution to the Shroud? For me it was very simple...When I was about 13 or 14 years old, my mother merely showed me a photograph of the Shroud. For me, I saw the face on the Shroud which was looking at me, and even into me. I was changed in an instant and my life would never be the same. For my mother, she was just being what she had been called to be by God...my mother. She undoubtedly wanted to show me this image to enrich my spiritual life as the Catholic boy that she wanted to raise me to be.

My mother passed away on February 6, 2010 with her life-long wish of receiving the Last Sacrament of the Catholic Church fulfilled during her last hour of life. The day before her passing, I explained to the priest who gave her this sacrament various things about the Shroud using a picture of the Shroud that was in Mom's room. Although she couldn't speak, she nevertheless became quite animated as I spoke - as if to make her own contribution to the discussion. Mom, in fact, always spoke about the Shroud to others and was its strong advocate.

Barrie Schwartz -- himself an esteemed member of the STURP team in 1978 and now author of the website -- Shroud.com, asked me to compose a tribute to my mother, a tribute that I am most honored to share.