

## She could laugh like no other

**F**rom the time we were married, I tried to make sure Margene knew I was always thinking of her, especially when she was out of town. Five years after we tied the knot, she flew to Las Vegas after Christmas to spend a few days with her family. Before she left, she taped a honey-do list on the refrigerator, pleading with the messy and irresponsible slob she married to keep the kitchen clean and make the bed, and not forget to feed our wirehaired terrier and tropical fish. When she arrived at her sister's house, a telegram was waiting for her:

Dirty dishes, unmade bed, hungry dog, the fish are dead.  
I miss you. Love, John

I wish I had a recording of the peals of laughter when she called me after reading the telegram. When Margene got wound up laughing, tears would literally run down her cheeks. She loved that telegram, and laughed about it many times over the years. To make sure she didn't lose it, she kept it safely tucked away in a place of honor: her underwear drawer, where I found it when I was going through her things a few weeks after she passed.

*When she brought the telegram back to Atlanta, it had a hand-written message from one of her sister's male friends scribbled on the back: Dear John: I'd trade my Arnold Palmer golf clubs, two deer rifles, a shotgun and a case of 12 gauge shells for Margene. I know that's not much, but it's all I have. I would give \$1,000,000 for her if I had it, but that's how it goes. I HATE YOU! Morris. Margene got a huge kick out of that, and it showed once again how lucky I was to be the one she married.*

