

# MARKINGS

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## A Memory of Lois

By Mel B., Toledo OH

Back in 1980, I was working part-time for A.A. World Services on the book that was published four years later as *Pass It On*. As a contributing writer to this book, I spent several days in Bedford Hills, N.Y. interviewing Lois W. at Stepping Stones, the home she and Bill had owned since 1941. (Lois, the widow of A.A. co-founder Bill W., was also a founder of Al-Anon.)

The first time I arrived there, a woman named Edna was staying with Lois as a guest. Edna was a timid woman in her late fifties or early sixties, and it was very obvious that she was suffering from a terminal condition of some kind. At first I thought she might be an abused wife seeking refuge in Lois' home. Another thought was that she might have been related to an early A.A. friend of Bill's.

But I learned that Edna was actually a housekeeper who had worked for Lois some years earlier. More recently, while working as a live-in housekeeper for another family, she had become ill and had a long stay in the hospital. Destitute and alone, she had been discharged from the hospital with no place to live, although a hospice of some sort would have an opening for her in a few weeks. She could no longer stay in the hospital during that interim period, and the family that had employed her would not let her come back.

In desperation, she had remembered to call Lois and explain her plight. Lois immediately invited her to come to Stepping Stones to stay with her until the hospice opening was available.

Edna proved to be a good companion for the next few days and she even took an interest in my interviews with Lois and our other conversations. Despite her physical suffering, she even tried to help around the house. And though she had not been involved



Lois W. with friend at the St. Louis Convention, 1955.

in any way with alcoholism, she showed a deep interest in our discussion of A.A. history. On Monday morning, a man arrived to take Edna to the hospice. We helped Edna carry her meager belongings to the car, said our goodbyes, and then watched sadly as they drove away. We knew that Edna would have only a short time at the hospice. A few months later Lois told me she had died.

Back in Toledo, I found myself breaking down every time I tried to

relate this story at an A.A. or Al-Anon meeting. I'm sure that Lois's unhesitating response to Edna's plea for help touched something deep in my heart. Perhaps it reminded me of Lois's generosity towards the early A.A.'s Bill brought home for help. It may have reminded me of the time alcohol left me helpless and alone, until I found A.A.'s helping hand. It also convinced me that Lois, a key person in A.A.'s early development, had the qualities of a saint.

### Observations of an Early Starter

## 60th Anniversary International Convention of A.A. San Diego '95

By Erik K., Mobile, AL  
Wednesday, June 28

I arrived in San Diego one day early so that I could avoid the crowds, long lines at the registries, and better contain my eager anticipation. I am in year 43rd of sober living (D.L.D. 12-

27-52) and have attended many conventions, conferences and events of A.A. throughout the years. They were always enjoyable and spiritually fulfilling for me. This time, however, I came away with a feeling akin to when I had the honor and pleasure of meeting with

