

On Christmas Day remember what's really important

I shared an office with Tom Woods when I worked at Insight. He and his wife Hilda were recently killed in a car accident. They died too soon that's for sure, but in the life they lived they can help us all remember what's really important.

The Woodses, married for more than 30 years, lived in Kirkland until the late 1990s. Hilda Woods attended Spanish-English church services at Washington Cathedral.

Hilda and Tom met in El Paso, Texas, where he fell in love with her and her two daughters.

Debbie and Susie became Tom's daughters, and they paid tribute Tuesday to the stepfather they knew only as Dad.

"Dad was my inspiration, the one who helped me with my homework and my bloody noses," Debbie Howell, 39, said. "Mom was my hero. She taught me to be a strong woman and not take crap from anyone."

"The life lessons (they) taught me will help me get through this," Howell said.

Susie Woods, the middle daughter, defined love by moments in her life.

"Love is my dad taking on two kids who were not his own. ... Love is letting us go and then letting us come back. ... Love is Mom's salsa," Woods, 37, said.

Tom and Hilda's daughter Cynthia East, 27, said she will never forget how much she was loved.

"Mom was the life of any party. She was ageless, beautiful and passionate," East said. "Dad loved the outdoors so much. I

will always see oceans and eagles and mountains through his eyes."

DEATH be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadfull, for, thou art not so,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse dwell,
And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well,
And better then thy stroake; why swell'st thou then;
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.