**The Blind Missourian**

**March 2020**

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Table of Contents

Missouri Legislative Fact Sheet 1

Come Join Us by Carol Coulter 4

My First Jefferson City Seminar by Carolyn McGhee 5

An Amazing Experience by Linda Coccovizzo 6

Tribute to a Faithful and Valued Member by Rita Lynch 8

Bill Neal by Carol Coulter 8

I Love You to the Moon and Back by Haylee Burns 9

A Tribute to a Dear Friend by Gary Wunder 11

Sharing Thoughts of Glenda Elgin by Rita Lynch 13

One Minute Message 14

NFB Pledge 14

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LEGISLATIVE AGENDA OF BLIND MISSOURIANS

PRESENTED TO

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

From: The National Federation of the Blind of Missouri

Date: February 17 & 18, 2020

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines us or our future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Blindness is not what holds us back.

This is the message we bring to blind Missourians and the communities we live in. We pledge to be a resource to you and your constituents when they turn to you for help.

The National Federation of the Blind is a membership organization of and for the blind. As a volunteer, grassroots organization, we are blind people working on behalf of blind people. We come together on the local, state, and national level to address issues of importance to our fellow blind citizens. We promote programs that encourage self-determination, independence, and equality of opportunity.

**Why Braille Is A Necessary Part of The Independence and Success of the Blind**

It is said that learning to read is one of the greatest accomplishments of man, and if blind people are to succeed, literacy must be a part of our skill set. This is why we have Braille, the finger equivalent of what most see with their eyes. Only when literate are we able to meet the challenge of expanding our knowledge on a wide variety of subjects and gain an understanding of our world. By using Braille, we are able to read things for ourselves. While audio and electronic means of access are essential to living in our society in the age of advanced technology, there is no substitute for reading something yourself. The importance of having the ability to communicate in writing and knowing where to use punctuation and understanding how to spell is a fundamental skill. Especially is this so if you plan to do a white collar job.

In our schools, less than 10% of blind children are getting the benefit of learning Braille. At least part of the problem is determining early on who will be most efficient reading Braille, who will be so using print, and which children can benefit significantly from learning both. Print is too often decided upon because it is considered normal, but children who are functionally blind but have some sight pay the cost in eye strain, headaches, and the inability to read rapidly or for long periods. Our blind children soon associate reading with discomfort and real pain.

Studies clearly show that most blind people who are employed know and use Braille. This should speak volumes to the need for it, but while sighted students are learning to read, blind students are being evaluated using a number of inadequate tools. By the time students are expected to read in order to learn, our schools are just deciding to teach our blind children to read Braille. The forecast is gloomy; they are behind, and unless they and their teachers and outside tutors make a herculean effort, this is where they will stay—behind.

Getting and keeping a job relies on skills. Fundamental among these are reading and writing. Audio and video enhance the lives of our citizens, but they do not replace reading and writing, especially for blind folks. As the governor makes one of his priorities employment first, we have the responsibility to do what will make blind people employable and provide for them and the rest of our society the fruits that productivity brings to us all.

**Employment First Legislation**

The Governor has clearly stated his intention that Missouri will become an Employment First state and will be an example employer which businesses can emulate. HB 1276, sponsored by Representative Unsicker, clearly defines a community based, integrated setting as the appropriate employment goal for people with disabilities and envisions their integration into competitive employment. The legislation outlines the requirements that the trainers of people with disabilities will meet. Additionally, the bill outlines the training requirements of those state workers providing job employment services for those with disabilities. Through this carefully crafted piece of legislation, HB 1276 outlines a state priority to increasing access to community based, inclusive, competitive employment based on quality supports that uses a person’s wants and needs to build an employment plan that is person focused. The National Federation of the Blind knows that people with disabilities can and do work in competitive settings as members of their workplace community. We support this legislation and ask you to do the same so that the number of us who enjoy real, remunerative employment continues to rise. Real jobs for real pay is the backbone of creating an inclusive community that fosters mutual respect for people of all abilities. With the use of assistive technology and the learning of necessary skills like Braille, the blind can and are successful in employment settings. We ask you to join us in supporting Representative Unsicker in bringing to fruition the benefits that will come from the passage of HB 1276—people with varying disabilities experiencing the dignity and self-support that comes with equal pay for equal work.

**Blind Pension Legislation**

HB 1270, sponsored by Representative Unsicker, has one simple but essential function, to remove the word certified from the law regarding correspondence with blind pension recipients. The well-intentioned insertion of the word certified has caused significant expense to the state as well as to blind recipients who are often forced to go to the post office to pick up mail that would otherwise be found in their box. Not only is this an unnecessary expense; it reduces the time blind pension recipients have to fill out the yearly recertification required and has caused a number of blind people to be terminated and subsequently reinstated, again at significant cost to the state of Missouri and its blind residents who receive the pension. Therefore, HB 1270 seeks to remove the word certified from the laws governing Blind Pension. Many blind Missourians have experienced significant issues due to the certified mail requirement, and that is why the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri strongly supports this legislation as presented.

**The Recording of IEP and 504 Meetings**

HB 1540 seeks to allow parents and legal guardians to record IEP and 504 meetings. Often meetings are long, and having good notes is crucial. The IEP team consists of the parents and half a dozen or more school personnel. A lot of information is exchanged, and some of it is highly technical and difficult for parents to initially understand. If one is blind and the information is presented in a form he or she cannot read, the problem becomes even more difficult and added emphasis falls to understanding exactly what is said. Even if the parents are able to follow along well enough to fully participate in the decision making, recalling the necessity and reasoning for certain decisions is difficult at best. For many people who are blind, an effective method for taking notes is to record the meeting. Unfortunately, many school districts have put policies into place to limit the access to this method for parents and guardians. This leads to misunderstanding and frustration for both parents and school personnel. Therefore, the National Federation of the Blind of Missouri supports this legislation, and on behalf of blind parents in Missouri, we ask you to support the passage of HB1540.

Come Join Us

By Carol Coulter

Participating in the Jefferson City Seminar for the first time can be intimidating. The capitol is a big and very busy place. The halls are full of different groups there to seek support for bills that are important to them just like we are. This year the Boy Scouts were very much present. An added obstacle this year was the construction going on, but this was not a problem after you were in the building. We cover four floors and there is the House of Representatives and Senate sides. For this reason, we pair new comers with those who have experience navigating the hallowed halls of our capitol. We also have the get together Monday evening to talk about the bills so that everyone can have a better understanding of them. Another good way to learn more about the bills we are working on, is to join the Governmental Affairs Committee conference calls that are open to anyone wishing to attend the seminar. The more people willing to come will help lighten the load for everyone and people won’t have to cover so much ground. Please think about taking that first step and attending your first seminar next year. Those of you who have been before are very much appreciated and we need you back each year to do the work that is needed and to be mentors for the new attendees. Below is Carolyn McGhee’s thoughts on her first-time experience.

My First Jefferson City Seminar

By Carolyn McGhee

When I decided to attend the Jefferson City Seminar, I had no clue what to expect at all. Getting there was a bumpy ride and we almost didn’t go because we had no information. I ended up calling once I got home and my dad got the information he needed. We had no idea where we needed to be or at what time.

Once we got there, we had to figure out the best way to get around the construction. My dad even told me what he knew about the history of the tunnel we were in. I had all of my stuff with me that I’d need because we didn’t go to the hotel first. It felt kind of awkward throwing EVERYTHING onto the check belt, but it worked out ok. While trying to find the alcove where we would all meet up, we almost got stuck in a tour line. Once we found the right spot and dad made sure that it was the right people, he left and went back home. I spent the rest of the day sticking to other members as I went to my appointments. I didn’t feel like I really knew what was going on or what I was doing. Because I was the only member from Springfield who came, there were multiple times where I had multiple appointments at the same time, some on completely different floors! All I could do was roll with it and accept how things worked out. Sometimes I got to meet with the representatives, sometimes it was an aid, and in a few cases I had to just leave a folder. By the end of the day it seemed like we were an hour behind. We missed one representative because we got so far behind.

When we checked out of the hotel and headed out for day two, it was a bit different. I ended up on my own finding my appointments. Lynn Morris helped me find one of the rooms I needed, and an aid helped me track down another representative before he went out on the floor. By this point, I’d heard the bills we were promoting enough times that I knew better which ones to emphasize. The room numbers were TINY, if there even was one, and I got confused at the end as to which side was which when I came back after my last appointment, but the stark difference in lighting and wall color helped a lot. Despite the obstacles and bumpy parts, I had a good time and feel like it was a worthwhile trip.

An Amazing Experience

By Linda Coccovizzo

Last summer, Terra, my 14-year-old and I had the opportunity to attend   
national convention in Las Vegas, as first-timers. She went to the youth track, and I went to the NOPBC parent leadership program. In the fall, I dropped my name in the hat to be chosen as one of the people to receive a stipend so that I could participate in the Washington seminar. Shelia Wright let me know in December that I would have that opportunity. I was also invited back to the Parent Leadership Program being held at the national center in Baltimore, before heading to D.C., to talk with our legislators. This PLP event promised to be much more intensive, since it wasn’t competing with activities around the convention, and we certainly   
did cover a lot of ground in those two short days of meetings.  
 Since its inception in 1983, NOPBC has been an integral part of our Federation, working to connect with parents of blind children to ensure those children had the best opportunity possible of growing up with the skills and confidence necessary to become competent adults. At that time, there was a fear that bringing sighted parents into the organization as leaders of the division, could open the NFB up for a sighted parental “take over”. It was Dr. Jernigan’s belief however, that the blind of the organization, and the parents of blind children had a shared interest, making life better for blind people. It was competent blind mentors and role models who would bring sighted parents such as Carol Castellano, and Carlton Walker,  our parent leaders for this seminar, to understand and apply the Federation philosophy to the task of raising their children.  
 I feel as if I have been given an opportunity of a lifetime; being able to connect with, and being mentored by, both of these moms who have stories of frustration and joy to share from the battlefields, to the playground. Also during the PLP Seminar, we had the pleasure of hearing from President Riccobono, our own Gary Wunder, Everett Bacon of Utah, and Pam Allen from Louisiana. Each one of these role models spoke about what it means to them to be blind, how we need to learn from each other, laugh at ourselves occasionally, and how leadership is not necessarily about taking everything upon ourselves, but utilizing the abilities of those who surround us. The tools that were given to me by this experience will serve to be very useful in my efforts to rebuild the Missouri Parents of Blind Children Division.  
 The Parent Seminar was held at the National Center in Baltimore. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to take even just a short tour. Ah, that old familiar smell of a large room full of hard-backed Braille books. What fun it would be to spend hours in the Jacobus tenBroek Library browsing through those shelves. I got a chance to check out the rocket launch exhibit and the tactile representation of Erik Weihenmayer's ascent of Mount Everest. We were even given an opportunity to make purchases at the Independence Market. I hope that one day I can get back to the center for the complete tour because there is so much more to see there.  
 Promptly after our meetings ended in Baltimore, it was off to D.C. In the last van to the hotel, we made it just in time to get to the great gathering in. For those who have not yet been to Washington Seminar, the best description of this event would be to call it a pep rally of sorts, getting everyone all pumped up for taking the issues to our legislators. However, really, you just need to make the trip to see for yourselves.  
 Tuesday and Wednesday were spent on the hill visiting the offices of our Senators and Representatives. Everyone seemed very receptive to the issues we took this year. ATAA, GAIN, and AIM HIGH were all bills which have bipartisan support. Senator Roy Blunt was not able to make it to our meeting, but he did make a point of catching up with Shelia before our train left to head to our appointments with representatives. Our group separated for those afternoon appointments, and we came back together at Emanuel Cleaver’s office, where he came in while we were talking to his Staffer. We had a great conversation, and in the end, Cleaver told us he would support all of the issues. I will definitely, very soon, be following up with his office to thank him for the great reception. We want our legislators to know we remember our visit, and that follow-up will serve to help them to remember to look at these bills and to cosponsor them. So much progress has been made getting   
the support to have bills created out of these ideas, that the last thing we want to have to do is start over.  
 In my short year and a half after joining the organization, my daughters and I have had so many awesome opportunities and fun experiences. We joined the Kansas City Chapter of the NFB a year ago in October. It was clear to me that these were the people who would help me to show my girls what it means to be blind, and that blindness does not define them. There is a saying, “It takes a village to raise a child.” In the past, I felt that as a blind parent of blind children, it was my   
responsibility alone to teach my children what they needed to know. For me to reach out for help meant I wasn’t strong enough to do it all on my own. I have since learned how incredibly true the afore mentioned quote actually is. I don’t know if I have the words to convey how grateful I am for all of my friends and mentors in my new NFB family. The only regret I have is that I waited so long to join you. It is my local and state chapter members, NOPBC, and NFB family from all over whom I am proud to call my village.

Tribute to a Faithful and Valued Member

By Rita Lynch

As this new year began, the members of our Jefferson City Chapter were shocked and very saddened to learn of the sudden death of another longtime member of our chapter. Phyllis Wilson passed away very unexpectedly on January 6th at her home. You wouldn’t have thought it by knowing and working with her in the Federation, but she was 83 years old. Although she did have a few health issues, she never let anything stop her from giving of herself in so many ways to help others. We here benefited greatly from Phyllis’s contribution to our cause. As one of our sighted members, Phyllis could always be counted on to help us in all chapter activities. We knew we could depend on her for transportation to get us to our state capitol and helping with legislative work. She also helped with fundraisers, public relations activities, and getting people to chapter meetings, etc. Phyllis made countless trips to bring members to and from the Amtrak station as Federation work was being carried out. Phyllis became involved in the Federation in 2008 when one of her special friends, Grace Haner, became a member of our chapter. We were so pleased when Phyllis was presented with the tenBroek Award in 2013.

Phyllis lived here in the Jefferson City area all of her adult life. She was a charter member of Memorial Baptist Church. Her children, grandchildren, and her church were most important to her. She had many special friends here and we feel blessed to have had the opportunity to know her and love her. Several of our chapter members were able to attend the memorial service for Phyllis. We appreciated so much the beautiful eulogy given by the minister as he shared with us the type of person he felt Phyllis really was. We miss her so much, but as Shelia said, we would be selfish wishing her to still be here, as we know she is rejoicing with her loved ones who have gone before her.

Bill Neal

By Carol Coulter

Bill Neal, a long time NFB member and dear friend passed away on January 22, 2020. When I think of Bill, I think of cowboy hats and western shirts. I also think of a very giving and kind man. He was always very outgoing and would talk to anyone. Bill and his wife Florence taught me what it meant to be hospitable.

Bill joined the Federation in the late 70’s and joined the Columbia Chapter in the 80’s. He has served as the Columbia Chapter president and on the state affiliate level he served as the recording secretary and as a long-time board member. Bill also served as our affiliate Ways and Means Committee Chair for many years and we still practice many of the ideas that he started. The first that comes to mind is our king and queen contest. We also continue to do the Roy Zuvers traveling trophy and walk-a-thons, two other ideas that he came up with. I looked back at some old treasurer’s reports and see that we have been doing these fundraisers since at least 1991. The auctions at our state conventions originated under his reign as chair of the committee as well and also appeared on a 1991report. I don’t know how many times his cowboy hat went on the auction block. Other ideas that Bill came up with were skate-a-thons and having a booth at the state fair. Bill was also very involved in the Merchants Division of the NFB where he also held various offices, the most recent being treasurer of that division. Through his work as a vendor, he trained several members of the Blind Enterprise Program.

Bill Neal was a regular guy who was easy to talk to and very much the loving and caring husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather which was very much in evidence at his funeral. While sitting in the audience, the most beautiful tribute was paid to Bill by his sixteen-year-old granddaughter Haylee. I immediately thought this had to be shared in the newsletter. Haylee had an assignment for school to interview an amazing person and she chose her grandpa. Below is what is now her tribute to her grandpa. To the family, on behalf of the Missouri Affiliate of the NFB, we want you to know that you all will always be a part of our family and we are here for all of you. While we will miss Bill dearly, we know he is in Heaven dancing once more with his lovely wife Florence and spending time with his son Sam.

I Love You to the Moon and Back

By Haylee Burns

I love you to the moon and back. When I hear someone say this I automatically think of my grandpa. When I was younger and my grandpa and I were on the phone we always ended the call with I love you to the moon and back. My grandpa is the most amazing grandpa anyone could ask for. Sometimes I get random calls from my grandpa asking me about Cardinals baseball, or when it gets closer to December he will call and tell me our birthdays are coming up. My grandpa has done so many amazing things for me and so many amazing things in his life.

The name of my amazing grandpa is Billie Lee Neal, many call him Bill. He was born December 7, 1944. My birthday is December 9th so we always celebrate our birthdays together. My grandpa was born in Columbia, Missouri. He has lived in Harrisburg, St. Louis, Wright City, and Columbia (all in Missouri).

My grandfather has four siblings. Their names are Vicky, Jimmy, Robert, and Debra. His wife is Florence (passed away in 2010) and they have three children, my aunt Carla, my mom Thracie, and my uncle Samuel. He also has many grandkids, ten to be exact. He also has nine great-grandkids.

My grandpa's school life, well his whole life, was way, way different than mine. My grandfather was blind so he went to the school for the blind in St. Louis, Missouri. My grandpa was not born blind though. When he was three years old, he lived in the middle of nowhere. His father Jimmy, my great-grandfather, had gotten his shoes all muddy, so he used a hunting knife to clean his shoes off with outside and left the knife there. My grandpa went and got his shoes all muddy and tried to clean his shoes off with the hunting knife and the knife came up and hit his left eye. They went to Columbia to the hospital and they removed his eye. When they removed his eye, it caused pressure on his right eye and he lost a lot of his eyesight out of his right eye

My grandfather didn't start going to first grade until he was eight because when he was little schools didn't teach handicapped and his parents didn't know about the school for the blind in St. Louis. At first, when he started going to school, he didn't like it because he was away from home. Those who went to the school for the blind lived in dormitories in St. Louis. They only went home during the summer, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. At the school of the blind, my grandpa wrestled. They only had one school for the blind in each state so they would compete against different states. My grandpa's main hobby when he was younger was listening to Harry Carey and Jack Buck Cardinals baseball on the radio. Listening to Cardinals baseball is still a huge hobby of my grandpa’s. When he was younger, he remembers going to movies, dances, and concerts. To get around, he and his friends would ride buses from their dormitories to wherever they wanted to go.

My grandpa has had many jobs. These included managing a cafeteria at Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, working at a furniture factory called Perminear in Wright City, managing a restaurant and gift shop at Ellis Fischel Hospital in Columbia called Grandpa's Grill, and a cafeteria at the Employment Security building in Jefferson City. He also ran a gift shop and a convenience store at a state office building in Columbia. From the time he was at Ellis Fischel Hospital through him working at the state office building, he also had vending machines all over Columbia and Jefferson City, and all over highway 70 at the roadside parks. My grandpa also went to Rock Bridge High School in Columbia to teach Braille and how to use canes to the visually impaired.

My grandpa did and does a lot for the blind. He is in the NFB (National Federation of the Blind). My grandpa is currently the treasurer for the NFB. He has also been the president before. There are so many things he has done with the NFB to help the blind. He would fly to Washington DC and talk to senators to help pass bills for the disabled. His first time ever being on a plane was to go to New Orleans, Louisiana to be in the Mardi Gras Parade with the NFB. He has been to 44 of the 50 states many from traveling for the NFB.

When I asked my grandpa, what is the most important thing in your life he said he is just trying to live a good life and live out the days of his life. My grandpa is an amazing man and has done amazing things.

A Tribute to a Dear Friend

by Gary Wunder

Normally when we write about someone recently departed in the pages of the *Blind Missourian*, we focus on what they did for and within the National Federation of the Blind. Certainly we can do that for Bill Neal, and most people reading this will be well aware of the milestones that made up his Federation career. He began participating in the Federation in the St. Joseph chapter, moved to Wright City, Missouri and participated in the St. Louis Chapter, and then moved to Columbia, where he participated actively and had extensive service on the Missouri Affiliates Board of Directors. During some part of that service he served as the recording secretary, but what he is most known for is his long tenure as the chairman of the Ways and Means committee. He was the chief coordinator of our fundraiser, and I think that he is rightly credited with the Walk-a-thon/skate-a-thon/move-a-thon and the King and Queen contest. Goodness knows he was a hustler when it came to getting money needed for the Federation.

When I think of Bill, most of my memories revolve around the friendship that we had. When he learned that I wanted to be an adoptive father, he, Florence, and his wonderful daughters and son agreed to do whatever they could to help. At the time I was married to Ruthanne, and she and I were invited to Wright City for a day full of hospitality, listening to stories about babies, and rehearsing some of the techniques we would need to use. We learned how to heat a bottle and test its temperature. We were given a baby doll and both cloth and disposable diapers, and the girls were particularly helpful in showing me how to dress and undress a baby, minus the squirming and the odor that would accompany the real task.

When Bill and his family moved to Columbia, he needed a cosigner on his house. I served in this capacity until he paid his loan down enough that he no longer needed me. When we got Missy, Florence volunteered to be our babysitter, and this service came at far less cost than the daycare we would eventually end up enrolling Missy in. There is also no question that she received much more one-on-one time than she would have at a daycare center. If Missy was sick and needed to be held all day, the family spent the day making sure that she got held, no matter what other chores went undone. If they went somewhere, she took the bus with them. Sometimes their communication was a bit much. When I arrived at their door to pick up Missy, Bill greeted me with “We know what you’ve been doing. Your daughter says you went to the hospital for surgery because, she says, ‘I am enough.”

One of the things Bill wanted people to remember was his birthday, and I would really hear about it if I called him at nine or ten at night. He said that he had almost concluded I was going to forget. It was amazing that one call, or one call from many people, could make him such a happy man. December 7 will always be a day that will live in infamy because of Pearl Harbor and a day of great joy because of Bill Neal.

I am going to miss Bill, but I cannot wish that he were with us still given the condition he was in for the last few weeks of his life. Given that he had liver cancer, it may be that our Creator let him travel the easier road, and although it is hard to find gratitude in the way someone leaves us, I do take some consolation in this for Bill's sake.

I want to end with a couple of funny stories. When Bill attended his first Washington Seminar, Nick Whitney and I accompanied him. We flew together to the nation's capital, and Nick and I decided to have some fun at Bill's expense. We pretended that the Washington trip was his first time on an airplane and that the only way we could coax him on was to convince him he was riding a Greyhound bus. The flight attendants were very sympathetic and did their best to assure him that his trip would be a good one. He was exasperated at what we were telling them and what they were buying, and I think he came close to hitting us when, as the plane began to leave the ground, we both insisted that he should remain calm because we were simply going up a big mountain and would soon be coming down the other side. He was quite irritated with us, but he was more than pleased with the attention from the young women in the cabin.

When our former affiliate president John Dower died, I was asked to do the eulogy. After it was over, many of us filed past the open coffin to pay our respects. Because we saw Bill standing off to the side, we asked if he wanted to go up and pay his last respects. At first he said, "I didn't lose anything up there." When we teased him about being afraid, he uttered some lines that I will never forget. With a mixture of utter sincerity, frustration, and a bit of fear, he said, "Now I'll tell you why I don't want to go up there. You see, every time I would meet John Dower, he would say, ‘Hey, Bill. How are you doing? Do you want to come up for a beer?', and the truth is, I'm just not ready to go."

I like the idea of Bill and Florence and Sam looking down on us as we go about our daily lives, transmitting the love and concern they felt for each of us. Like Bill, I’m nowhere close to being ready to go, but when I do, I imagine that Bill and Florence will invite me and Debbie to supper so we can talk about our families, our Federation, and our good fortune to have walked through life and that which comes after together.

Sharing Thoughts of Glenda Elgin

By Rita Lynch

     On February 19th Glenda completed her earthly journey as her soul and spirit transitioned to her heavenly home. We know she is now free from all suffering of the cancer that she bravely fought for the past two years. Her passing leaves a huge void for us who knew and loved her. Our deepest sympathy we extend to Rick, Glenda’s husband their children, daughter, Johna and son Riley, her mother Shirley, and her many other relatives and special friends.

     Rick and Glenda were active members of our chapter for over eight years and added much to our success. On February13, 2018, just two days before she suffered a major seizure and stroke, and when her physical battle really began, Glenda, Nina and I had spent a good part of that day collecting door prizes around the area for our upcoming state convention. It was an enjoyable and very productive day which Nina and I will always remember.

     Glenda’s faith, family, and friends were her life. Other things which gave her much pleasure were her beloved Kansas City Chiefs. Just two weeks and two days before she left us, she was able to enjoy their winning of the Super Bowl, something she waited a very long time for. Glenda participated in marathons, biking and other physical activities. Even more special to her was the welcoming of their first grandchild. Remi was born just a couple months ago. Glenda was able to hold, to love, and to spend time with their precious granddaughter.

     Glenda faced the end of her time here on earth with peace, confidence and assurance. Although we will miss her so much, our faith tells us that we will see her again when God calls us to our heavenly home.

One Minute Message

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.

Pledge of the

National Federation of the Blind

I pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its Constitution.

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### FREE MATTER FOR THE

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