

A Surprising Romance

The highlight of the year 2012, without any question, came about when my second wife, Gaylene Rogers, and I were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple in August. My first wife, Jean, and I were married for 62 wonderful years; and I couldn't have been happier; but after she became disabled, and had lost much of her ability to act or speak for 13 long years, Gaylene blew in like a fresh wind over the barren landscape of our lives; and her



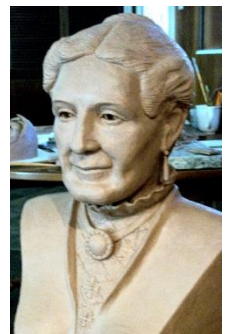
friendship became a blessing and a joy to both of us. But then, after Jean's death and as months went by, what had been a simple friendship morphed unexpectedly into romance and Gaylene agreed to join with Jean and I in our quest for eternal life. It was good to hear, in a later blessing, that Jean approved of my marriage to Gaylene.

Gaylene returned into our lives in a miraculous way. After 37 years of separation, and in direct and immediate answer to prayer, she emerged from the past like an angel from heaven.

We first became friends while I was helping her return to activity in the Church 37 years before; and she had now returned the favor by helping me return to the more normal activities and emotions that had become blurred by the fog of affliction over the years.

Shortly after Gaylene and I were engaged, and in response to a blessing given by a patriarch, I began to sculpt a life sized bust of Gaylene's great grandmother, Aurelia Spencer Rogers, who she had learned to love while starring in a one-woman theatrical presentation that showcased Aurelia's life. For years afterward she placed flowers on Aurelia's grave several times each year.

I do not claim to be an artist in the sense that others are; but I felt the touch of angels as the face and features of Aurelia gradually emerged from the raw clay. The feelings that I felt were unmistakable as I sculpted her eyes, her nose and ears with a deftness and perception that were far beyond my natural abilities; and as I worked the clay an amazing thing continued to happen. Her facial features had become so lifelike, and the spirit that attended her was so tangible, that whenever I looked up into Aurelia's eyes I felt as though she was about to speak to me. She didn't, of course, but I found myself wishing that she would—or could—for there is much to learn from such a woman.



Gaylene was delighted with the end result, and before she died unexpectedly, she asked if we could please donate a white marble bust of Aurelia to the general presidency of the Primary as a gift to the children of the world. In August, her wish is granted. The presentation was a wonderful spiritual experience. In November a similarly rewarding experience took place when an identical marble bust was presented to the Farmington 1st ward where the Primary first originated.

As the year ends, I am alone again, but wonderful memories linger. What will happen next I leave in the Lord's hands. It is my fond hope for the New Year, that our daily lives will reflect the Savior's love; and that the lingering memories of each one of us will bring us joy forevermore.