Sudie family remembrance - for her San Rafael memorial service

(December 13, 2025)

My name is Thomas Malarkey. I'm blessed to be a member of Susannah's large and colorful family, her tribe. We all know her as Sudie, and I'm speaking on behalf of us all, some of whom are here today.

My sisters Tucker and Sarah are here. Our father was Sudie's dear first cousin Tommy. Technically that makes Sudie our first cousin once removed, but she felt like our aunt. She and her 3 siblings, Neil, Alice and Stoddard, grew up together in Portland with my dad and his 3 siblings, Laurie, Johnny and Sally — all overlapping ages and living blocks away from each other. In fact, there were so many Malarkeys running around the SW hills, one neighbor said they sprayed for them in the summer.

Paul and Neil Koehler are here. They are two of her 5 Koehler nephews (children of Alice and Peter) and represent her 16 total nephews and nieces.

Her great niece, Evelyn Koehler - is here and represents some 34 great nephews and nieces. And amongst these are parents of Sudie's growing gaggle of great great nieces and nephews. And then there's the first and second and third cousins, once and twice and now three times removed.

I'm here with my wife Nicole – who says that Sudie is partly why she married me - and our younger son Blaine.

Sudie's family includes Harriet Hope, who's family became Sudie's own. Harriet's son David, and grandson Ezra, are here.

And there's some 50 other family members, mostly in Oregon and Washington, who are joining us via livestream. Greetings tribe!

I know you're getting the picture: Sudie's family was BIG. And family was BIG for Sudie. And Sudie was BIG for all of us in her extended family. This amazing book of family, in its second edition, assembled lovingly by Jinx Faulkner, Paul's wife, for Sudie - says so much on this front. There will be some copies at the reception afterwards - check it out.

Sudie's larger family

While Sudie had blood family, she also created family in so many parts of her life — her Dominican Sisters and staff community here, her former students at the various schools she taught at, the Santa Sabina community, Casa de los Pobres — and more. She had an uncanny way of making you feel welcome, like you mattered and you belonged to something larger than yourself. Whether as Sudie, Sister Susannah, Sister Mary Augustine - her ministry was to foster and open the spirit of people to love, to joy, and to

see ourselves as part of the family of this planet… the endlessly beautiful and mysterious - and vulnerable - earth we all inhabit.

Here today, Sudie's passing has brought many of these families of hers together. To connect us a little more, I want to invite you, in a moment, to find someone near you that you don't know or know well – and once you've greeted them, share:

- HOW DO YOU KNOW SUDIE, SISTER SUSANNAH?
- Share a quick memory you have of her or a way she influenced you…

Family on video, you can reflect :)

Sudie's life

None of us knew all the sides of Sudie. There's so much I'm still learning. If you haven't read the beautiful remembrance written by the Sisters, please do. There's been more chapters of her extraordinary life than I imagine any of us knew. We from her Oregon tribe can share a little window into a few chapters…

Early on, influenced by her mother Susannah's deep Catholic spirituality, Sudie heard her own calling. It was to be a Dominican nun. She joined this community at the age of 19. Not all in her family initially embraced this. For instance, my grandfather, with whom she was close, lamented that he'd been hoping "to see many little Sudies."

When asked, by her great nephew Peter and his wife Keely, in a 2019 interview, "Was it a clear decision to you or did you struggle?" Sudie replied, "*Nope it was clear. No struggle. Mother would wrestle with ideas. You know, she was a real deep thinker, and she assumed I was wrestling with this idea. I said "I'm not wrestling, mother."*

As it happened, there were some bumps in the road. She did a year in a Catholic college, Manhattanville, before entering the convent. In her words… "*During that year, I was supposed to have taken advantage of all the cultural opportunities in New York, but I kept getting campused for misbehavior — smoking in the wrong place, that sort of thing. I spent a lot of time in the bridge room playing bridge and learning to smoke*."

One day she cut her biology class because she didn't like cutting up frogs, and she got sent to the Dean, Mother Westin. Sudie recalled, "*She proceeded to tell me that there was no way I would make it in the convent. She said, "We've never had a freshman here with such a record of breaking rules as you, and I know you've probably broken them innocently enough, but you're very undisciplined and you know, in convent life, you really have to pay attention to the rules and it's going to be hard for you.*

"So I thanked her and left, but I went and joined the convent anyways. Later Mother Westin wrote me and said, "Dear Sudie… How happy I am that despite your unpromising months here at Manhattanville you have persevered, no doubt without some strong support on the part of your novice mistress."

Dear Mother Westin, you will be happy to know that, after 76 years as a Dominican sister, Sudie did indeed persevere.

At the same time Sudie radiated love and joy, she was also fierce about making change — both In the world, and in the Dominican community.

These came together in Santa Sabina the retreat center here on the Dominican campus that she led for 27 years. Inspired by Thomas Merton, Thomas Berry, Sister Miriam McGillis at Genesis Farm in NJ and others, Sudie had expanded her theology and come to believe (in her words), "*The human community and the earth community are one community, and they either grow together into the future, responsive to the needs of both, or they both perish."* Sudie, in partnership with Harriet Hope, lovingly and creatively built a contemplative space where all were welcomed, hosting poets, writers, and peace activists - including Thomas Berry, Mary Oliver, William Stafford, Daniel Berrigan and more. Together they created not just a Retreat Center – but a collective ministry rooted in a deep earth-centered spirituality, whose influence rippled widely in the world.

I count myself as one of those ripples. Spending time at Santa Sabina over the years with them was deeply influential and hugely helpful for me, at a formative time in my life.

Sudie's spirit

Sudie's spirit was - and is still - clear, strong and grounded in joy and in love. "*Love love love to all of you*" is how she would say goodbye on weekly phone calls with her Koehler people. Her spirit was expressed in these 4 tenets attributed to Angeles Arrien. As I say each of them, I invite you to take it in and connect it to how you experienced Sudie, Susannah…

- **Show up** (choose to be present)
- **Pay attention** (to what has heart and meaning)
- **Tell the truth** (without blame or judgment)
- **Let it go** (Be open to outcome but not attached to outcome)

Feel familiar?

Sudie both knew herself and continued to become more fully herself. In her words…

"*My essential spirit is basically liberal and free. And I look for whatever it is in life's situation that is consistent with what makes me who I am.*

And if something isn't, I just ignore it.
And by ignoring it, I'm usually breaking rules.
And when you break rules, you suffer the consequences.

But as I grew in my own personal life and religious life, I found I was able to express the freedom that I experienced in a way that was positive, so that people responded positively to it.

Little by little by little, I think I just defined my own way of being in the convent, my own way of being in my own faith life. Just simplifying it, simplifying it, peeling off things that no longer were consonant with what I felt good human life was."

All of us have been blessed by this clarity… I know I speak for those of us in her family, when I say that Sudie saw me as I was, and she also saw, at a deeper level, my spirit — and this helped me see it myself, and to further live into it. Indeed, we have been her ministry too. You might think of us as "all her little Sudie's."

Portland service and burial
Sudie will be buried in Portland, next to her sister Alice, brother in law Peter, nephew Richard, and life long friend of her and all her family, Mary Winch. There will be a burial service with scores of relatives celebrating Sudie's life with final flowers – which she dearly loved - tossed in the grave as they say goodbye.

We're honored and so happy that Sisters Abby, Cyndie and Patty, and Sudie's beloved nurse and dear friend, June, will be traveling to Portland. The sisters will be presiding at the burial – joining this Dominican Sister Community with the place where Sudie will be laid to rest with her family. We want to express our profound gratitude for the Sisters and staff for making all our connections to and visits with Sudie possible. Our family feels such love for you, for supporting her, and for sharing her with us.

Closing: Sudie's gift to our lives
The great Maya Angelou once said "I've learned that people will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel." I know all of us here will never forget how Sudie made us feel. And, though she has passed, she will continue to do that. Her presence is so strong still now. May her memory be a precious blessing for each of us.

I'll close with a few words from Sudie herself. When asked by Peter and Keely, "Anything you want to say to people in future generations?*"* she replied, **"***Live your life! Live it. Live it... Don't just watch it go by. Live it. Enter into it as fully as you can, heart, soul and mind*."

Thank you Sudie for living your life, and living your faith, in all the ways you did. So many have been blessed by your love and ministry, and we all – and the world – are so much better for it. And so we say back to you, Love, Love, Love…

Current word length 1400-ish (without the possible turn–and-talk activity – 3 mins, so aiming for 7 mins in the final version). Need to still edit this down!
Speaking time (from AI): Reading 1100 words aloud typically takes between 4 to 9 minutes, depending on your speaking pace: around 3.5 to 4 minutes at a fast pace (300 WPM), 7-8 minutes at an average pace (150 WPM), and closer to 9 minutes or more if speaking slowly (125 WPM).

What she taught us as a matriarch…
As an unmarried
She became a matriarch
The most exemplary you could imagine
Taught us so much about to live life and love
There was always a teaching moment
She wanted to locate you exactly where you were in life, what's happening now. What are your struggles? What are your ambitions?
Heartfelt solutions, then she would come up with very pithy, elegant, heartfelt solutions. Usually along the lines of do it! Go for it! Live your life fully! We're not here forever! Move things forward! Marry, the girl! Have a baby!
She just wanted more love, more life, more community

And our younger son Blaine, who's about to graduate from St Mary's a Catholic HS in Berkeley, and who, when he was a freshman in his Religion class, interviewed Sudie about her spirituality for an assignment. Our older son Finn who's at college in OH couldn't be here, but played an Irish __ on his fiddle for Sudie via FaceTime when she was mostly not awake. It was one of the only times her body moved when Nicole and I were there for a couple hours that day.

Sudie quotes

<u>Peter-Keely interview</u>

- I was always attracted, as my mother was, to a more contemplative, more experiential grasp of what really is essential to my life spring, and not dealing so much with all the clutter of the details, staying in the flow.
- My spiritual upbringing came basically from two sources. One was my mother's innate spirituality and the innate essence of her life, which was grounded in spirituality. It did not have a name or a structure, but just was part of her being. I was very close to my mother and I would steal the books that she was reading even as a little kid and read them and hide them under the mattress. So nobody would know that I was interested in my mother's journey.
- I got the opportunity to go to a Catholic boarding school in high school, and I was very excited because any new adventure is just opening another door for me: give me one and I'll take it!
  I just had a wonderful opportunity at boarding school to experience, finally, the faith that I felt in a way that was consistent with the way these Dominican sisters were living. Very liberal, very open, very warm. And I began to see that if I wanted to follow this deepest inclination in my soul, I could live a life like this.
  They had found a way to live freely within a structure, and it's the only way that I could imagine living – without the sense of: "This is wrong. This is right. This is what you do. This is what you don't do."
- Was it a clear decision to you or did you struggle?
  - Sudie: Nope it was clear. No struggle.
  - Peter: It was clear. You knew what you wanted.
  - Sudie: Mother would wrestle with ideas. You know, she was a real deep thinker and she assumed i was wrestling with this idea.I said "I'm not wrestling, mother. It's just very clear to me."
- My essential spirit is basically liberal and free. And I look for whatever it is in life's situation that is consistent with what makes me who I am.
  And if something isn't, I just ignore it.
  And by ignoring it, I'm usually breaking rules.
  And when you break rules, you suffer the consequences.
  But as I grew in my own personal life and religious life, I found I was able to express the freedom that I experienced in a way that was positive, so that people responded positively to it.
  Little by little by little, I think I just defined my own way of being in the convent, my own way of being in my own faith life. Just simplifying it, simplifying it, peeling off things that no longer were consonant with what I felt good human life was.
- **You have a lot of intergenerational relationships and friendships. What have you learned from the younger generation?** Sudie: I just love being with people. And if they're younger, then that's a level of fun and openness to their lives that I enjoy. What I've learned simply is to continue to be young and heart.

- **Three adjectives that your close friends would use to describe you?**
  Stubborn. Confident. Generous with my time. Caring. But you know ... a mind of her own.

- **Anything to say to people in future generations?**
  Live your life! Live it. Live it... Don't just watch it go by. Live it, enter into it as fully as you can, heart, soul and mind.
-

<u>2015 interview w/Jinx</u>

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<u>Blaine interview</u>

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<u>Jinx</u>

- People were just drawn to her… She was magnetic.
- She had a gravity that was very attractive, with her deep voice and her laugh, and a lot of innate wisdom - from years - that gave her depth that was instantly attractive.There's a weight
- She had a huge amount of self-acceptance
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Paul's thoughts…

Buddhist phrasing:

There's 4 things in life: you show up, you pay attention, you tell the truth, and you let it go.

- She held all these really well
- These could provide a structure
- Mentor to so many - it's her ministry. Love them for who they, how they are… People have been coming to her door for years, because of how she opens her heart to others.
  - Professional teacher AND ministry…
- Maya quote…
- Loved being wild and free… loved the flowers… remembers climbing trees…
- Paul meditates every day…. You don't have to be ordained to live a spiritual life.
- 2019 Peter-Keely interview…
  - Background: jsut wanted to do recording
  - Transcript and recording
- So not dogmatic… she was a rule breaker…
  - What's it mean to
  - Abortion
  - Women as priests - why not??
  - But was true Catholic and Christian - the real deal
  - Sometimes she and mom would get into sisterly spats. But Sudie would never hold grudges. Big lesson for us.
  - When Paul was 16, went on Outward Bound… felt renewed… during his solo came up with model - open heart… star as significance of rays coming out and going in - with open heart… Sudie: your wise beyond your years; you've figured out truth! So supportive.
  - Jinx and I and family - 15 years of Christmas' together. She'd set up Xmas village, the scene, the vigil, the manger, etc.

    - She'd come to Bend in summers - with habit. Took it off (never understood the habit). Loved to ride horses - would get on Dusty, ride through the fields in her habit, galloping, fully free.
    - Never looked back and regretted much.
        - Would you have wanted children? Don't know, never looked back.
        - w/Jinx: I would have liked to. But was so happy with where she was in life.
    - Parents wanted her to delay a year. She went to a boarding HS (San Domenico?). Go to Manhattanville in NY - flirted with the boys, but didn't change her direction. Story: teacher/mother there - you'll never make it as a nun. You break the rules too much - caught smoking, staying out.
    - Was asked to delay her indoctrination into the convent - so she could become more.
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- Bring Alice's perspective…
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- Thomas Merton