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Nell Irby only ever wanted to be one thing – a mother. She achieved that goal, and fortunately, she was my mother.

She was many other things, of course...wife, teacher, soprano in the church choir, bridge player, community volunteer, but the thing she was most confident in was that she was a good mother. (I would argue that she was good at all those other things, too, and more.)

She had 80 years on this earth, and 45 as my mom. Born in Lynchburg in 1933 at Virginia Baptist Hospital, she was the youngest of 5. Tragically, her dad was hit by a car and killed in 1935, and the family moved back to Blackstone to be near relatives. My grandmother never worked – never even drove a car – so various aunts and uncles provided for them. Somehow, all five children graduated from college.

My mom taught me all sorts of things – that when you make your bed, you lie in it; that water seeks its own level; and that if you are too sick to go to church on Sunday, you are too sick to do anything else that day.

I don't suppose I ever thought it was easy, being a mom, and she didn't try to make me think it was. But never once did she make me think it was anything less than the most important thing on earth and what she most loved to be.

To all the moms out there, Happy Mother's Day!

God Bless,

Margaret

Margaret Keightley

Executive Director

Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond

P.S. Most of the pictures of my mother are in albums, but here she is at her 80th birthday party, about nine months before she passed away.

