

Velma Biddle remembered

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Last Saturday, May 4, about 75 local residents and family members attended a memorial service at First Christian Church for long-time resident Velma Biddle. Velma died Jan. 3, 2013, at the age of 103.

As a popular teacher, she taught children in her own family about the majesty of God's creation by collecting swallowtail butterfly eggs in her backyard garden, placing them in a bottle and giving them to the children so they could watch the earthbound caterpillar enter its chrysalis for a deathlike sleep and then burst forth, gloriously transformed into the swallowtail butterfly.



Just to the right of the bird on Velma Biddle's St. Francis statue, a butterfly emerges from its cocoon, a special event for family and friends at Biddle's memorial service.

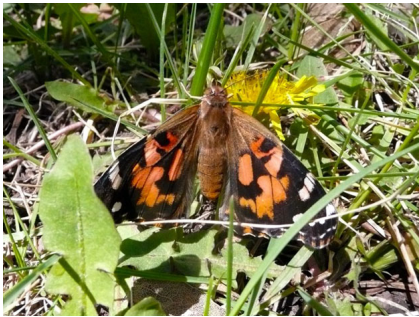
Mark Biddle, a grand-nephew, who experienced this lesson when he was a child, and his wife, Justyne, a science teacher, obtained a painted lady butterfly caterpillar a couple of months ago so their daughter, Rowyn, could watch this transformation.

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Rowyn wore this caterpillar, which had now become a chrysalis, in a small container around her neck to the service. Then during the service, amazingly, and perhaps miraculously, there was a fluttering in the container as the butterfly began to emerge.

Not surprisingly, there was a gush of emotion by those witnessing this event. It was like Velma was participating in her own service. After the service, the family took the emerging butterfly to Velma's backyard garden where she would have been pleased to see it released near her St. Francis statue.



This swallowtail butterfly was a fitting remembrance for 103-year-old Velma Biddle as she was honored during a memorial service last Saturday.

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