



## **My Nana, Esther Evans**

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Hey everyone, thank you all for coming to celebrate my grandmother. I'm so glad she was able to touch all of y'all one way or another, though I know she's never been a forgettable woman.

I've taken a lot of time trying to find the right words to describe the kind of person she was. The only person I know that could have done that right was my Nana; I think she knew all the words in the dictionary and more. So I think the best way for me to do that is talk about how she impacted me.



My siblings and I spent a lot of our childhoods with Nana. She encouraged us to read and learn about everything and I know I absorbed that as well as her passion for helping and caring for others into my personality. She had this beautiful book filled with nursery rhymes that we would read together on her floral couch in the living room. There was a library near her house that we went to all the time and we would check out books to read together. Those books would come alive and my imagination flourished. We would make up stories and she always had one to tell. We would play word games, solve puzzles and we had a game called "Rock School " where we took turns being the teacher and trying to answer questions the other made up.



She gave me my love of learning. She was there at every awards ceremonies and competitions to support me. I even wanted to be a teacher like her. She encouraged me to be the best I could be and she made sure I knew how proud she was of not just me but every member of my family as well.



When she had the stroke about 4 years ago, I was so scared I would lose her. I thought she would live forever with how she handled life. Even though she lost the usage of half her body, her mind was still there. With that fear, I worked to find the best ways to learn about her life and my dad's.



I wanted to know her life and I swear she was a human encyclopedia. But her focus during my visits would always come back to me. She kept encouraging me and talked about my classes. Nana kept me on my toes and knew something I should try and learn during each class. Always. And she always helped me learn. This is a very special thing for me, has been all my life, but I am taking one summer class right now. I told Nana about it. It's on the psychology of death and I wholeheartedly believe she and God wanted to make sure I learn the most I can, and I can honestly say that on every assignment and exam I've taken I've gotten an A. The day before she passed, we went to see her and talk to her. Though she wasn't conscious, I told her this:

**"Nana, thank you for all you have done for me.**

You have helped me to become the best me I can be. You do not have to stay here for any of us; go home, don't be in pain. You will have the best view of me walking across the stage with Dad and the rest of our family. I love you and thank you."

Her eye twitched, as if she winked, and I knew she heard me.

Goodbye for now, Nana.



Written by Jessie Pearl Evans, Esther's Granddaughter