

Charles Gilchrist Award
In Memory of Mom

I, Matthew Jablonski, the first son of Jan Jablonski, whom passed away last summer, in wake of five years of suffering ALS, am honored to accept the Charles Gilchrist Award on Mom's behalf. My father Dan Jablonski was unable to be present tonight because he is away watching my brother, Peter, show one of his finest moments of his college career before graduating this year. They wish they could be here this evening, to see this recognition of Mom's accomplishments.

Her devotion toward the historic Noyes Children's Library, in Kensington, began over twenty-five years ago, in the late-1980s. Ever since I was born, the library has been closely intertwined with Mom and our entire family. She and I would go there to check-out books on a daily basis, for her to read to me, much of the first half of my childhood.

In 1991, the unique library was in danger of closing, due to budget cuts. However, thanks to Mom, and a collection of dedicated individuals, their heroic efforts, that proposition never came to be. Instead, their determination created the Noyes Children's Library Foundation, which has made the landmark attract hundreds of children, like I once was, come and support it to this day. Since then, Mom served as a Co-President of the Foundation.

Fast-forward twenty years, in 2011, Mom was diagnosed with her fatal illness. This became an increasing challenge for her to live in a normal lifestyle. Despite this, she would not let it consume her attachment to Noyes. Coherently, one goal of the Foundation's Board was to undertake a multi-million dollar capital project, to make Noyes handicapped accessible for her and anyone else with a disability.

Mom did everything she could, from writing countless emails, by using innovative technology, to offering insight at meetings. Thanks to her numerous efforts, the ambition of renovating the library, making it welcome to everyone, will likely become a reality in the near future.

In closing, to me, Jan Jablonski has become not just a name but a title, a title of an individual who shows determination, collaboration, perseverance, optimism and inspiration. Here I am now, following Mom's footsteps, acting as a Board member for the Noyes Foundation, trying my hardest to keep those qualities alive and well.

Thank you.

April 8th, 2017