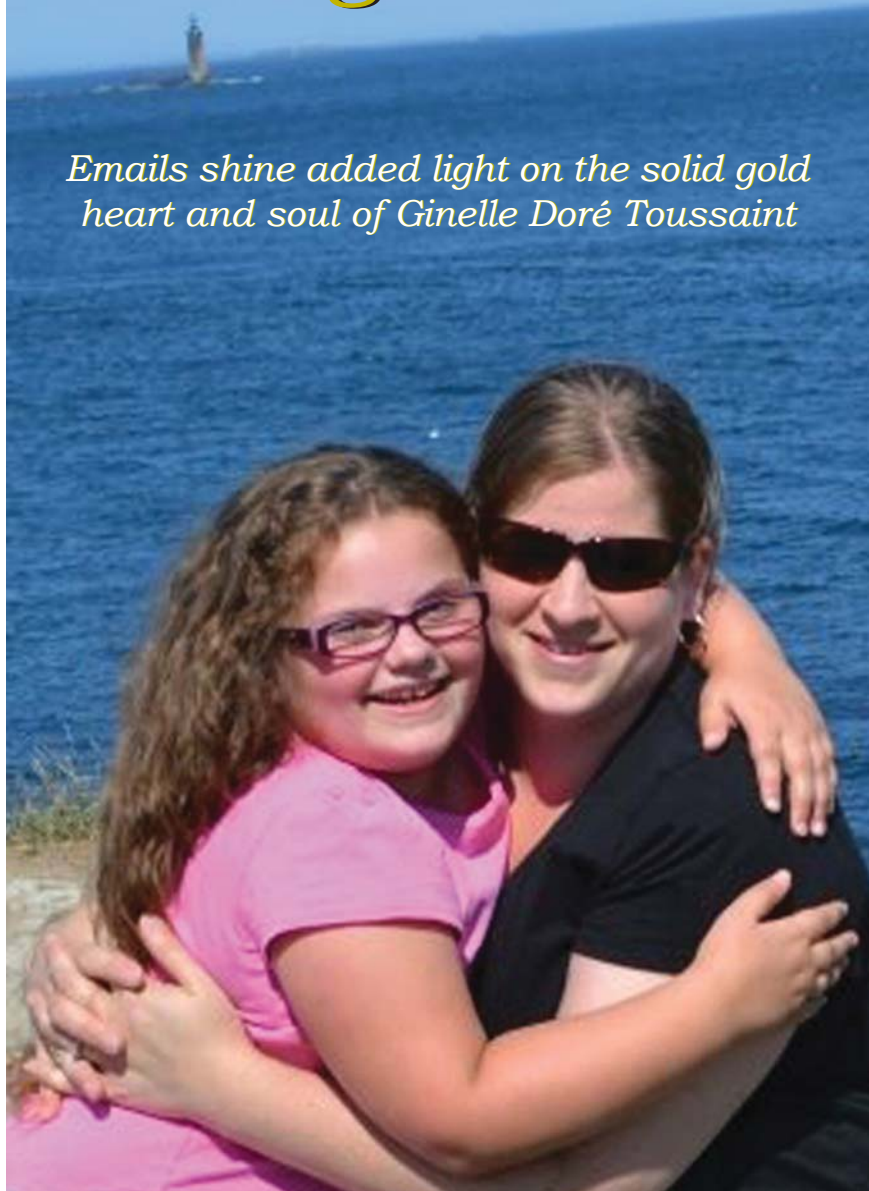


Golden nuggets among the sand

*Emails shine added light on the solid gold
heart and soul of Ginelle Doré Toussaint*





PARTING WORDS OF PRAISE -- In her last text message to mother-in-law Kathy LaPietro (right), Ginelle wrote: "If something has been forgotten, no worries. It is what it is and will all work out just fine. You are tired. I can't thank you enough for everything you have done and continue to do for my family. You are amazing and I am truly blessed. Good-night for now. Let's wake up to a wonderful Christmas together. Love you." Ginelle took her last breath on December 27, 2016 -- the birthday of her recently deceased mother Suzanne Toussaint (left).

As I was putting the finishing touches on the following tribute to Ginelle Doré Toussaint in 2017, I felt an inexplicable urge to visit an old email account I'd been contemplating cancelling due to its largely dormant status.

With emails dating back nearly a decade, I was tempted to hit DELETE ALL. But something made me reconsider. Instead I typed in "2013" -- the year when Ginelle had taken a portrait of her father to accompany a story I'd written about him.

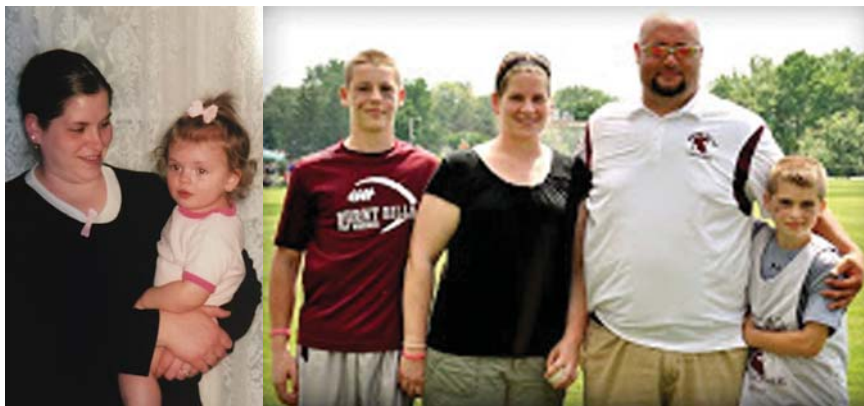
Like an old prospector panning for gold, I was blessed to discover a few precious nuggets among "the sand" in my electronic IN BIN.

With permission from Ginelle's family, I'm reprinting excerpts on the following page from two of the uplifting and insightful messages I received from her iPhone that October. I didn't realize at the time how many balls Ginelle was juggling. In hindsight, it's a marvel she found the time and energy to compose them.

But perhaps the greatest testimonial to Ginelle's solid gold heart and soul are found above and below in the final emails she sent to her mother-in-law and her father just days before her spirit passed over on December 27, 2016. -- *Ann Hauprich*

Ginelle's father treasures this email sent to him on December 25, 2016

Merry Christmas Dad! We have all had a nice day. I think we all have that feeling of it being a bit different than usual. I ate and drank some. Took a nap & then had a very nice & relaxing visit w/both Renee & B. Thinking I might take another nap & then try some of the food that was sent (so much food)! I hope that u had a good day so far & that it continues. Enjoy dinner at Neil's. Hope all goes smoothly. Love u. ♥



It was the portrait at far left that Ginelle Doré Toussaint took of her father, Stephen R. Toussaint, in Autumn 2013 that led to uplifting email exchanges between the busy young mother and author Ann Hauprich. Top left photo shows toddler Morgan nestled in her Mommy's arms while the image beside it captured Ginelle on a sports field flanked by husband Jason and sons Darien and Caeden. Following Ginelle's untimely passing, loved ones would don Toussaint 19 shirts honoring her legacy.

——Original Message——

From: ginelle toussaint
To: Ann Hauprich
Sent: Sun, Oct 20, 2013 10:23 am
Subject: Re: Belated Happy Birthday to YOU!

Thank you for the birthday wishes. I had a wonderful day, spent with my family. My 10 year old son scored 2 out of the 3 touchdowns in his game yesterday. He made the pass for the 3rd touchdown. Exciting! When we returned home, a copy of your book was in our mailbox! Can't wait to read the article about my father. :) I hope you enjoy the rest of the weekend.

~~~~~

——Original Message——

From: ginelle toussaint  
To: Ann Hauprich  
Sent: Tue, Oct 22, 2013 2:03 pm  
Subject: Re: Sounds like you had a banner day!

Thank you very much! My boys make me proud! Their hard work & determination helps to get them far in the game! My oldest, however, is out for the season. Hoping he'll be cleared for sports & gym next month. Their father (Jason) is an assistant coach for the Varsity football team here in Burnt Hills. My boys are also very involved with that as well. Sports is their passion & they are very athletic. I saw the article about my father online this morning. You did a wonderful job! Thank you!

# Live, Laugh, Love



Celebrating the brief,  
but purpose-filled, life  
of Ginelle Doré Toussaint

# Ginelle Doré Toussaint

Remembering a solid gold daughter,  
sibling, wife, mother and volunteer

Ginelle Doré Toussaint made a lasting impression on my writer's heart when she responded to an SOS from my home-based office in September 2013.

*The Saratogian* had assigned me to prepare an article about her father, Stephen R. Toussaint, who was being installed as Grand Knight of the Saratoga Knights of Columbus. While my deadline allowed ample time to research and write the feature, securing a portrait of the leader to accompany the piece was another story entirely.

Because I was then still using a film camera, negatives had to be sent to a lab before I could scan, upload and email photographs to my editors. Upon learning of my predicament, Ginelle offered her digital photography skills to aid this tech-challenged Damsel in Distress.

Despite her hectic schedule (Ginelle was busy earning the REAL LIFE equivalent of a PhD in Early Childhood Education at the time), she came through in a manner befitting the legacy of her maternal grandfather George S. Bolster.

It was Bolster who took the 1975 baby portraits of Ginelle on the facing page. And, in a Circle of Life moment, the newspaper awarded the picture an adult Ginelle took of her father a Front Page placement. Ginelle wouldn't hear of receiving payment for her contribution – which she subsequently donated for reprinting in this book.

Although physically weakened by cancer, Ginelle's caring, giving, nurturing spirit remained strong. Upon learning that Ginelle's heart and mind had continued to overflow with concern for the well-being of others right up until her untimely December 27, 2016 passing, I found myself reflecting on a verse by Emily Dickinson:

*“If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
I shall not live in vain;  
If I can ease one life the aching,  
Or cool one pain,  
Or help one fainting robin  
Into his nest again,  
I shall not live in vain.”*

The following is a tribute to Ginelle's brief, but purpose-filled, life.



*“On October 19, 1974 -- a cloudless and sunny day -- God paused, reached down to earth, and blessed Stephen and Suzanne Toussaint with a precious baby girl they named Ginelle Doré.”*

-- Passage from the January 3, 2017 eulogy for Ginelle Doré Toussaint, who grew up to become a caring, supportive, loving daughter, sister, spouse and mother.



Ginelle’s French middle name Doré translates to “blonde” or “golden” in English. Following her passing, father Stephen R. Toussaint would reflect that although Ginelle didn’t yet have an abundance of golden tresses when the name Doré was given to her as a newborn, “there was solid gold in baby Ginelle Doré and in her actions throughout her lifetime. A most fitting name.”



“More than anything else in the world, Ginelle cherished being a mother to Darien, Caeden and Morgan. That was her true calling,” reflected a grief-stricken Jason LaPietro shortly after his wife’s untimely December 27, 2016 passing.

“Before Darien was born 15 years ago, Ginelle had planned on a six-month leave of absence from her job. By the time Caeden and Morgan (now 13 and 11, respectively) arrived, Ginelle and I would joke that she was enjoying the longest six-month maternity leave in history.”

Even though the couple’s shared decision for Ginelle to be a full-time homemaker meant doing without certain material things, Jason said her commitment to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of their children provided them with things money cannot buy.

The way they looked at it, Ginelle could always return to the outside workforce should the need arise after their youngest had left the nest. Until then they’d find creative ways to stretch Jason’s income as a varsity football and lacrosse coach in the Burnt-Hills-Ballston Lake School District.

But when an inoperable form of cancer claimed Ginelle’s life midway through the 2016-2017 academic year, a desire to assist The LaPietro Family quickly became a community-wide cause.

Credit for the creation of a GoFundMe page to subsidize Ginelle’s medical and hospital bills goes to primarily to friends of the family. In seeking donations, supporters were reminded of Ginelle’s incredible contributions as a parent volunteer in classrooms and as an enthusiastic booster of athletic events.

As a relative affectionately observed: “Ginelle was at school events, concerts, parent teacher time, art displays, Mother-Daughter Nights, Field Days and Moving Up Ceremonies to name a few. She enjoyed family vacations to Maine and loved the ocean. She went camping, on many day trips and picnic outings. Ginelle was in attendance at every athletic event possible, often while sitting in the bleachers or car supporting Morgan’s homework efforts. Whether it be games of soccer, lacrosse, baseball, basketball or football, Ginelle was behind the children and Jason, encouraging each of their personal activities.”

Just how many lives had been touched by Ginelle was evidenced in the long lines of mourners who wrapped themselves around the interior – and exterior – of the Glenville Funeral Home to pay their respects at her wake on the afternoon and evening of January 2, 2017. The slowly moving sea of humanity with a shared goal of wishing to console Ginelle’s family must surely have felt like a comforting community-wide hug.

Perhaps the Rev. James Vaughan expressed it best when he reflected that Ginelle’s wake had been “a testimonial to her goodness” and how she had lived her life, day in and day out, devoted to caring for others, especially her children.

Because his own mother died when he was young, leaving him to be reared by a single father during The Great Depression, the padre shares a special bond with those who feel Ginelle’s absence most profoundly.

I join Father Vaughan in praying God will bless the fund that has been established in Ginelle’s name to help ensure the realization of the hopes and dreams of her cherished children.



Vocation is rarely used in the same sentence as motherhood. But no other word does justice in the case of Ginelle Doré Toussaint. This beautiful soul devoted her life to the care of her three offspring in a manner worthy of one who had taken vows promising to make their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being her most important mission.

Ginelle and Jason with Darien in 2001. The couple would later joke about Ginelle taking “the longest six-month maternity leave in history.” The more recent photograph captured a blissful Ginelle relaxing at home in Burnt Hills, NY with Darien, Caeden and Morgan.



## **Ginelle’s Family Fund**

Donations may be sent to:  
Ballston Spa National Bank  
Burnt Hills Branch  
PO Box 70, Ballston Spa, NY 12020



*“Ginelle very easily brought a smile to your face and would want us to remember the fun, happy, joyful times that we all shared.”*



*Passages from Ginelle’s eulogy shine light on how she exemplified dignity and grace -- even as she was courageously battling cancer near the end of her human journey.*

“In 1999, Ginelle met her future husband Jason in downtown Saratoga Springs. She was taken with Jason’s outgoing personality and warm smile. Jason felt Ginelle’s kindness and loved how happy they felt together. They became a loving couple and started making plans for their future and creating a family.

Being a mother was the essence of who Ginelle was. As a teen she began caring for the children of neighbors, friends and family, bringing love and joy to them through her gentle nurturing. Ginelle became a mother with the birth of her first son, Darien Connor. Soon followed the births of Caeden John and Morgan Elizabeth. Ginelle was so proud of her children and believed being a mother was truly who she was meant to be. She invited other young children into her home while their parents worked. She nurtured all of the children with music, love, education, outdoor fun and the special requests made by their mothers. Sisters Marci and Suzanne are forever grateful that Ginelle cared for and loved their babies as if they were her own while they were at work.

Last July the family vacationed in Maine. Despite limited resources, children’s summer sports schedules and last minute plans, Ginelle and Jason seized the opportunity and brought their family to the ocean. Once in Maine, Ginelle delighted in being by the seashore with her immediate and extended family. She enjoyed lobster dinners, watching her children frolic in the waves and souvenir shopping.



### **THREE CHEERS FOR AN AMAZING MOM!**

These photographs capture some of the moments that won Ginelle admiration as a true parenting partner with husband Jason and as a loving and supportive mother to Darien, Caeden and Morgan. Whether assisting in a classroom with Caeden, waiting for a bus with Morgan or at a sporting event with Darien, Ginelle rocked in her roles as a multi-tasking Mom and an enthusiastic cheerleader.



Our family is grateful to have had an intimate view of Ginelle mothering her children with love, grace and beauty during her last few weeks. She nudged everyone to get their showers done on time, helped Morgan with her hair, lent a hand with homework, went over next day's schedules and reminded Caeden not to lose his lunch box. We enjoyed seeing the kids kiss their mother hello and goodbye as they came and went from their daily activities and Ginelle smile or make a joke to lighten a somber moment.

Ginelle exemplified charity, kindness, love, patience and tolerance. She always shared her smile with others. A high school friend who was a new student recalls Ginelle saving her a seat at the lunch table every day. A neighbor remembers her as a most wonderful person who always made sure that everyone was happy.

In her last weeks while in the hospital her warmth came through in her interactions with staff. She never failed to say please and thank you assuring them of their importance to her.

We remember that Ginelle lit up the room with her happiness and genuine joy to see you. She very easily brought a smile to your face and would want us to remember the fun, happy, joyful times that we all shared. She is watching to make sure that we Live, Laugh and Love, just as we did when she was here with us.



THE TOUSSAINT FAMILY JEWELS -- It was ca. 2007 that Ginelle and her nine siblings posed for this portrait as gift to parents Stephen and Suzanne Toussaint. Front row (L to R) are Renee, Brigitte, Neil, William, Suzanne and Stephen. Jr. Back row: Marci, Allisse, Ginelle and Collette.

*The following eulogy excerpt speaks volumes about the strength of the bonds that united the 10 Toussaint children and endeared Ginelle to her six older and three younger siblings.*

“Though she was seriously ill, Ginelle remained thoughtful and inquired about how Dad was every day (because) she worried about his grief after our mother died in August. When Renee had oral surgery recently, Ginelle was the first to call to see how she was feeling. She loved to hear about Marci’s visits with granddaughter Kaylee. She continued to share favorite music and songs with Collette. She prayed for Allisse to find the perfect new job and she wondered how Ambur was coping with the stress of final exams. She congratulated Stephen as the Oakland Raiders made their way to the play-offs. On Christmas Day (two days before she passed away), Ginelle asked for a visit with Brigitte because sharing conversation with a sister was just what she needed. She expressed concern for the health of Bill’s aging dog. She admired her brother Neil for gathering the family together at his home for the Christmas holiday. Ginelle prayed that (youngest sister) Suzanne will continue to have a healthy pregnancy.”



Top photo taken by Pa Toussaint in 1975 shows a "Little House on the Prairie" Christmas with Ginelle front and center, flanked by Stephen, Jr. and Brigitte. Behind them are Renee, Marci, Collette and Allisse. Ginelle, who would later welcome three younger siblings (William, Neil and Suzanne) was an excellent student who made many wonderful lifelong friends while attending schools in the Saratoga Springs City School District. The SSSH Class of 1992 graduate subsequently attended the State University at Cobleskill where she majored in Early Childhood Education. Ginelle was also employed at the Saratoga Shoe Depot prior to starting "the longest six-month maternity leave in history" around the turn-of-the-millennium. Young Ginelle also enjoyed doting upon Marci's children Jake and Karley (who went on to attend Skidmore College) as well as caring for the offspring of other youngsters in and outside of her family circle.



# Toussaint 19

*An earlier passage described how Ginelle Doré Toussaint had chosen full-time motherhood as her vocation. She and husband Jason LaPietro had reasoned Ginelle had the option of returning to the workforce should the need arise after Darien, Caeden and Morgan had left the nest. Until then the couple would find creative ways to stretch Jason's coaching income.*

*But when an inoperable form of cancer claimed Ginelle's life two days after Christmas in 2016, a desire to assist her cherished children quickly became a community-wide cause.*

*The poignant photos on the facing page that were taken by Erica LeVan on April 27, 2017 and the captivating story by Daily Gazette sports writer Jim Schiltz that follows shed additional light on Ginelle's legacy.*

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BURNT HILLS — The Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake varsity boys' lacrosse team has an unwritten rule that in a one-sided game it will not try to score more than 19 goals. The Spartans found themselves in that spot last week in a matchup with Albany, and quelling their attack after reaching 19 goals was never more appropriate.

That's the number Burnt Hills sophomore Darien LaPietro is wearing this season in honor of his mom, Ginelle Toussaint, who succumbed to cancer on Dec. 27. That game against Albany came on the night the Burnt Hills community came out in force to support LaPietro, his younger siblings Caeden and Morgan, and their dad Jason LaPietro, who serves as an assistant coach for the Spartans.

"It was a great night," said Darien LaPietro, whose mom's birthday was October 19. "It was great to see so many families giving their support to my family."

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TEAM TOUSSAINT 19: Ginelle's father, Stephen R. Toussaint, Sr. (front row, fourth from left) was profoundly touched by the outpouring of support at the fund-raiser honoring her legacy. Among the many relatives in attendance were those who posed for this group portrait with members of the lacrosse team. Included in the front row are Ginelle's sisters Brigitte, Collette and Allisse (with hands on shoulders of nephew Greyson, son of Neil Toussaint), and Suzanne (sporting "baby bump"). In between Allisse and Suzanne are Ginelle's daughter Morgan and her paternal grandmother Kathy LaPietro while paternal grandfather John LaPietro and Neil Toussaint are on Suzanne's other side. Partially hidden behind Neil is Toussaint brother Stephen, Jr. Also behind Neil are Ginelle's husband Jason LaPietro and sons Darien (with hair blowing in the breeze) and Caeden (at far right). Inset photos show Grandpa Toussaint offering encouraging words to Darien; Jason receiving a hug from brother-in-law Steve Toussaint, Jr.; and Grandma LaPietro embracing Darien as Morgan looks on.



## Three cheers for Toussaint 19!



Photographer Erica LeVan captured these and other heart-warming moments during an April 2017 athletic event honoring Ginelle Doré Toussaint. To view enlargements and/or additional images of those who donned Toussaint 19 shirts (including Ginelle's longtime husband Jason LaPietro and their three sports-loving children Morgan, Darien and Caeden), please visit <https://goo.gl/photos/qGS6fqYGmvDyX5NK7>.



The memorial game which the Spartans won 19-5 on April 27 was organized by the Burnt Hills Lacrosse Booster Club. All proceeds — well over \$1,000 — went to Ginelle’s Family Fund according to BH-BL head lacrosse coach Tom Schwan. “I can’t say enough about our booster club and our community that came out,” Schwan said. “Different sports teams from the school were there. It was a pretty awesome night.”

Jason LaPietro also serves as an assistant coach with the BH-BL varsity football team. Its coach, Matt Shell, and his son, Jacob Shell, are both cancer survivors. “When Matt was sick and Jacob was sick, the community was there for them,” Jason LaPietro said. “They’ve been there for us. Great community. I can’t say more than that.”

Darien LaPietro scored the game’s first goal, kick-starting a run of six unanswered goals in the opening quarter.

“I don’t know if the other guys were looking for him or not,” Jason LaPietro said. “He got leveled on the crease and the ball found its way in. After the goal Tom goes to him, *Your mom guided that one in.*”

That was one of two goals scored by the University at Albany commit. By the fourth quarter, 10 other Spartans had scored led by Hunter Wolfe with four goals. All of the Spartans wore black t-shirts under their game jerseys with No. 19 and ‘Toussaint’ emblazoned on the back in teal lettering. The t-shirts were donated by BH-BL varsity girls’ coach Jake McHerron.

“Hunter’s mom (BH Lacrosse Booster Club boys’ vice president Sherri Wolfe) spoke to me a month before about doing something,” Darien LaPietro said.

“Darien and Hunter are such good friends. I call Darien my second son,” Sherri Wolfe said. “It (Toussaint’s passing) really hit home for my son and our entire family. We wanted to do something but didn’t know if it was too soon, so I asked Tom about it. He said check with Jason and we went from there.”

The Spartans began to pile up goals shortly after Burnt Hills student Hailey Aldrich sang one of Toussaint’s favorite songs, Rascal Flatts’ ‘My Wish’, and then the national anthem.

“It was an emotional night,” Schwan said. “Lots of tears.”

“Her (Ginelle’s) whole family was there,” Wolfe said. “Her dad was there. Cousins, brothers and sisters. It was wonderful.”

Burnt Hills collected eight goals in the second quarter, and three and two in the quarters that followed, to reach 19.

“There was a lot of time left when we got our 19th goal,” Schwan said. “I told Jason, *We’re going to keep it right at 19.*”

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Sincere thanks Daily Gazette sports writer Jim Schiltz and his editors at the community-minded Schenectady, NY newspaper for granting permission to reprint his detailed account of the Toussaint 19 memorial event. Journalist Schiltz may be reached at 518.395.3143 or @jim_schiltz on Twitter.

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**PARTING WORDS FROM GINELLE** - In her last text message to mother-in-law Kathy LaPietro, Ginelle wrote: “If something has been forgotten, no worries. It is what it is and will all work out just fine. I can’t thank you enough for everything you have done and continue to do for my family. You are amazing and I am truly blessed. Good-night for now. Let’s wake up to a wonderful Christmas together. Love you.” Ginelle took her last breath on December 27, 2016 -- the birthday of her recently deceased mother Suzanne Toussaint. To learn more about Ginelle’s legacy, please read “Golden nuggets among the sand” by Ann Hauprich on LegaciesUnlimited.com.

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