



JILL KONEY DALY

DOROTHY'S HOME

From the Desk of Annie Edwards

To: Kroger Management

Hand-delivered

December 4, 2008

Please allow me to compliment one of your employees, Mark Kubinski. He is a treasure. With my driving days now in my rearview mirror, I have found great delight in daily constitutionals to Kroger to procure my fresh food. Your Mr. Kubinski always greets me kindly, engages me with the news of the day, and attentively packs my small rolling cart for my short walk home. He speaks *with* me rather than *at* or *through* me. (Not everyone in your establishment deserves my praise. In fact, if you would care to discuss the proliferation and rudeness of cellular telephones in the workplace I would be happy to oblige.) As I am 91½ years of age, I will admit to being superannuated and perhaps old-fashioned, but I believe that exemplary customer service should never go out of style or be unrecognized.

So, thank you for employing such a fine assistant manager and for pausing to read my letter.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy 2009,
Mrs. Annie Edwards

P.S. I thoroughly enjoyed your special Thanksgiving dinner-to-go last week!

Dear Dorothy,

Would it be possible for you to come home from California for the holidays this year? Has it really been an entire two years since we last saw each other? You had some business in metro Detroit at the time. (Speaking of which, I have not signed the documents you left since it is not necessary to add your name as a joint owner to my bank account. Direct deposit works just fine, and with the bank branch at Kroger, I have had no problems accessing my funds despite your fears.)

I digress. Even though your job is demanding, couldn't you spare a few days away so that we might spend our first Christmas together since your father passed away? It would be extraordinary to catch up in person. Do you remember our family "squeezy hugs"? Although I revel in your calls the first Sunday of the month, the holidays are brutal. A squeezy hug could put a dent in my loneliness.

I finally sold the LeBaron (imagine—44,000 miles in the last 16 years!) after Dr. Margaret Montecello "strongly discouraged" me from driving due to that darn macular degeneration. My only regular outings are short excursions to Kroger on Woodward. I find that if I scurry, I can reach the middle of the boulevard in one light! Since we have suffered some icy days lately (I wonder if you recall winter's challenges?), I have summoned a taxi on occasion to attend to some errands around town (surely you recall the consistently pathetic state of mass transit in this state!). Also, when they provide transportation, I attend some so-called "events" at the senior center, but I find so many of the participants such unmitigated bores, I cannot tolerate it as a regular diet. As you know from the obituary clippings I send, so many of my dear friends have now passed! Sadly, I am beginning to lack the particular energy that is necessary to engage in new relationships yet again. Alas, the best company I keep now is with the books on tape I receive in the mail from the Library for the Blind.

Well, enough of this babbling and brief sojourn into my occasional pity party. Know that I love and miss you and hope to see you home for the holidays.

Love,
Mother Dearest



Dear Mr. Kubinski,

I cannot thank you enough for allowing me to join your family holiday fête, what with my Dorothy not being able to celebrate with me this year.

I thoroughly enjoyed your smart and talented children, Jessica and Nicholas, and hearing about their college experiences. They remind me of my honors English students at Northern High School ages ago!

You certainly have done a fine job of raising them alone since your wife passed away 11 years ago. I had no idea you were a single father! Certainly, your life's challenges never seem to interfere with your pleasant attitude.

Please also thank your extended family for their gracious acceptance of my intrusion and for the delicious jar of Sanders Hot Fudge.

Wishing you and your family a Happy and Healthy 2009,
Mrs. Annie Edwards



Dear Dorothy,

Thank you for the post card from Maui. It was kind of you to remember my birthday. Did I mention during our latest telephone call that my last dear old friend Frieda passed away? She used to find me such humorous cards! Although I have not seen her since she was moved to the nursing home after her stroke last year, it still feels like a great last loss to me. Oh, the fun we had at our teachers' bridge club!

I regret to inform you that I cannot attend your retirement party in California. Although I would dearly love to see where you live, I am certain that air travel would be far too taxing for me now. And I cannot say that I am enamored with those new airport scanners!

Might you now find some periods of retirement idleness? Is it possible that you could visit this summer in Michigan? Perhaps we would take a drive up M22 to revisit Glen Arbor and the Sleeping Bear Dunes (no—I would not climb them this time!). Or stay at the grand old Portage Point Inn where we used to enjoy holidays in your youth? Or we could just idle away some precious time here at this great old house where we enjoyed life together as a family so long ago. Perhaps my eyes would allow yet another competitive game of Scrabble.

I look forward to a positive response and itinerary and hope you are well.

Love,
Mother





Dear Mark,

What a glorious Fourth of July celebration! I am so very grateful that you let me join your family for the festivities. What fantastic news to hear that the children's scholarships are continued for another year!

How fun to be with your young nieces and nephews as they oohed and ahed at the fireworks! It took me back to the Hudson's fireworks downtown. My husband and I regularly took Dorothy to my father's office in the City-County Building where we enjoyed front-row seats to the extravaganza.

The photographs you slipped into my grocery sack today really tickled me. I cannot remember the last time I waved a sparkler! Hopefully your family and friends do not consider me an old fool.

My heart seems to have been jump-started ever since the youngsters have taken to calling me "Granny Annie." Being an only child, with one daughter far away and no grandchildren of my own, I feel greatly comforted by your family's warmth.

Warmest regards,
Granny Annie



Dear Dorothy,

Merry Christmas to you, dear. I was taken aback to receive your holiday greetings from Maui with the announcement that you have retired there!

I am sorry that you could not find the time to visit this summer in Michigan. Your beach house sounds wonderful. I cannot imagine anything more exquisite than summer on Lake Michigan, but I am sure you are seduced by Maui's yearlong warmth. If you have a chance, could you please send me some actual photographs? I do not have a computer to access them on the website you sent, although I have a friend, Mr. Kubinski, who might assist me.

Kindly,
Your Mother

Dear Mark,

A thousand thank yous for another delightful Christmas and the lovely hat and gloves. As you might have observed, I value nice accoutrements but have been hesitant to update my ancient wardrobe due to the uncertain economy.

I also appreciate your help in accessing the photographs of my daughter's beach house on your computer.

Best wishes to Jessica and Nicholas as they head back to Michigan State and Alma. It was heavenly to hear Nicholas reprise his choral concert and Jessica's violin accompaniment was superb as well. Please let them know that Granny Annie is exceedingly proud of them.

Hugs,
Annie



Dear Mark,

As I approach my 93rd birthday, it occurs to me that someone locally should be apprised of the whereabouts of my latest last will and testament. You will find it wrapped in aluminum foil (labeled "venison") in the basement freezer. I would be eternally grateful if you could retrieve the document and commence probate proceedings upon my demise. You will find my "pre-paid funeral arrangements" file in the cabinet in the back room. (I have directed that there be *no* funeral services.) There is also a file with my daughter's contact information. She should be notified at your earliest convenience.

Finally, although I do not intend on leaving my earthly body anytime soon, I want to make sure that you know that your friendship has salvaged my last years and I thank you.

Love,
Annie



Dear Jessica and Nicholas,

Thank you for stopping by today. Isn't it a glorious summer? This is just a little note to tell you how much I am enjoying my flower garden again. Although your father did not want you to be compensated for weeding every week, I enclose a small token of my appreciation because you are such good children and I surmise that you have better things to do with your time. (You do not have to tell your father about the enclosed checks.) You have infused my withered existence with such joy!

I wish you warm summers, crisp autumns, cozy winters and, always, the sweet promise of spring throughout your lives.

Squeezy Hugs,
Granny Annie

To: Kubinskij@msu; kubinskin@alma
From: Kubinskim
Date: October 25, 2010
Subject: PLEASE READ ASAP!!!

Hi kids, I tried calling your cells but no one is picking up. I didn't want to leave a voice mail (you guys never listen to them) or to shock you with a text so I hope this works.

I am VERY SORRY to tell you—we have lost our friend, Annie. It appears that she died peacefully in her sleep two nights ago. They say it was her heart. We didn't see her in the store for a couple days so I became concerned and called. No answer. I used the house key she gave me. She was already gone. Please CALL ME as soon as you get this so we can talk. Cremation Monday—no funeral services—but I was thinking we could hold a memorial for her at our party on the 4th next year?

I know that you were as fond of her as she was of you and that she will live on in our hearts.

Love ya,
Dad



Obituary

EDWARDS, Annie

March 31, 1917–October 23, 2010. Age 93. Happy Oaks, Michigan. Beloved wife of Andrew for 54 years until his death in 2000. Surviving daughter, Dorothy Edwards of Maui, Hawaii. At Annie's request, there will be no funeral services. Memorial will be held next July. Donations can be made to Literacy Detroit.



Excerpt from Probate Court Order

Estate of Annie Edwards, 2010—468,125 DE

This matter coming on for hearing before the court and there being no objections;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

- 1) the will of Annie Edwards, dated August 28, 2009, is admitted to probate,
- 2) Mark Kubinski is appointed Personal Representative,
- 3) Dorothy Edwards, daughter, is determined to be the sole heir and devisee.

Dated: January 19, 2011 /s/

Motown Brokerage House
Detroit, Michigan

To: Mark Kubinski, Personal Representative
Estate of Annie Edwards

Dear Mr. Kubinski,

Our sincere condolences on the loss of your friend Annie Edwards. You inquired as to the possible existence of any brokerage accounts due to some correspondence you found in her house after her death.

Our legal counsel has reviewed the admitted will of Annie Edwards and your Letters of Authority and has found them to be in order. This is to confirm that there is, indeed, a brokerage account in the name of the decedent, but the fact that there is a named beneficiary will render probate unnecessary. You are the named beneficiary, Mr. Kubinski, and the contingent beneficiaries are your children Jessica and Nicholas Kubinski.

We are in the process of auditing the account. I can assure you that a complete statement of Mrs. Edwards' holdings will be available within 14 days.

Should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact us. Naturally, we are anxious to discuss how we may establish a business relationship with you with regard to these funds.

Sincerely,
Maximillian Brown, Vice President



Probate Court Inventory

<u>Description of Property</u>	<u>Value</u>
House at 127 Elm St., Happy Oaks, MI 2 x SEV (\$74,000)	\$148,000.00
Household furnishings	\$ 3,000.00
Clothing, personal items	\$ 1,200.00
Bank account, Great Lakes Bank	\$ 5,294.67
Total	<u>\$157,494.67</u>

Dated: February 14, 2011
/s/ Mark Kubinski, Personal Representative

Ms. Dorothy Edwards
Maui, Hawaii

Dear Ms. Edwards,

Enclosed is a copy of the Inventory. The court told me I need to mail it to you. Your mother's probate assets consist of her home here in Happy Oaks and the bank account at the Great Lakes Bank branch at Kroger. Once the 4 month claims period expires and any claims are paid, I will transfer the funds to your bank account in Maui and send you the recorded deed. Perhaps you were struggling with grief when you told me to liquidate all of her personal and household items in an estate sale? I will wait for written confirmation and ask your permission for my children to select small items as a remembrance.

Sincerely,
Mark Kubinski

Motown Brokerage House

Dear Mr. Kubinski,

Attached is the updated statement of accounts for the decedent, Annie Edwards. We would again like to convey our deepest sympathies on the loss of your friend.

You will be pleased to know that due to some generous pensions, savvy investing, and frugal living, Mrs. Edwards amassed an estate of \$1.6 million. She was a dear lady who took a keen interest in her business affairs and brightened our establishment with her regular correspondence, visits, and “suggestions.”

May we arrange a meeting with our wealth advisor soon?

Best regards,

Maximillian Brown, Vice President



Ms. Dorothy Edwards

Maui, Hawaii

Greetings! Enclosed is your check for \$3,653 from the estate sale. I'm preparing the final paperwork to close the estate. There were no claims, and I'm not taking any fiduciary fees. Per your OK, Jess selected a little statue of a cockapoo (which reminded your mother of a long-ago family pet, Poncho). Nick snagged an antique bottle capper, which may come in handy if we ever start a home-brewing hobby! Thank you! They mean a lot to us.

It's hard to believe that it's almost a year since Annie died. It's been a busy one for us. Jessica graduated from MSU and was accepted to medical school at Wayne State! She hopes to specialize in geriatric care. Nick still loves Alma College where he is trying to figure out how he will translate his vocal talents into a job in the real world.

As we went through your mom's personal items, we found the enclosed scrapbook. It appears to contain every letter and post card you ever sent Annie. I also threw in some photos of her over the last few years. A particular favorite of hers was the one that shows her and the little kids waving sparklers at our annual 4th of



July party. We really like the shots at the beautiful Portage Point Inn, where we went on a Sunday drive with Annie last summer. She told stories about your wonderful vacations there. I hope your memories sustain you now.

Also—a weird thing happened. I was cleaning out the home for the estate sale and something told me I better check the freezer one more time. Wouldn't you know it—there was an aluminum foil package tucked in the back with your name on it! I thawed it out and peeked inside to make sure it was not food! It was a letter! I enclose it now and leave the reading to you.

Annie was a grand lady. The Kubinskis are so lucky she came into our lives. If you ever come to Michigan to check on the home or your tenants, we would love to meet Annie's daughter. You will always be welcomed in our home.

Sincerely,

Mark Kubinski



Dearest Dorothy Ann,

A mother never stops teaching, especially when she is a teacher, so here are your final lessons. If all goes as planned, by now my ashes will be mingled with the waters of Lake Michigan, Mark will be a wealthy man, and you will be the new owner of our old home and the small bank account you were so anxious to access. As I failed miserably in securing a visit from you, this is my last-ditch effort to bring you home even if it is too late to bring me joy. I hold no illusions that you will take up residence here, but I strongly suggest that you visit here to become acquainted with the former strangers who enveloped me with love while you were putting mountains and oceans between us. The Kubinskis showed me respect, kindness, caring, and fun with the purest of hearts. (If you doubt their motives, know that the extent of my wealth was a secret I shared with no one.)

I am sorry we grew apart and even sorer that you kept the reasons to yourself.

The only legacy I have left for you now is some wisdom: no matter where you live, you will never be truly at home until you sort out whatever it was that kept you away. Only then will your heart find its way back home. It is never too late.

Peace and Love,

Mother Dearest ■



Jill Koney Daly grew up in Detroit, spent her teen years in Troy, and lives in Royal Oak with her husband. She has one daughter living in Manhattan and another attending Michigan State University. She's a 1982 graduate of the Detroit College of Law and has worked for the Oakland County Probate Court for 23 years, where she has been probate register since 2006. She reads, gardens, walks, plays tennis, and is a lifelong Tigers fan.