



Remembering Mary Harris



Thirty years ago, following my passion, turning my avocation into my vocation, I never thought once about what this hobby and business would be like many years later. The focus was on the next show, and just growing my business. Well, a philatelic lifetime of years has passed and so has the generation that I grew up knowing and respecting. People like Bob Siegel, Kenny Wenger, and Lou Robbins have all passed.

Now my generation is at the top of the food chain and that is very unsettling. One of my best friends, a client, Dr. Jeff Westheimer, passed 18 months ago, John Wright, a dealer that I had known long before going into this business, passed earlier this year. Recently, we lost one of the sweetest women in the philatelic world, Mary Harris.

Our paths crossed well over 30 years ago, I don't remember when, probably as a collector of one cent 1861 postal history. Even back then Mary and Labron Harris were fixtures on the show circuit. Mary had a way of remembering your name and anything that you may have shared with her. Mary never wanted to talk about herself.

She was keen to know the latest about me and my family. She was always so positive, bright, and cheery when talking with you. When Mary perceived a kindness had come her way, she would always follow up with a handwritten note. Simply put, she was one classy lady.

While collectors would flock to their table at shows to buy postal history from Labron, they also came to chat with Mary. There was a profound way that she could put a smile on your face. You always felt good when you got up and left their table.

I admired Labron and Mary's unique relationship, both were golfers and Labron had been on the PGA tour. You could tell just by the flawless flow of their business how tuned in they were to each other. They would crisscross the country doing shows, Labron driving, and Mary reading books to him while he drove. I would assume that it was a very easy transition from the life of a nomadic golf pro to postal history dealer. It appeared that during show setup each had their own duties, which were accomplished with precision, just like a golf pro out on the practice range before a match. Their highly regarded business ethics set the bar for our industry. It is a benchmark that I have always tried to hit.

Not one of us knows just how much time he or she has left on the clock. One possible way to help alleviate that unsettling feeling that comes with our advancing years is to make a list of people that mean a great deal to you. Every couple of days reach out by phone or write a personal note and let one of them know that you are thinking of them. If my experience is any indication, you will find that the task will provide great comfort.

And to our dear Mary, you will never be forgotten.

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