

A tribute to my angel, Cora Lee, who saved my life.



In 1958, I was a student at Bordentown Military Institute in Bordentown, New Jersey. One day, I began to have trouble breathing and went to the newly built BMI infirmary. The school nurse was on duty, and she had me get into bed there for observation. As the day went on I was having more and more trouble breathing. It felt as if I had a ball stuck in my throat, obstructing most of my air intake, and I therefore could barely breathe or speak. Through that night it got worse and I was awake all night, becoming exhausted by having to breathe every breath incredibly deeply in order to keep from suffocating. I still remember that feeling today. In the morning I tried to communicate to the school nurse that I needed help desperately, but she seemed to ignore my plea. At lunch time, she brought me a hotdog. In order to try to convince her to really get me lifesaving help, I threw the hot dog at her. As she was yelling at me that she was going to report me to the school authorities, the assistant school nurse, Mrs. Cora Lee, arrived at the infirmary for her first shift after having been off the previous day, when I had first entered the infirmary. She heard the yelling and came into my room to see what was happening. She immediately saw the problem and asked me if I felt I needed immediate medical help. She told the school nurse that she was going to telephone the local ambulance service to come immediately. The school nurse told her not to do so, and threatened her with disciplinary action. Despite that, Cora went and telephoned for an ambulance.

The ambulance staff immediately decided I needed a trip to the nearest hospital in Trenton, while wearing an oxygen mask. As they were wheeling me out of the infirmary, all I could think was that Cora had saved my life, as I was so exhausted that I doubted that I could have continued to breathe much longer. Since I was so glad to finally escape from the infirmary, I grabbed Cora's hand and would not let go, forcing her, very willingly on her part, to ride next to me in the back of the ambulance several miles to the hospital. Cora was my absolute angel through all of this. I thanked my dear Cora then, and again a week later when I returned from the hospital after having spent the first twenty four hours in an oxygen tent and a week on powerful medications to combat the bronchial pneumonia, with which I was diagnosed there.

After so many years having passed, and my frequently thinking so fondly about Cora, I have recently felt compelled to formally and publically document Cora's personal courage and her intelligent and compassionate actions to save my life. I heard later that many student cadets would try to go to the infirmary only when Cora was available there. If only everyone in the world was like Cora; simply a great heroine. Thank you so very much Cora, for my life. My wife, my 2 children and I owe you so very much.

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December 8, 2015