

MY FRIEND, "SISTER" AND HERO(INE)

by Melody M. Nuñez

"Hero" is a charged word — one that means different things to different people. One dictionary source defines the female hero, a heroine, as a woman admired and emulated for her achievements and qualities. Based on that information, and on the insistence of my heart, I knew I had to write about Gloria Page.

I "met" Gloria over the phone on the first anniversary of the September 11th tragedy, in 2002. At the time, I was the e-commerce manager for Stampington & Company, and it was a rather melancholy day for me — until I spoke to Gloria. She was returning my call from the day before, as I needed to order some copies of her book titled *Holy Moly Mackeroly!* Though she was in Missouri, far removed from where I sat in California, we formed a fast connection as our words danced over the phone lines.

Though it may sound dramatic, Gloria helped restore my faith in humanity that day — with her kindness, her genuine warmth, and her open and friendly heart. When I hung up I felt blessed to have spoken with her. I had no idea how many more blessings I would receive from this amazing woman.

Shortly after our conversation, Gloria invited me to join an online art group based on her book. Her kindness, generosity, and loving spirit inspired me, and early on Gloria and I decided we were sisters somehow separated and then reunited by the universe. I knew I was lucky to have gained such a wonderful big sister and friend.

Gloria is truly unique. She's an accomplished artist and is incredibly talented, yet is very humble and appreciative for each step in her progression artistically and professionally. The ultimate nurturer and caregiver, she showers love and kindness on her family and friends. Though I've been the lucky recipient of many gestures of her kindness, one stands out particularly clear in my mind.

We'd known each other less than a year, and had yet to meet

in person. Gloria knew I had a nasty cold, and I was home feeling miserable when the doorbell rang. In came a box from Missouri, which I opened eagerly. The contents were beautifully wrapped (Gloria's presentation is always top-notch!), and she'd gifted me with tea, a jar of local Missouri honey, and honey candies I'd had as a child. I was touched to my core — that she would go to such trouble to care for me long distance — and I laughed and cried at the same time. That care package was proof of love — proof I was lucky and blessed to have a sister of the heart.

Though she emanates a bright light, Gloria's life has not been without challenges. Her courage in facing such challenges has made me admire her even more. The one she's currently facing is a big one. On Thanksgiving Day 2007, Gloria celebrated one year as a breast cancer survivor, and has adopted a powerful motto: LiveStrong — LoveStrong — FightStrong! Her fight continues, as does her zest for life and her abundant love.

Most of us will face adversity in our lifetime. What defines us is how we choose to handle ourselves in those difficult situations. Do we close ourselves off and inflict negativity on ourselves and those around us, or do we move forward and continue to love, hope, and give it our all? I strive to be one who loves, hopes, and continues to give when facing darkness. I like to think I'm like my big sister, Gloria, in that respect.

Though she's too modest to accept the title of hero, she's my hero all the same — someone I greatly admire and truly hope to emulate. †



Melody M. Nuñez is an artist and writer residing in California. To see more of Melody's work, visit her Web site at www.melodynunez.com.

To learn more about Gloria Page, visit her Web site at www.impressionsart.com. To learn more about Gloria's new DVD by Creative Catalyst Productions, visit www.ccpvideos.com.