

My dear friend and first bridge partner, Jeanne Colvin passed away peacefully in the early hours of Saturday morning, the 12th of November. Already I feel her absence and know I will continue to miss her hugely.

I first met Jeanne in 2011, when we attended bridge classes with the late, great Maureen Meade. As we both joined the classes on our own, naturally we were thrown together, but luckily we got on like a house on fire from the start. The bridge was almost incidental.

When I think of Jeanne I smile, as she always made me laugh. Her sense of humour was second to none. As we drove from Raheny to Malahide twice a week for bridge, she would regale me with stories from her very interesting past. Jeanne got married to her precious John a little bit later in life and they did a lot of travelling and had many many great times and enjoyed a lot of novel experiences together. The USA was a particular favourite and she had a ton of American friends. Jeanne had a varied career too, working as cabin crew with Air Lingus in her younger days and later studying for a masters degree which allowed her to work very successfully in the HR and training areas, with a number of different companies. More recently, she was working for herself and always had something on the go.

Jeanne was a phenomenal hostess and I enjoyed numerous very sociable nights in her house, some with bridge friends and at other times with longtime friends of hers, a lot of whom were poker players. It was common on those nights for me to lose heavily, though luckily the stakes involved were never very high. Anyway, the beautiful food Jeanne provided always made up for any losses I may have incurred! Not to mention the wine, sometimes even champagne and always the good company. One memorable night, which a few reading this will remember, Jeanne introduced us all to a new bathroom she had just had installed. I don't think I ever laughed so much in my life; she just made the whole thing so funny.

Jeanne also had a heart of gold. She loved bags, but it got to the stage where I couldn't admire her handbags, as next thing it would be given to me! I know others in the bridge club had that experience too. On another more serious note, a Syrian family moved onto her road a couple of years before Covid. Jeanne became their advocate and mentor, on a purely voluntary basis and I know they will always be grateful for everything she did for them. One of them spoke very movingly at her funeral.

Shortly after Easter in 2021, Jeanne rang me to apologise for the mistakes which had been creeping into her online bridge game. I insisted I hadn't noticed, but the truth was, I had and I was wondering. She told me she had brain fog and constant nausea and had made an appointment with her GP. He referred her for further tests and around August that same year, she was diagnosed with liver cancer, an insidious and vicious enemy, which really gave her no respite, throughout the remaining 15 months of her life. My heart went out to her (and to John) as they endured setback after setback. Throughout it all, Jeanne remained positive and upbeat, though she was nobody's fool; she knew exactly what was happening to her and what was facing her. Yet I still got her funny messages, the commentary about my bridge results and the questions about how you all were keeping, up to 2 weeks before she died. At that point John rang me and said Jeanne herself had decided to give up the treatment, but wanted to see me. I'm so glad I went.

I spent 2 hours with her the day of the Dublin City Marathon and she chatted away, still asking about me and how I was. There were a few tears, but not many. She told me she'd had a great life and her only

regret was leaving John. Once again I marvelled at her bravery. I visited her again the following Sunday, but by this time she had declined and she slept throughout my visit. 6 days later she passed away.

Jeanne had one more surprise for us all. Her funeral was totally arranged by herself in tandem with the celebrant, Lesley, who was a personal friend. At the end Lesley said Jeanne didn't want us to be sad and had the Abba song 'Take a Chance on Me' blaring out from the speakers and insisted we all sing as Jeanne wanted...and we did!

Jeanne I hope you are at peace. I will miss you my friend; I'm so glad I took a chance on you as my bridge partner 11 years ago and got to know you as I did.

Mary Deane