

## **Tribute to Jo Cline**

**3/1/2025**

**by Susan Conner**

**I am Susan Conner, and I, along with my wonderful colleague, Charles Johnson, hired Jo Cline to be our right hand at The Lilly Endowment in Indianapolis, back in the early 1980's.**

**We hit the jackpot when we hired Jo. We thought we were hiring her for her skills, but little did either Charles or I first realize, we were also hiring one of the finest human beings that either of us would ever know. On top of that, we were getting a friend for life.**

**Lilly Endowment makes huge charitable grants, but runs itself as a small enterprise, and Jo fit right in. Jo was a model employee. She did her work efficiently and was always quick to help others. She always seemed to be in a good mood and enjoyed laughing, which is a prerequisite when you work in a serious place.**

**In our area we handled thousands of requests for charitable grants that could not be honored. We would get many letters addressed to a woman we did not know, named "Lillian Dowment."**

**Our all-time funniest request was from a woman who desperately needed breast equalization surgery because, after all, she was a dancer. And while her husband could not help her pay for the surgery, he stood 100 percent behind her! Jo and I had to break the news to this poor lady that the Lilly family endowment could not fund adjustments to her endowment!**

**After several years, Sam's work in the US Army took them back to the Pentagon in Virginia. When Sam retired as a Colonel, they chose to return to Indiana. Jo called me, and although her slot with Charles and me was filled, I recommended her highly where I knew there was an opening. Now Lilly Endowment doesn't hire people back, but in Jo's case, there was a rare exception. She wound up working for the Finance Department, and ultimately worked for the Chairman of the Endowment. She was perfect for the role. Never did Jo have a bad word to say about anyone; and never did anyone have a bad word to say about Jo. If you knew Jo, you loved her.**

**My career eventually took me away from the Endowment, but we remained lifelong friends, and we both eventually settled in sunny Florida. We got our husbands involved in our friendship, and they enjoyed rounds of golf and dinners discussing the Cline's world travel. Jo and I so enjoyed our lunches at a midpoint between Avon Park and Ft. Meyers FL...we especially loved the hush puppies at the Magnolia Street Café in Arcadia. Mike and I are going to stop there today and get a takeout order in honor of Jo!**

**Jo handled her illness with grace and an optimistic attitude. She had the stalwart support of Sam every step of the way, who exhibited the strength of a military officer and the heart of a lamb. Her nephew, Steve Long, kept us informed through Caring Bridge. All of us should be so lucky as to have a Steve Long when our time is short.**

**I don't know many of you, but I do know that Jo told me about what a wonderful group of friends she had in Avon Park. And I saw your outpouring of local support on The Caring Bridge website and here today at this amazing memorial service.**

**As I said on the Website and I will repeat here, we all miss Jo because she was very simply, the most perfect human being that any of us will ever know. We miss you, Jo, and we love you.**