

Our Story

Ours is only one of thousands of stories that have been told in the past days of the last 20 months. On February 12, 2021 Katherine Blackburn had finally reported to her Covid Vaccination Site for inoculation. Months of isolations from family and friends was now fading away with the promise of renewed freedom. She was excited for the new hope of being part of the solution to the ravages of the Pandemic. She trusted and believed in the leadership guiding the nation and world through this crisis. At 12:45pm on February 12, 2021 Katherine Blackburn took her last breath and died. Cause of death, allergic reaction to the vaccine.

Since the beginning of 2020 Katherine and I had monitored the events and statistics of this insidious virus infection of the globe. The numbers were numbing and offered little connection with the bodies and tears accumulating across the country. Staying isolated we felt a false sense of security. It wasn't until late 2020 that the loss of close friends began to usher in a feeling of uncertainty. So with the miracle of vaccines offered for salvation our spirits were boosted. The truth was less obvious in the information flow to us as the public. It became a dilemma of analysis and choice for each of us to make individually. Katherine and I choose to participate and scheduled our vaccinations.

Katherine is my beloved wife and shared 57 years of married life with me. Suddenly 2021 which was to be the turnaround for the Pandemic Tragedy has become my personal nightmare of grief. As I have reflected on my personal tragedy, it has become more obvious of the depth and scope of what has really happened. We have seen a failure of truth, trust and empathy.

Our choices and decisions will be no better than the quality of the truth in the information we use to make those judgements.

The success of the strategies and solutions we implement cannot happen without a reciprocal trust of all the stakeholders in the community.

The realization of the closure of the problems and tragedies born of this pandemic will not happen until the empathy that is due to every victim and sufferer is satisfied.

My Family and I feel strongly that the closure that Katherine would wish for is a way for current and future generations to have a sense that a loved one lost during this pandemic will have counted for something more than a tracking statistic to measure bureaucratic decisions and policies. Lives do matter and so do deaths. Each and every life lost during this crisis needs a moment of acknowledgement and meaning not for just them but those of us who survive them. The vigilant service of the first responders saved many lives but also were the only contacts for many who passed. There is another group to be remembered and supported, these would be the “Last Responders”, those who have tried to find closure for the victims and the families. There needs to be new efforts for these Last Responders to insure the lessons learned from today become the foundations for tomorrow’s strategies and support.

The Tragedies of this new decade have become the genesis for our Charitable Foundation that can become a new tool in creating a better and more compassionate world community for the future.

Gerald and Katherine Blackburn

Founders

Katherine & Gerald Blackburn Memorial Foundation

2021