any times I will read or hear something which is so memorable I immediately copy it down on a piece of paper, a program, a napkin or whatever is at hand. I keep them in a box I have on my desk. It’s a plain box, one which once held a man’s shirt from the old Steiger’s department store and has now lost its elegance through years of use. One of these days, I will find a more elegant container that fits the bill for my “collection of quotable quotes.”

Often, when I hear or read these words, I wish I were as talented to have said them. I’d like to share some of them with you today:

The first comes from Donald Sanders, the president of Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts and the world-famous designer for the restoration of the once magnificent Victory Theater in Holyoke. Years ago when South Hadley’s Helen Casey began a serious effort to restore the theater, managed to have a concert there given by an outstanding Irish tenor and brought the world-famous Armand Hammer art collection to the city, I played a very small part in the effort. I wondered through the years what might come of the work so many did. In recent years as millions of dollars have come in from the state and there is hope for more funding. Don Sanders has said some lovely and very encouraging things.

In describing the Victory at this particular period of time Sanders said, “The theater is like a muse, mute on the outside but eloquent within. The sheer fact of the Victory’s survival in downtown Holyoke for nearly 30 years is awe inspiring. A humiliated victim of decline yet a proud harbinger of rebirth it calmly awaits its promise to be heard.”

For those who may think this is about as possible as dribbling a football, there are still many who disagree and we were fortunate to see the phoenix, the Victory Theater will rise from the ashes and once again offer superb artistic performances.

The second quotation is something I overheard many years ago on, of all places, a bus. A young couple sat across the aisle from me. I blushed a lot as the evidence of their love was embarrassingly obvious. Along with hugs and kisses there were many words of affection.

Out of the blue, the young woman said to her partner, “If you live to be 100, I want to live to be 100 minus a day because I never want a day without you.” After I blotted some tears from my eyes, I wrote it down, and today as I read it, almost 40 years later, I hope that couple is still happily together.

On the eve of her inauguration, the latest president of Mount Holyoke College, Lynn Pasquerella, said, “Our lives are transient. But, at the end of life, we have to ask ourselves whether we have lived a good life, whether our lives had meaning.” I hope some of the students who attended her inauguration will pay heed to those words.

Also in this box is a large piece of paper which I had by my side when I read Ayn Rand’s novel “Atlas Shrugged” many years ago. I copied several lines and even a few paragraphs. The first reads, “Some people wish to destroy the good and when you learn to understand their motive you’ll know that darkest, ugliest and only evil in the world, but you’ll be safely out of its reach.” Another quotation I wrote on the same paper reads, “A sacrifice is the surrender of a value. Full sacrifice is full surrender of all values. If you wish to achieve full virtue, you must seek no gratitude for your sacrifice, no praise, no love, no admiration, no self-esteem, not even the pride of being virtuous. The faintest trace of any gain dilutes your virtue.”

I also have kept countless quotes from David McCullough, who is this year’s Holyoke St. Patrick’s Parade Committee’s choice for the John F. Kennedy Award and is also one of my favorite authors. In his book, “The Path Between the Seas,” the incredible story of the Panama Canal, McCullough quotes Teddy Roosevelt who said, “Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight which knows not victory or defeat.” I always dig this quotation out when I am about to venture into something which could be a monumentally great thing or fall flat on its face.

And, finally, I want to share a poem credited to an author named Grace Noll Crowell. I copied it down a few years after I was married and have shared it with many women who truly love the women who their sons have married. The poem is too long for this column, but its last line reads: “Dear God, I am so grateful that my son in searching for a woman, found this one.” Would that every daughter-in-law could hear these words from her husband’s mother.

I’ve put all of these back in the old box and know that the next snowy night when I am looking for something to read I am going to pull the box out and read some treasures.

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