

Eröffnung des Käthe-Beutler-Hauses am 24.03.2021

## Käthe-Beutler-Haus Dedication.

### Remarks from Bruce Beutler.

Käthe Beutler was beloved by all ten of her grandchildren. She was our link to the past, with nearly four decades of memories about life in Germany, reaching back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

My first meeting with her that I can remember took place around 1960 or 1961, when I was about three years old. She and my grandfather were visiting us in California, and they were walking with me along a residential road not far from my home. They spoke to each other in German and to me in heavily accented English. I heard a metallic “ping” on the pavement behind me, turned around to look, and saw a silver dollar, which I picked up. At once I heard another “ping,” again behind me and realized that my grandfather was dropping these silver dollars. There were nine of them in all, each dropped behind me as I scrambled to pick them up. “It’s raining silver dollars!” he said.

My grandmother corrected him: “No, it is not raining dollars. That cannot be. Either you gave them to him, or we must turn them in to the police because they don’t belong to us.” She disapproved of deceptive games with small children. She was generally indulgent with her grandchildren, but mainly when we were small. She was strict when we were a bit older. She had little patience for immature behavior on the part of young adults, nor for tardiness, laziness, unreliability, or dishonesty.

After my grandfather died, she came to live in southern California for several years, in Sierra Madre, which bordered my own family’s suburb of Arcadia. She lived in a small house with a nice garden, to which she was attentive, often growing vegetables for herself. My brothers, sister, and I liked to spend weekends with her, and visits were arranged in rotation: one of the four of us per weekend. On those occasions, when we were young, she spent endless patient hours playing board games, card games, dominoes, and in my case, since I didn’t like these games very much, taking me to the zoo, the arboretum, the Descanso Gardens, Busch Gardens, and Bailey’s Canyon, where the two of us went for long walks when she was still able to do so.

She loved classical music and was a skilled pianist. For a time she gave piano lessons to children in her neighborhood. In general, she always tried to encourage children to learn. To cite one example, we sometimes spoke about history and different cultures. Perceiving that I might have a nascent interest in cultural anthropology, she gave me the book “Civilization” by Kenneth Clark, which she praised as “a book for your entire lifetime.” She knew, too, that I was particularly interested in biology, and especially in animals and their behavior. This

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prompted her to give me the book “King Solomon’s Ring,” by the Nobel Prize-winning ethologist Konrad Lorenz. Further, knowing of my particular fascination with birds, she bought me a pair of zebra finches when I was six or seven years old, making it clear that they were mine, but caring for them at her house for several years until my parents were willing to let me bring them home. She generally tried to nurture interests and stimulate learning among all her grandchildren in this way. She avoided spoiling us with praise, but she showed admiration for scientists, artists, and human intellectual achievement of all kinds. This certainly motivated us.

When asked why she had become a physician, my grandmother answered: “to be useful.” I once asked her the more specific question as to why she had become a pediatrician. A summary of the reply would be that she found children aesthetically pleasing, enjoyable to care for, and there was the prospect of helping them much more than was often possible with adult patients. We were all beneficiaries of this viewpoint.

We admired our grandmother because she was honest (even brutally honest sometimes), classically educated, articulate, sympathetic to young people even if she was strict with them, and closely aware of current events even when she was very old. We saw her as a strong person who always tried to do good, even in a world that had been particularly harsh toward her. If she were here today, she would be delighted — and undoubtedly very much surprised — to find the Charité is naming a Käthe-Beutler-Haus in her memory. We are proud that her exemplary life is being recognized by this esteemed institution, that played a formative role in her professional career.