A memories jar

Most of us want to be remembered after we’ve died. Many of us might not think about the value of our leaving behind some artifacts—memories embedded in memorable items—that will help others continue their fond memories of us. (Remember that tender reminiscences can be powerful motivations for behaviors that emulate what a dearly departed friend or relative embodied.)

Suzy Strunk of suburban Philadelphia shares an idea from her own experience: a “memory jar” she constructed to remember a family friend. Here’s what she writes:

*Someone recently gave me a giant old glass jar, which she used to hold bird seed. The jar had also been used to put up pickled food a long time ago. Last night I gathered some items given to me by a dear childhood friend of the family. His name was Frank; he was a high school principal whose students loved him dearly. For about thirty years Frank and I spoke on the phone every Saturday morning. [He died recently.] Last night I gathered up some small books, a snuff box of Frank’s grandfather, Frank’s baby rattle and a photograph of my dear friend. Those items now reside in that old jar. This collection of “Frank stuff” brings back nice memories of a very special man, of times spent in the company of an intelligent, lively human gift from God. The jar has been repurposed.*

Any of us could assemble memory jars like Suzy describes, setting up places in our homes where we remember the good that occurred in our lives because of the people whose artifacts we treasure. It’s possible that several of these jars could be given to those for whom a dearly departed loved one was a significant life-example.

A way to extend another person’s fullness of years into the future….