

An Open Letter of Thanks to Amy Baxter



Doctor Amy Baxter tosses wreath of orchids atop Virginia Heinlein's ashes. Photograph ©2003 by Victor Koman

Dr. Amy Baxter is known to many as the Heinleins' "adopted" granddaughter. She was never adopted. The term was conferred on her as their mark of the warm friendship in which they held her. Some several years ago a young girl wrote a letter telling Robert and Ginny she had no grandparents, that her parents were readers of his and had introduced her to his writings, that she knew they had no children, and asked could she please adopt them as her grandparents?

They wrote back warmly and said, kindly, "Of course you can." Over the years the letters continued. Eventually Amy visited and yet later came to spend some time with Virginia, who enjoyed her company and encouraged her dreams. Amy became a physician. During Virginia's last illnesses, Amy visited and ensured her adopted grandmother was receiving proper medical care, encouraging her to pursue the therapy necessary

to recovery, and helping to plan Ginny's return to her home. Sadly, on January 18th, Ginny died before those plans came to fruition.

During the weeks that followed Amy planned a small ceremony to reunite Ginny's ashes with Robert's in the Pacific. The Navy, because of hostilities, regretted it was unable to arrange a set time for a vessel that witnesses might board, but provided refreshments for the ceremony conducted on a boat owned and operated commercially by a retired Lieutenant Commander. Last month, in April, arrangements were completed, and Amy and her husband, Dr. Louis Calderon, arranged to travel to the Pacific Coast, with their smallest child, an infant girl, and invited a small number to attend an ashes ceremony held at her expense in San Diego Bay, California. Amy invited a small number of members of The Heinlein Society, of those local to Southern California,