I’m often asked which novel is my favorite, but that’s a question I can’t really answer. It’s like trying to choose between my children, and all I can say is that I like them all for different reasons.

I can say however, that*A Walk to Remember* was my favorite novel to write. I enjoyed the process of capturing the voice of a smart-alecky 17-year-old kid. Likewise with Jamie Sullivan. There was something intrinsically sweet about her character that gradually seemed to take over the book. It was also the only novel that made me cry while writing.

*A Walk to Remember* was inspired by my sister.

In many ways, Jamie Sullivan was my younger sister. Like Jamie, my sister was sweet. Like Jamie, my sister had tremendously strong faith. Like Jamie, my sister loved church. Like Jamie, my sister wasn’t popular at school. Like Jamie, my sister was always cheerful. Like Jamie, all my sister wanted in life was to get married.

And like Jamie, my sister got cancer.

Like Jamie, my sister met someone. And like Landon, there was a long period of time when this fellow couldn’t imagine himself marrying a girl like her. And yet, in the end, he couldn’t help himself. Even when he knew she was sick, even when he knew that she might not make it, this man asked my sister to marry him.

It was just about the sweetest thing that’s ever been done for anyone, and I suppose I wrote this novel not only so that you could get to know my sister, but so that you would know what a wonderful thing it was that her husband once did for her.

Sadly, my sister died in June 2000. She was thirty-three years old.