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S.T.O.R.I.E. Time, Fall Semester 2016

University of Northern Iowa. Human Relations: Awareness and Applications (Fall 2016).

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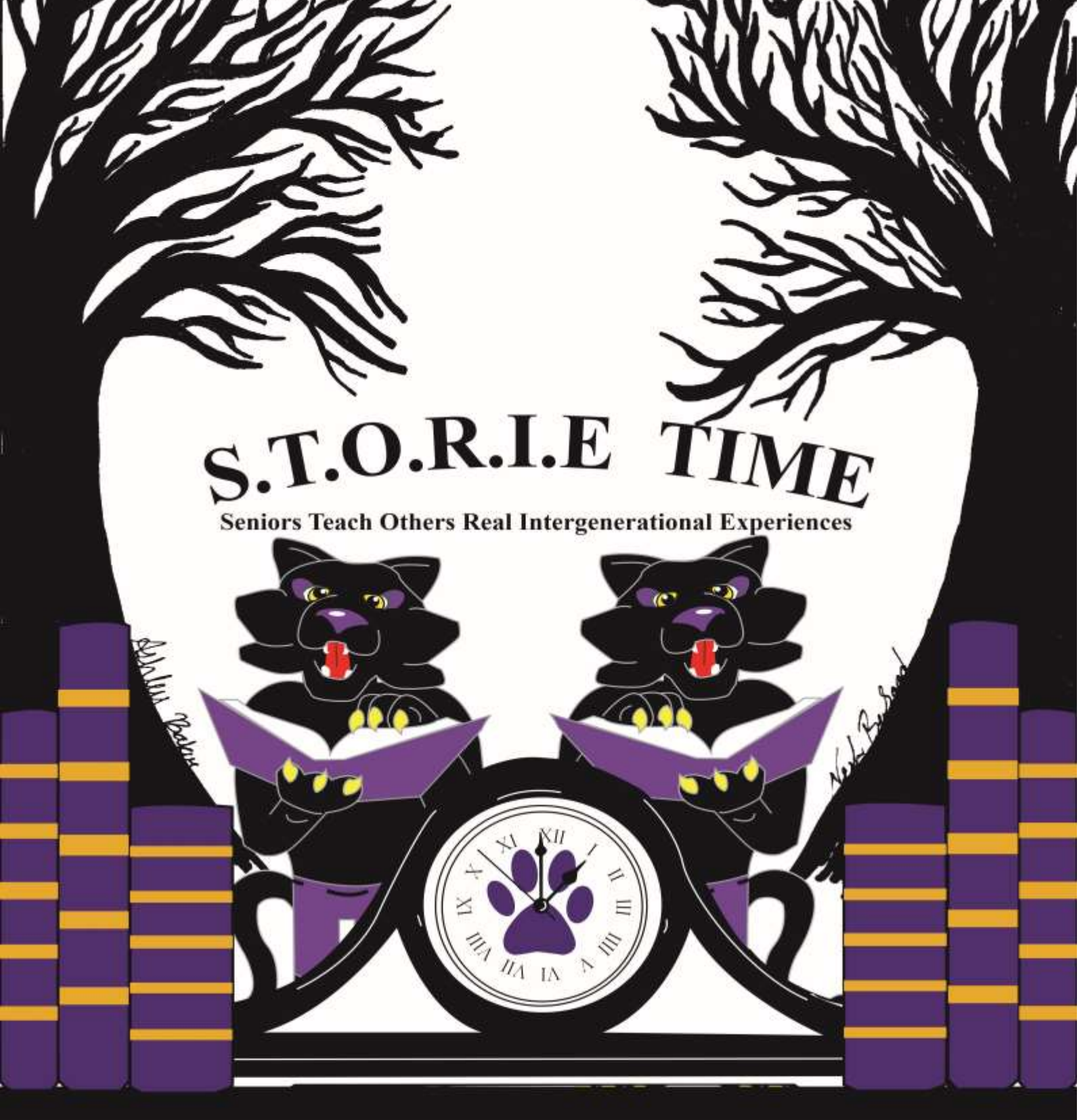
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University of Northern Iowa
Department of Teaching
Human Relations Seniors
Western Home Community Seniors

Fall Semester 2016

Human Relations

University of Northern

DEDICATION

*Kathy Oakland, UNI Instructor in Department of Teaching
Dedicated to Mrs. Goettsch, Mrs. G, and Betty*



A TEACHER 1967

*I was a senior at Story City High School.
Mrs. Goettsch was my Science Teacher.*

A COLLEAGUE 1984

*I was the English/Speech Teacher at Dike Community School.
Mrs. Goettsch was the Science Teacher.*

A MENTOR 2016

*I am the UNI Department of Teaching Human Relations Instructor.
Mrs. Goettsch is teaching my students!!
She has touched thousands of lives in her teaching career.*

A FRIEND

*She is a true lifetime teacher. I am proud to call her my mentor & friend!
Thank you!! Kathy Egemo Oakland*

*May gratitude be a handprint
you leave on the hearts of others.*

Common Love

Betty Goettsch, Western Home Community Senior
Ashley E. Gjorcevski , UNI Human Relations Senior 5B10

Even though I have only known you for a short time, I think you are one of the most amazing people I have ever met. You have accomplished so much in your 93 years of life and you show no signs of slowing down. You raised three successful children and now, you have five beautiful grandchildren. You received the first ever Distributed Education degree from Iowa State University, and you taught and inspired high school students for over 30 years.

The first time we met, we connected over our common love of the Theatre. You are very involved in the Waterloo Community Playhouse and I am very involved in the Theatre program here at UNI. We talked about how you got started in theatre and some of the roles you have played; but most importantly, we talked about how theatre changes people. We agreed that theatre is a great way for people to learn to appreciate themselves and to help people discover their identity.

However, I think the most significant thing you told me was how your faith has guided you through the tough times. You told me stories about some of the hardships you have faced and how each time, someone just happened to be there to help you. When I asked you if you thought it was luck, you said, “Some people think the Lord works in mysterious ways, but I don’t. I think the good Lord works his message through people.”

I hope you realize how inspiring you are and how many people you have touched. I hope that when you look back at your life, you realize what a “star” you are. Thank you so much for being my friend.

S.T.O.R.I.E Time

Seniors Teach Others Real Intergenerational Experiences

Kathy Oakland



Teacher Education Majors at the University of Northern Iowa are matched with senior adults residing at Western Home Communities. During their ten one-hour meetings, the students and residents are guided in their discussions by the book Gratitude: Affirming One Another Through Stories (2013) written by UNI Emeritus Faculty, Dr. Len Froyen.

Celebrate gratitude as the courier of the stories you tell.

Dr. Froyen's words are threaded throughout the book, as he has been the thread of the program.

Through conversations and stories, the seniors of both generations are enhancing their understanding, compassion and acceptance of each other. S.T.O.R.I.E. Time gives the seniors a chance to choose a story together that will be written for the book.

Special Thanks to: University of Northern Iowa, Department of Teaching, Western Home Communities, UNI Donald Rod Library,

Special Gratitude to: Len Froyen, Grandma Carol Shelton, Terri Knutson, Mary Nielsen, Hillary Mason and Katelyn Brown



EXPLORING LIFE

Carolyn Martin

Director of Volunteer Services, Western Home Communities

The 108 residents who are engaged with the UNI seniors are having a great time exploring life together. The UNI seniors are getting to know a piece of history they otherwise would not have access to, and our Western Home Communities seniors are getting the opportunity to share their legacy with a younger generation.

As we age, we naturally start looking for ways of making a difference, finding the purpose of our lives and sharing stories of our lives so they are not lost forever. This project between UNI and Western Home Communities does just that. Besides sharing stories, our residents have an additional connection to UNI, many of our residents' alma mater. They have something to look forward to and are finding creative ways of engaging the students in their lives at Western Home Communities.



Relationships such as the ones that are being developed through the STORIE project have a lasting impact, far beyond the 10 weeks the students will be visiting. Both generations become more comfortable with people outside their peer group; students have a better understanding of what the families of their future students will be dealing with; our residents have a greater understanding of the pressures and expectations on young people today. Developing these relationships creates compassion, understanding and a tolerance that isn't possible without this type of interaction.

The residents are eager to share their stories and to know that they will be written down and included in the book. They are eager to read stories of other matches and see where their conversations have led. It will be a perfect culmination to what has been, and will continue to be, a fantastic relationship between the Department of Teaching and Western Home Communities.

*May gratitude be a guest of your heart
and a companion of your soul.*

Section 1

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Betty Goettsch . . . Ashley E. Gjorcevski

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PROLOGUE: Passion for Teaching

Audrey Schoeman, Western Home Communities Senior

Molly McCarty, UNI Human Relations Senior 1D15

Like most young girls, Audrey would line up her toys like they were students in a classroom and she would teach them. What makes her different is rather than other young girls, she never lost the drive for teaching and education. Her experience with school has been different than most. When her older brother started school she started school along with him. On his first day of school, Audrey and her mother brought her brother to school and she ended up staying with him. Her passion for teaching and education continued to follow Audrey throughout her life.

As time went on, certain things got in the way of Audrey following the career path that she wanted. In her senior year of high school, Audrey had decided that she had decided to secretary school because it took a shorter amount time of schooling and it was less expensive. That changed when her business teacher Mr. Guthberthson got her in contact with someone who could get her a scholarship so that she could attend the UNI's teaching program.

Because of Mr. Guthberthson, Audrey was able to get the education that she needed so that she could be involved and make a difference in many different aspects of education. She went on to become a first grade teacher and she later served on the New Hartford school board.

Mr. Guthberthson was the teacher that gave her the resources that she needed in order to get the education that she needed. She took that opportunity and worked hard so that she could work in the field that was her passion. In these jobs, she was able to go on and shape her students' lives.

May gratitude become a seed



you nurture in the soil of humility.

Section 1



0

The Door Was Opened Just a Crack

Velma Falk, Western Home Communities Senior

Mary Kimani, UNI Human Relations Senior 1C11

When you meet Velma you are immediately drawn to her. Her face is wrinkled at all the right places-- around her eyes and mouth. They speak of a woman who has seen a lot in her time. Two marriages, three children, and a life that has been filled with both joy and pain.

As I walked into the room the first thing I noticed was her eyes. They are the brightest blue you have ever seen. Her eyes twinkle every time she begins to tell me her stories. We sat there for hours laughing about life and what has come to be. But as we continued, her voice was bittersweet as she told me about the man who cared for her.

She met her first husband at the dancing hall. "When it came to something that Ken wanted, he could be very persuasive." He began calling on her and one beautiful day in November, they got married.

However, as time continued the true colors began to show. That persuasiveness and determination that had drawn her at the beginning, to him became a bane. He became manipulative and abusive. Verbally and emotionally.

"I just have this desire to fix things, to make things better. I think with my first husband, I thought I could help him." He became increasingly distant, and Velma became essentially a single mother to her children.

However, throughout all this there was some glimmer of love and hope. Her pastor. She remembered, "He is truly the only man who I really felt loved and

cared for me. We just connected.” His sermons ministered to her heart. Throughout the painful marriage, the pastor was there to listen and give advice. This sadly had to come to an end. Velma knew that her husband did not like the pastor. She knew that if they stayed as church members, her husband would use his influence to have the pastor taken out of the church. But before she left. She left the pastor a poem:

The Door

***The door was opened just a crack . . . But I had to peer inside
To see if I could see the man . . . Whose soul he could not hide
The room was dark and dimly lit . . . Yet I could see the pain ,
Across the eyes, the mouth, the brow, . . . But heart I saw that’s fain***

***Steady, steadfast was his goal, . . . In life and love of her
And yet in all reality . . . There was a breath of myrrh
With trembling hand I touched the door, . . . But dared not enter in,
For if I had he’d seen my soul . . . And the love I had for him
I saw a man on bended knees . . . Praying to his God
He is His, not mine nor yours . . . Father, Strength, don’t let him down!***

He hadn’t said anything or written to her. But many years later, after he had left the church and was moved to a different one, he came back for a day to preach for the congregation that once was his. Velma knew she had to go back and hear him preach once more.

Now divorced to her husband, she went and sat in the pews that were all too familiar, to hear a man whom she knew cared for her. He began his sermon: “Once upon a time there was a woman who came to a door.” Immediately Velma knew this was the prequel, prelude, the beginning to her poem that she had given him. That beginning was for her.

May gratitude serve as a proclamation

of grace and goodness at work in your life

1

Somebody You Should Know

Marlys Folkers, Western Home Communities Senior
Taylor Ambrosy, UNI Human Relations Senior 1A1

Did you wake up this morning grateful for what you had? Grateful to be given another day? I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to meet Marlys Folkers. Marlys has witnessed WWII, The Depression, and the Vietnam War throughout her lifetime. She is grateful for each day she is given, to say the least. Marlys lives by the quote, “Make the best of what you have.”

Marlys has helped this community in many ways. You may know her from the many volunteering positions she takes on. Marlys can be seen ushering events at the Gallagher, helping with Meals on Wheels, or volunteering at the House of Hope. She attributes her personality from her profession of teaching. Teaching has allowed her to become social, welcoming, and develop confidence.

Marlys wants to help others and see them living happily and safely. Through her years of teaching, she has lost both students and colleagues in the war or from natural life circumstances. Having experienced the hardships of growing up without much having much, she is thankful for each day she has been given that others have not. Marlys believes that if she has food on the table and a roof over her head, she is well off. This is one thing in life that we all often take for granted.

Marlys Folkers is somebody everyone should know and someone we should all aspire to be more like. Marlys, I want to thank you for teaching me more about myself and the person I want to become. I hope that someday I can be as strong of a teacher, daughter, mother, and grandmother as you are. Thank you for opening my eyes to the struggles that come along with life and how we can grow from

them. I look forward to taking each day one at a time and being thankful for each moment that has been given to me. My hope is that others can learn to do the same.

2

Two Wings of the Same Falcon

Marilyn Roseberry, Western Home Communities Senior

Ryan Black, UNI Human Relations Senior 1A2

Being able to get your driver's license is a rite of passage of a teenager. The freedom, the road, the car were all important things to Marilyn when she first got her license. What good is a license without a car? Thankfully her father looked around and found her the perfect car. A, ummm . . . "beautiful" Ford Falcon. Her father was confident in his choice and hoped that Marilyn would want to buy the infamous Ford Falcon. She appreciated the gesture but didn't want the car.

Persistence is not a virtue wasted on Marilyn. She wanted the car that she wanted. Eventually, she found the car she desired. A bit run down, but she figured it would be fun to try and fix it up. Against her father's judgement, Marilyn bought the car she desired and brought it home. Now, while Marilyn was persistent, she wasn't very good at fixing cars. She found the science of mechanics interesting, but her skills didn't match the passion. One day, while looking at this car in front of her house, a boy from down the street stopped by to assess the situation.

Marilyn knew of this boy, but didn't know much about him. They went to school together and that was about the extent of their known similarities. The boy looked the car up and down, admiring the craftsmanship. Marilyn chalked up

another thing that brought them together: their love for cars. She explained to him that fixing up the car was her goal and he offered to help in any way that he could.

Throughout the next year or so, Marilyn and this boy tinkered on this car and got to talk to each other. They grew closer and closer through their daily chats and struggles. This boy would have just been another neighbor down the street if Marilyn hadn't been so stubborn about her first car. The car brought them together, but their love kept them together.

Marilyn and this boy ended up getting married and living a very happy life together. They lived in Cedar Falls their whole life. He enjoyed tinkering on clocks, cars, and anything else with moving parts. Unfortunately, his life was cut short by complications due to dementia and Parkinson's disease.

To this day, Marilyn still has a replica model of her first car sitting in her office. It reminds her of the memories she had created together with her husband through the years. His love for cars and his love for Marilyn never ceased. They say curiosity killed the cat, but in reality, curiosity sparked the love.

3

People Change People

Evelyn Boardsen, Western Home Communities Senior

Rachel Burns, UNI Human Relations Senior 1A3

Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock. The second hand of the clock keeps moving forward. Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock. Time is slowly slipping away as it gets later in the day. Sprinting into the Western Living Home, I burst through the door to make my grand appearance and start scanning the crowd immediately. "If I was

Evelyn Boardsen what would I look like? Where would I be? Is she going to be mad at me that I was late on the first day?”

Then as if someone could read my thoughts, I hear this joyful laugh and turn to find Evelyn socializing with her friends and the other students from my class. “Okay Rachel, keep it cool. You’re only 10 minutes late. She obviously has a good sense of humor since she is making everyone laugh. Just be yourself. I’m sure she will like you.” After repeating this pep talk to myself a couple hundred times, I finally built up the courage and finally introduced myself.

“Hi my name is Rachel Burns and I am going to be your partner for this project. I am so sorry that I was late...” Before I could even finish asking for forgiveness, Evelyn put her hand on my arm and smiled reassuringly at me. In a soft tone she tells me that it is okay and that people often run late for things. She was just glad that I didn’t catch wind of what people say about her and run off. With a sly grin on her face she gave me a nudge and we began talking.

When week one approached I had no idea what to expect. I have never done this before and neither has she. Will we have enough to talk about? What will she say? How will I know if she likes me? Thousands of questions raced through my head as I knocked on the door. Well here goes nothing, I thought to myself. Slowly the door opens, and Evelyn bright eyed and full of enthusiasm welcomes me into her home.

From that moment on, the next seven weeks flew by. It was as if I was catching up with an old friend, not someone who I had just met a few months ago. The constant laughter, endless joy, and the genuine compassion for each other built our friendship from the ground up and made it stronger with every visit.

When talking to Evelyn every week, I noticed that there were more similarities between us than there were differences. Topics such as hardship, work, family, and even compassion for others showed us both that we had the same

viewpoint. It was as if we were placed together because we were always on the same wave length. Even though there is a large age gap between us it did not matter. We connected on another level. It was as though I was a younger version of her.

There was this aura about Evelyn that made me feel safe around her and that I could be an open book with her. Together we talked about our joys and our despair, we talked about our families and our friends, and we talked about the simple things in life and appreciating what is around you. Through these visits I discovered what I want my future to look like. Evelyn impacts the lives around her through her crazy sense of humor, her bright smile, and her compassion for others. Knowing that she thinks of myself as a younger version of her is an honor. So as she has said many times, the important thing to remember is that people change people. It is up to you to make an impact on their lives. Do not be afraid to show compassion.

Dear Evelyn,

I just want to thank you first and foremost for taking a chance to be a part of this program. I know that you were a little apprehensive at first, but I am glad that you decided to join. Throughout these past few months you have reminded me that there is always joy in the little things and that sometimes we have to look a little harder to find it. Your compassion for others has truly inspired me and I hope someday to be half of the woman that you are. Thank you again for opening up to me and allowing me to open up to you. I will cherish this time that we have shared forever. Thank you for being my friend.

Sincerely, Rachel

4

Childhood Grit

Mary Jane Boorom, Western Home Communities Senior

Claire VanderWiel, UNI Human Relations Senior 1A4

Mary Jane was an average girl growing up in Iowa until she contracted polio at the age of four. Even though she was so young, she can still remember what it was like having the virus and going through the process of trying to recover. Once the virus took hold, she was not able to walk or swallow food; instead, she would lay in her bed while those around her took care of her in a way that she was no longer able to. She can remember when she was fed ice cream and had to let it sit in her mouth until it melted, only then would she be able to swallow it.

The local chiropractor would come to her house to help her recover, as he did with the one other child in her school who contracted the virus at the same time. Slowly but surely, Mary Jane started to recover, and she relearned how to walk as she had several years before. The small child that she was, Mary Jane would toddle from her room, across the hall, and back again. This gradually built the strength back up in her legs.

Though she eventually recovered, she was always slower and clumsier than the other kids that she went to school with. Walking long distances, like from their classroom to lunch, would be very difficult, and she had a hard time keeping up with her friends. Even in gym class, her clumsiness and lack of flexibility left over from having polio affected what she was able to do. Her gym teacher couldn't

understand why she couldn't do a simple somersault like the rest of her classmates. She just didn't have the flexibility because of what happened when she was four years old.

Despite these challenges, Mary Jane didn't take the easy road in life. She still found ways to do everything that everyone else was able to do; she didn't let this disease hold her back. In elementary school, all of the kids would play baseball during their recess, a sport that requires a lot of running and coordination, especially in the legs. To make up for her lack of speed, she learned how to hit the ball incredibly far so that she could make it to first base, though any other kid would have gotten a home run out of that same hit. By finding ways to get around what she was not able to do as easily as everyone else, Mary Jane got to play with her friends as any child who had not contracted polio would have done.

Growing up in a farming family, like many of her peers, every child had responsibilities from a young age to help out. This would keep the household running, and the animals would be healthy and happy if everyone did their part. Even with these physical difficulties, Mary Jane didn't get out of her fair share of the chores. She still would have to lead the cows from the pasture into the barn and take care of some of the pigs.

Though she went through these horrific struggles as a very young child, Mary Jane found the strength to overcome her disease. She never took the easy road afterwards, as she easily could have to get out of chores and sit around all day long. Even though the effects stayed with her long after the virus was technically gone, she found ways to still do everything she would have done otherwise

May gratitude inspire you

to be a good steward of your blessings.

5

The Unexpected Adventurer

*Marlys Simpson, Western Home Communities Senior
Caitlyn Eimer, UNI Human Relations Senior 1A5*

Growing up, I always knew that there had to be more to life than the small town in Iowa, in which I lived. I always felt like I had a lot to see, explore, and conquer. My mother and father were always very supportive, and never let me believe that I couldn't accomplish something that I had set my mind to. I've always looked up to people that go after what they want and never look back. As my time in college is coming to an end, I find it harder and harder to be motivated each day. Until the day that I met Marlys.

Although she would probably never admit it, Marlys is one of the most adventurous people I have come to meet in my life. She always jokes about how she doesn't have much wisdom to pass down, or hardships to share. Which is something that I not only admire, but also find very relatable.

After Marlys graduated from high school, she went to school for two years in order to be able to teach for the following two years. This way, she could save up enough money to go back and get her teaching degree. After getting her degree, she moved to Baltimore to teach. After one of her colleagues visited family in Norway, it took little to no time to convince Marlys to go to Norway the following

year. They left on a ship from New York, and began their journey to Europe. They traveled around the different countries, then traveled around Norway. Marlys ended up getting a teaching job, and then stayed for the next forty years.

Not only did she follow through with her aspiration to live and teach in Norway, but she has also done so many other adventurous things that bring such warmth to my heart and a smile to my face. She's been to fifty-two countries, traveled across the Canadian provinces, she took a trip to New Mexico last week, and she even dared to try mixing Coca-Cola with milk.

Marlys is everything that I aspire to be in a person. She's modest, open-minded, loves watching shows on Animal Planet, and shows others how to truly make the most out of life.

6

You're coming With Me

Margaret Hartman, Community Senior

Samantha Hartman, UNI Human Relations Senior 1A23

Margaret Forey grew up in small town Rodman, Iowa. The year of her high school graduation, 1949, Rodman was considered home to only 123 people: one of which was Bernard Hartman. Margaret had attended school with Bernard for years and he was constantly picking on her. He would step on the back of her shoes just to be bothersome. It wasn't until Margaret's senior year that Bernard finally had enough courage to ask her to the graduation dance. Although they went with a group of friends it was the official start to their dating relationship.

After high school Margaret left to attend college at Buena Vista, while Bernard stayed behind to finish up his senior year of high school. Although they

tried, balancing college and a relationship, it was just too much, life was pulling them in different directions and they decided to break up. One weekend in 1952, while Margaret was in Des Moines for a teachers' convention, she happened to run into Bernard at mass. At the time Bernard was working for Firestone in Des Moines. He asked her out for breakfast and she happily accepted. Although it was nice to catch up, they both continued on with their lives. The next year Bernard was drafted into the Korean War which took up the following two years of his life.

He was back in time to be the usher for a good friend's wedding, which happened to be Margaret's brother. After the wedding party was done throwing rice at the happy newlyweds Bernard walked up to Margaret and said, "You're coming with me."

She replied, "Who says so?"

He said, "I do!" Margaret was, and still is, a very stubborn woman. Luckily, that night she was feeling generous and once again accepted his offer. They danced the night away and continued to fall more in love with each other over the following few years. They learned that their time apart had allowed them to grow as individuals which made them an even stronger couple. After eight years of challenges and obstacles, they were finally married on December 28th, 1957.

7

Crying Tears of Joy

Ruth Ann Gooden, Western Home Communities Senior

Whitney Fisher, UNI Human Relations Senior 1B6

It was the August after high school graduation from Gladbrook-Reinbeck High School for the young and confident Ruth Ann Gooden and she was headed to the Iowa State Teacher's College in the fall. Although, something in her set uneasy for her growing desire to become a rural schoolteacher. She desired it so much so

that she had completed the yearlong course offered senior year to gain certification in one of Iowa's many rural schoolhouses that so desperately needed a teacher. Her tuition at UNI was paid and she was off! Not without some hesitation though.

Sure enough, Ruth Ann's self-assured personality did not fail her; less than a month before she was to start classes, she received an interview for a rural school teaching job. Before she could even make sense of it all, she had been offered a job just a 15-minute drive up the road from her house!

It was the next week that Ruth Ann's dad drove her to the house of a family attending the rural school. She was to stay with them as she taught. As she arrived to meet the family, the father briefly introduced his children. There was a young girl about 6, twin boys about 10, and an older girl about 12. It was the introduction of Mary Ann, age 12, which sticks out most vividly. Her father simply stated that she would never learn or pass her 8th grade exams to go on to high school. Ruth Ann could not believe her ears and her bold personality had been set off by this comment. She promised to herself in that moment, she would do everything she could to change that.

As school started and lessons began, Ruth Ann quickly learned the challenges and joys of teaching. It was a fond time she looks back on often. Like walking to school with the children of her host family and getting to know the family that so kindly opened their home and hearts to her.

Each weekend Ruth Ann's dad would pick her up and she would return home for the weekend. At school, she taught 6 students of varying grades from 1st-7th. They were in one of the more modern schoolhouses that had a furnace in the basement. It was a learning experience for Ruth Ann, considering she had only spent one week observing a classroom in her yearlong teaching certification class.

She would teach the students each day in preparation for their county tests to pass 8th grade and continue on to high school. Her promise to help Mary Ann pass

these tests continued for the two years that she spent out at that rural school. As they studied and worked hard, she recognized that previous teachers had never given Mary Ann the time of day. She was simply passed along each year. Ruth Ann's determination shone brightly as she encouraged and worked with Mary Ann each day.

She remembers it like it was yesterday, when she received the letter stating that Mary Ann had passed her 8th grade tests and would go on to high school. The tears of joy streamed down Ruth Ann's face. Ruth Ann never taught again after those 2 years in the rural school, but she kept in touch with most of her students. Maybe before this she had wondered if you can cry from joy, but never after did she wonder again.

8

An Unusual Friendship

Mac Eblen, Western Home Communities Senior
Courtney Hansen, UNI Human Relations Senior 1B7

It was the year of 1941 and the male to female ratio at Wichita State was about 50/50. Then Pearl Harbor happened. The following spring semester carried on as normal. When the fall semester began, there was a significant change in the ratio and it continued to change throughout the semester. By the spring of 1943, Wichita State had nearly become a women's college, except for the few young men who chose to continue their studies and be drafted later. As the war went on and more men were drafted the following fall semester, the women were in for a big surprise.

When the fall semester of 1943 started there was a large number of air force cadets at Wichita State. These men were there to prepare before going overseas and would spend roughly four to eight weeks at the school. In between their time

preparing, they also spent time “chasing skirts”. These young men were very open and blatant with their approaches. While many of the young men were looking for hook-ups, there was one sergeant who was not. The sergeant in question wanted a different kind of relationship than all of the other young men, for he had a wife back home in New Jersey and was looking for a friend.

One day, the sergeant finally got the courage to ask Mac out. However, he told her that he had to tell her something important first, about his wife. For the sergeant, he missed having the companionship of a female but loved his wife very much; he asked Mac if she would be willing to go out with him just as friends. The two would go out on the weekend to a movie or dinner and enjoyed each other’s company. However, this was strictly a platonic relationship.

Mac worried about having to explain her relationship to her parents due to their concern of her seeing an older man. While it was difficult to explain the relationship to her parents they were understanding about it. What made this friendship so unique was not the age difference but the fact that it was true friendship during a time when many men were pursuing the skirt of a woman.

When it was time for the sergeant to leave, Mac made sure to keep in touch with him during the war by sending care packages. While the two fell out of touch after the war, the friendship has left a lasting impression on Mac. Listening to Mac tell her story about the man, you could not help but notice the lasting effects of friendship.

Dear Mac,

I want to thank you for allowing me the privilege of getting to know you and your story. You have taught me that true friendships can last a lifetime even if we lose touch with that friend. You helped me realize how lucky I am to have my best friend, considering that for a while we had lost touch with each other. I hope that

by writing your story, you will be able to look back at this time and always remember the friendship of the sergeant and your other friends. I have been truly blessed to be a part of your story and would like to thank you for letting be a part of it.

Sincerely, Courtney

*Springtime flowers
bursting through the earth
remind me of the ways you enter my life.*

9

Fifteen Years, Fifty States

*Fern Guild, Western Home Communities Senior
Mariah Hesse, UNI Human Relations Senior 1B9*

Fern Guild saw a lot of the world before glaucoma took away most of her ability to see. At the age of 51, her husband retired from his job at John Deere and the two embarked upon the trip of a lifetime. By the age of 51, most of us see our lives as half over, but for Fern this was when the adventure would just begin.

Following her husband's retirement, Fern and her husband bought an Air streamer, a brand of luxury trailer that they would live in for the next 15 years of their lives. During these 15 years her and her husband would live and stay in every single state in the United States. In each state they were able to stay at campsites, motor home parks, and city/ state parks, some of which they were able to stay in for free as her husband, a mechanic of 30 years was able to offer his services to the people who ran the parks.

Throughout this amazing journey, they saw many amazing things. One of her favorite things that happened during this time was when they went to New York and she was able to see a show on Broadway. Even now, almost 40 years later, these sights still stay clear in her mind. She saw many unforgettable places, and things.

Her journey was not limited to within the U.S., as her and her husband also stayed in Mexico. At the start of his retirement, they were able to watch cliff divers in Acapulco. Their journey also extended into Europe and Canada, where they beheld many beautiful sights, but the ones that stand out most in her mind were in the Northeast United States, more specifically Washington which she remembers as a very beautiful place to live.

Fern Guild saw more of the world in 15 years than most people see in a lifetime. Throughout these years she made many memories that will be imprinted upon her mind forever, memories that she has shared with a UNI student that she, too, will remember forever.

10

The Next Chapter

Lorna Ericson, Western Home Communities Senior
Kimberly Kellen, UNI Human Relations Senior 1B10

We all have different parts of our lives that have their own unique story. The hardships, joys, and passions change in each chapter and shape our thoughts and actions. Through those stories we are formed into the individuals we are today. Lorna's story starts off in Downey and West Branch, Iowa going to school, helping on the dairy farm and creating different relationships. She always had food in her stomach, clothes to wear, a family that loved her and fun activities to keep her busy. When she turned 16 and graduated from high school she had the opportunity

to go to college. This was a risk she was willing to take at such a young age. She left home, moved to Cedar Falls to attend Iowa State Teacher's College, and roomed with a girl she didn't even know. The risk she had taken paid off two years later when she graduated with a 2 year teaching certificate.

Life was looking up, Lorna had a teaching job, got married, had three beautiful children and even finished up her last 2 years of college at the University of Iowa at the age of 40. At this time in Lorna's life, she started to realize her true passions. One of them was being a mom and helping her kids succeed in life, whether that be teaching the importance of working hard or supporting them in school. Her other passion was teaching. After receiving positive feedback on evaluations and having a note written to the school talking about excellent teaching abilities, Lorna knew that she was where she was supposed to be. She was able to find encouragement from a younger principal named Linda and felt that she could ask Linda anything. Lorna felt she could act herself around Linda. This gave her the confidence to become a great teacher and to collaborate with others around her. Through this chapter in her life she learned how to be task oriented and that a hard worker was a good quality to have.

After 40 some years of working hard and growing a successful family she had the opportunity to retire with her husband. They had the luxury of living in many different places throughout the United States and formed friendships with people along their journey. They decided to settle down in Cedar Falls, Iowa in the Western Home Communities. Lorna has grown her own community by being involved in church, the schools, and the Western Home. Life took a turn when Lorna lost her husband. Thinking back and learning about the joys and struggles she faced in the past made her turn around and look towards her future with positive goals in sight.

In this chapter of Lorna's life she shows kindness to others by inviting them to dinner or taking them to a show. She invites them into her house and treats them like family by sharing her knowledge on topics and giving without the expectation of receiving. She gives advice to others from the wisdom she has gained throughout her life to help them be the best person they can be. This part of Lorna's unique story is not finished, but it is definitely a great start.

11

Holiday Friendship

Donna Pohl, Western Home Communities Senior
Morgan Kuennen, UNI Human Relations Senior - 1C12

Donna Pohl grew up in a home where family and school were priorities. Her days consisted of going to school and her nights involved homework and chores. Throughout her education, Donna excelled and enjoyed her time there. She took pride in her successes and accomplishments that school brought her.

However, Donna did not grow up with many close friends. She formed several friendships, but only a few were true friends. Ellen was a friend Donna grew fond of and continues to be a huge part of her life. The two girls spent a great amount of time together. They grew up with similar interests, which created a strong friendship.

Specifically, Donna and Ellen strengthened their friendship through their shining similarities. As they spent time together and learned more about one another, Donna began to discover how Ellen's hospitality influenced her life of service to others.

In 1962, Donna and Ellen became a part of Orchard Hill Church. Both women volunteered their time in helping the church and using their talents to serve others. In 1997, Donna noticed the church's poor representation of holiday

decorations. She believed the church should be represented with beautiful decorations for all to admire. Donna addressed her concerns to Ellen and her friend saw an opportunity. With Ellen's strong hospitality and Donna's willingness to serve, Ellen volunteered them to help with the holiday decorations.

Nearly 20 years later, Donna and Ellen continue to decorate their church for the holiday season. During the weekend following Thanksgiving, volunteers, led by Donna and Ellen, decorate and set up over twenty trees and fifteen wreaths. Banners and lights are also hung throughout the church, representing the holiday spirit. Year after year, the ladies adjust the decorations on the altar, giving every Christmas season its own, unique style.

As Donna and Ellen continue to put forth their time to the church, they are doing the same with their friendship. Donna has a true friend to help her through anything, and it is reciprocated through Ellen's feelings towards her. Both women continue to spend time together and they represent a true friendship many search for.

Although Donna's childhood did not consist of several close friends, she still has a friendship one cannot replace. Donna and Ellen are not only best friends, but sisters who cherish the relationship they have created. The women treasure the importance of their friendship and their family connection, which will stand true forever. Donna and Ellen created a friendship and sisterhood forever irreplaceable.

Donna,

Thank you for welcoming me into your home and sharing your stories with me. I enjoyed spending time with you and learning about your passions and hobbies. You have inspired me to help others and use service as a source of positivity in life. Both you and Ellen are amazing women and I am blessed to have had the opportunity to meet you both. Again, thank you for everything you have

done and all you have taught me. I will forever cherish our time together. With gratitude, Morgan

*May gratitude inspire you
to see the goodness in all things.*

12

60 Years of Adventures

*Barb and Morris Kratz: Senior Citizens
Amanda Leslie, UNI Human Relations Senior 1C13*

Fate brings people together. It was fate that brought Barb to Iowa when she was in 8th grade. Although she lost most of her friends, she was about to gain so much more by coming to Iowa. Little did they know at the time, but Barb and Morris were destined to be together. They met on a typical Tuesday evening over at Electric Park in Waterloo, Iowa. They square danced the night away and were obviously meant to be together. They went on dates all the time, such as going to the movies or picnics up on a hill, or simply had family gatherings. Their time spent together brought Barb and Morris even closer. With 60 years of adventures, they were able to create many memories together which furthered their relationship.

Who would have guessed that right before Morris met Barb, his girlfriend had left him and he was saddened. Not for long, however because the love of his life showed up and gave him 60 years of adventures. Getting married is one of the biggest risks you will ever take because you do not know if it will last or not, but

luckily Barb and Morris knew each other well before getting married. There were many reasons as to why their marriage lasted 60 years. They both thought that having common interests such as antiques, cars, church, and traveling were things that helped keep people together. Questers is an antique club in the Cedar Valley which allows people to showcase their antiques, so Barb and Morris joined. This led them all around the Midwest trying to find their next big antique they needed. Sometimes they would go to day-long antique shows including a car show, so Morris would check out the cars while Barb examined the antiques.

Barb and Morris also have a passion for traveling to interesting places that not everyone would think of as a ‘vacation’ spot. Japan was a trip they talked about often because of the friendly people and amazing culture. We shared the same experience of riding on a bullet train to go to Kyoto. They also liked to visit England, Jamaica, Mexico, Vegas and other various spots which had many adventures filled within each of those trips. Simple things such as drive-in movies, big family dinners, and afternoon picnics were also very dear to their hearts.

They took another risk in their life when they moved into their house on Grand Blvd, with a new baby and two acres to take care of. Fate would have it again that these two would meet lifelong friends across the street who were also interested in similar things. They lived in the house for 21 years. Meaning that saying goodbye to those memories would be difficult. Yet, they were onto the next chapter in their lives. They currently are living the motto of life: “A glass of wine a day will keep the doctor away.” Although they’ve had their fair share of sickness and healthy times; Barb and Morris are still dedicated to each other for more years to come. Who would have thought that 60 years would happen in such a blink of an eye?

13

The Joys of Antiquing

Morris and Barbara Kratz, Community Seniors

Sarah Loschen, UNI Senior 1C14

How many people do you know that are able to buy a great fridge for \$250? I am definitely not somebody who could do that, but I do know Morris and Barbara Kratz who enjoy going to auctions and antique shops to find these killer deals. Every Monday evening, I have had the pleasure of sitting down with this lovely couple to drink some wine and talk about life.

Barb and Morris were young when the Great Depression happened, but they still remember what it was like to have to save every penny. They grew up in a time where money was tight for nearly everybody. They have learned how to find the best deals while spending as little money as possible. This is how they have become so good at finding great deals on everything from clothes to appliances.

Morris and Barb both have many hobbies, but one thing that they have enjoyed their entire lives is going antiquing. They have spent many weekends traveling all around the Midwest looking for great deals. They have made friends along the way since they see a lot of the same people while at these shops and auctions. Making friends is not difficult for this couple since they are some of the friendliest and talkative people that you will ever meet.

One place that Morris and Barb frequented was the Iola car show in north central Wisconsin. This is a huge three-day event where thousands of people show up to view the cars. Over 2,200 cars are shown at this event. Barb would often go antiquing in town while Morris spent his time between 8am and 4pm at the car show. He would spend 8 hours walking around and talking cars with people with

just one break for a beer at lunch. While in town, Morris and Barb would often eat at the Crystal Cafe. Here they would enjoy a home cooked meal with some homemade pie for dessert.

The car show was just one event that Barb and Morris went to. They went to countless antique shops in many different towns and states. One thing that Morris loves to collect is radios. There are a couple antique radios in their house now, one of which is right next to the couch that my classmate, Amanda, and I sit on. This radio is nothing like I have ever seen before. It is huge and is topped with glass so that it can serve as an end table in their home. Along with radios, they enjoy collecting old photographs and postcards.

I have enjoyed spending my Monday evenings with Morris and Barb. From them, I have learned how to appreciate the little things in life and to always be friendly with every person you run into in life. These are some important things that I can use in my future teaching career.

Morris,

Thank you so much for inviting me into your home every week to talk about life and many other things. I really enjoyed learning about yours and Barb's life together. I find it amazing how you two have been together for 60 years and still have so much love for each other and your families. You are truly an inspiration to all young couples, such as myself, who are just starting out.

Thank you for everything, Sarah

14

Generational Tribulations

Mac Eblen, Western Home Communities Senior
Maddy Miller, UNI Human Relations Junior 1D16

Although the origination of tribulations may change from generation to generation, many people, young and old, come across misfortune in their lifespans. Whether these hardships derive from relationships, wealth, belongings, or health, they arrive with life-changing lessons for the beholder. Fortunately, as my luck would have it, some people acquire the same life lessons via similar, unimaginable hardships. Given comparable afflictions, those people are then able to establish an indescribable connection.

On that account, how many people do you personally know who have suffered from rather rare brain illnesses? The answer for me is now one - other than myself. That leads to Mac's story...

At age 91, Mac Eblen has lived through it all. However, being a young lady in the Great Depression Era was not the worst ordeal she has had to overcome throughout her lifetime. Although the Depression taught her how to live within her means and manage the unexpected, she learned even more from subsequent misfortunes in her life. At age 80, Mac dealt with something that no mother should ever have to deal with. Her second child of three became ill at the ripe age of 50.

After watching her son become consumed with psychosis and hallucinations without a medical diagnosis, Mac received the dreadful news sometime later. She learned that her 50-year-old son was suffering from Frontotemporal Dementia. She then became his caretaker. His life, cut too short, taught her to be grateful for the time and abilities we are gifted while we can still enjoy them, to empathize and be more understanding toward those with physical and mental disabilities, as well as to welcome hardships.

Due to her unfortunate struggles as a parent and my own confrontation with Anti-NMDA Encephalitis, we share the belief that everyone is different in his/her own beautiful way. Some optimism I gathered from the wise Mac was that: *We aren't just a different person, but a better person because of our hardships.*

Essentially, you can't reverse your inevitable misfortunes- so why not find the good in them?

Although my outcome was different than her son's, Mac's retelling of this relatable story makes it evident how my parents must have felt during my experience with a rare brain infection. Despite everything, Mac conceals each of her traumatic life-experiences eloquently, just as I hope to one day. Upon looking at her, all a person could catch a glimpse of before being consumed by her "elegant" personality, is her beautiful smile.

Dearest Mac,

Thank you for your friendship. I loved hearing your stories. We both share the undervalued beliefs that life is precious, and that a person doesn't know what he/she has until it's lost. I'd like to think we were brought together, not because of coincidence, but because we both understand those beliefs better than most people could ever comprehend. As always, smile and remember you're an inspiration. Until next time, Maddy



15

A Man of Many Stories

John Falk, Western Home Communities

Senior

Sara Parris, UNI Human Relations Senior

1D17

One event can change someone's life; whether it takes seconds, minutes, hours or days. Just one life changing event. This leads me to John Falk's story. John could overhaul an engine by the age of ten. He was on the path to take over and run his dad's garage, until one tragic event would put John's life on a new path. In his senior year of high school, his father was in a

fatal car crash. John would no longer have the opportunity to run his dad's garage. The catastrophic event would change John's path.

After his senior year of high school, John worked in a shop for a while and then was a janitor at his former high school. This is where John's old coach told him to go to college and become a teacher. John enrolled at the University of Northern Iowa for Industrial Arts. Little did he know, he would only be enrolled for a year. John enlisted in the Marine Core at the age 21 years old, where he served his country during the Korean War. He never turned down an opportunity to help.

One event. One life decision. The chance to do great. John married his first wife and started a huge family. He was blessed with nine children, five boys and four girls. John supported his family by working with Goodyear where he ran his own store. When Goodyear gave John a promotion he felt underqualified, but took the promotion and moved his family. John hated uprooting his family and making his children change towns and schools. He worked for Goodyear running stores and taking promotions until he retired, 30 years later at the age of 57. John kept busy visiting his family, until an old work friend needed help saving his Goodyear store. John ended up staying and working for another 5 years completely turning the store around.

As shown, one person can kick start a new journey. John's mother started getting ill and needed a heart operation. This life event brought John back into his hometown, where he contacted a few old friends. The only friend who was free to visit John was Donna; John's old school crush. John called Donna to see if she would be interested in grabbing a bite to eat. They would get together for dinner at the Red Fox in Waverly, Iowa. These two were not looking for love, just a social visit.

John would visit his mother once a month and would call Donna to meet. One October day, out of the blue, Donna asked John why he hadn't hugged her yet. Their friendship and love flourished over the months. At a New Year's Eve party without thinking--John asked Donna one simple question. He asked for her hand in marriage. Donna replied with one simple word: no. She was on her way to visit Rome for two weeks. During those days apart John wrote her each day. A few months later John asked again and got the answer he wanted. In May of 1994, the two married surrounded by their families.

One senior matched with another senior out of 108 different matches who share some of the same passions, values, and determination. John opened his home to me and we laughed and shared our stories. Stories that warmed our hearts and stories that silenced the room. I see John as someone who was never underqualified, but as someone who rises above expectations. John is determined and believes there is always a way to help. People have more problems than you could ever expect and do not always set high expectations for themselves. You can always bounce back because the Lord has a plan.

Dear John,

Thank you so much for letting me into your home and sharing your stories with me. I have learned a great deal from you since the first day we met. I never thought taking Human Relations would end with me making a new friend who I look forward to seeing every week. Strong, compassionate, driven, and courageous are just a few words which describe how wonderful of person you are. You taught me hard work does pay off and to enjoy the little things.

Warmest thanks, Sara

*Your soothing presence was the strength
I needed to face my past.*

16

Unexpected Beginnings

Ken and Carol Cox, Western Home Communities Senior

Ali Perman, UNI Human Relations Senior 1D18

You never know where you are going to find love and what circumstances will start your love story. Neither Ken nor Carol knew what was in store for them, coming into college at the University of Northern Iowa. Years later I had no idea what was in store for me coming to this same university.

Little did Carol know, that taking a shift in the Campbell Hall Dining Facility dish room during her sophomore year would change her life forever. It was the night before her 19th birthday and everyone at work was giving her a hard time about how old she was getting. Ken had never met Carol before, but as he was taking the garbage out, he thought it would be funny to play a joke on Carol. After he threw the trash out he took what he thought was an empty garbage can and put it over Carol's head. As he lifted the garbage can back off he realized that the garbage can was not quite empty and some of the leftover trash leaked onto Carol's hair.

Thankfully Ken, being the gentleman he is, knew that trash in Carol's hair wasn't a very good birthday present. Feeling terrible, Ken asked Carol to go to ice cream with him to make up for the trash in her hair. Little did they know that this priceless beginning would be the start to their love story.

Coming into college I never thought I would meet my future husband in a dance class. I was impressed that Aaron could throw me higher than anyone else in the class while swing dancing, but when he asked me out a few months later, I said

no. After hanging out over the year, I learned he was actually an awesome guy and when he asked me out the third time I thankfully said yes.

For their first date Ken took Carol to Baskin Robbins for ice cream and must have known she was the one because he spent 15 cents on her. Ken called a few days later to ask Carol to homecoming. When Carol said she was going home that weekend for a wedding, Ken thought he was getting turned down again, but he had made quite the impression on Carol and she wanted to go to homecoming with him.

Carol called her mom and told her that she wouldn't be able to make it home to her cousin's wedding because she had been invited to homecoming with Ken. Her mom was not very happy that she would be missing the wedding, but Carol took a chance on Ken, which paid off. Ken and Carol went to the homecoming game that weekend and a fraternity party after and started dating. Life has never been the same for either of them since.

After finally saying yes and agreeing to go on a few dates with Aaron I realized my life would never be the same either. What started as studying together and hanging out with our groups of friends turned into climbing waterfalls together, running the trails, bike rides, getting lost, planning a wedding, and lots of laughter. It is crazy how one person can come into your life and have such an impact on you.

In August 1971, Ken and Carol got married. Ken has been paying for his garbage stunt ever since, but who knows what would have happened if Ken had not been such a prankster. November 5, 2016 Aaron and I got engaged. Who knows what would have happened if we hadn't ended up at the University of Northern Iowa in a dance class together. These unusual beginnings led to many adventures and quite the love stories.

17

A Man and His Motorcycle

Lyle Erlanson Western Home Communities Senior

Kyle Polzin, UNI Human Relations Senior 1D19

In life, there are many times that we get caught up in the monotony of our daily routine. We wake up in the morning, go to work for an eight to ten hour shift, come home from work, eat dinner, watch some television, and go to bed in order to begin the same cycle the next day. The best way to break this daily grind is to find a passion of yours and pursue it no matter where it might lead you. For Lyle Erlanson, his passion for motorcycles has escorted him to rallies and events all across the nation. He has been on motorcycle rides as far north as the Boundary Waters in Canada and as far south as Atlanta, Georgia. These motorcycle rides provide Lyle with an opportunity to see breath-taking views of the nation while also enjoying the company of his fellow motorcycle enthusiasts, Dave, Kirk, and Kirk's son, Cody. Though Lyle thoroughly enjoyed the group rides, he wanted to experience the thrill and adventure of taking a solo ride across the United States.

After careful investigation, Lyle found a Grand Prix (GP) bike race that was taking place in Monterey, California in the spring of 1988. He had always dreamed of watching a GP bike race and this was the first GP bike race that was being hosted within the last thirty years. With his sights set on this motorcycle race, Lyle ventured out on a thirty hour and two thousand plus mile trip of a lifetime. As Lyle commenced his trip, he traversed west across Iowa until his path intersected with Interstate highway 35 (I-35).

Once on I-35, Lyle drove south on the highway until he made it to Emporia, Kansas. During this first leg of his ride, Lyle played the radio as he cruised down the highway. After only two hours into his journey, he soon realized that the radio

was distracting him from taking in the scenery of his ride so he turned it off. With the radio off, Lyle had a clear mind and heart as he soaked up the beautiful views that the Iowa and Kansas countryside had to offer him.

When his six hour journey to Emporia, Kansas, had run its course, Lyle then took highway 50 from Emporia to Colorado Springs, Colorado. This leg of the trip lasted almost nine hours, but it was one of the more picturesque rides that Lyle had ever taken in his life. There were fantastic views of the rolling plains in Kansas and the mountain ranges in Colorado. As Lyle got farther into this leg of the journey, highway 50 turned into a two lane highway. Lyle loved driving this stretch of the trip since he was able to take in more of his surroundings on the easy going two lane highway. Once Lyle made it to Colorado Springs, he drove to Monarch Pass. Upon reaching Monarch Pass, Lyle got off his motorcycle and took in the breathtaking view that this landmark offered him. There was a clear blue sky and rugged, rocky mountains as far as the eye could see.

Once Lyle had his fill of this scenic view, he took a risk and headed north towards Denver, Colorado. On his way to Denver, Lyle ran into an unpassable road due to the snow from the Coloradan winter. This occasion seemed to put things into perspective for him; not everything on this drive or in life would come easy or without challenges. This occasion also reinforced the idea that Lyle was truly alone on this trip. Just when he was starting to question what his next route would be, he met a fellow motorcycle enthusiast. Within a few minutes of chatting with this individual, Lyle learned that they were both heading to California, so he would have a companion for the remainder of the trip.

Lyle and his new friend decided that they would head south from Denver to Fresno, California. This second to last leg of the trip lasted over sixteen hours and was one thousand one hundred and fifty plus miles. Though it was a long journey, this leg of the trip seemed to fly by in the blink of an eye for Lyle and his riding

partner. The two headed south and drove through the west entrance of Yosemite National Park. The scenic views from Yosemite looked even better than postcards that Lyle had seen of this historical national park. The two drove from Yosemite to Las Vegas, Nevada. During this stretch, there was a quiet peace between them with only the engines of the motorcycles roaring. After rolling through Las Vegas, the pair drove through Death Valley on their way to Lake Isabella in California.

As they were heading towards Lake Isabella, Lyle and the other motorcyclist drove by a grove of orange trees, which emitted a scent so strong and sweet that they could almost taste the citrus in the air. When the two made it to Lake Isabella, they took a scenic route around the lake to admire its beauty and wonder. This route guided them towards Fresno. At last, the time had come for Lyle to say goodbye to his new friend and continue on for the final leg of his journey.

This last stretch of the journey from Fresno to Monterey stretched over 150 miles and three hours. The remaining miles zoomed by underneath the tread of Lyle's tires as the anticipation for the GP bike race rose. Finally, after thousands of miles, gallons of gas, and countless stops, Lyle made it to Monterey. This journey of a lifetime allowed Lyle to follow his passion for motorcycles and break out of the monotony of everyday life. As individuals, we too can break out of the monotony of life if we just follow our passions to wherever they may take us.

Dear Lyle,

I want to thank you for providing me with the opportunity to listen to and share one of your stories. It has been an honor and a privilege getting to know you over the past couple of months. I will always cherish the stories that we swapped with one another during our weekly meetings. I hope that I was able to successfully capture the significance of this event in your life. I know that because of your story I will now strive to follow my passions no matter where they might lead me. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your story.

Sincerely, Kyle

*My story now flows with grateful
reminders of your encouragement.*

18

Stitched Together

Donnabelle Miller, West

ern Home Communities Senior

Ashleigh Robinson, UNI Human Relations Senior 1E20



The quarter was coming to an end. Donnabelle and her then fiancé Lee were getting ready to take a giant leap into their future. They were both set to graduate in November, Donnabelle had just accepted a kindergarten teaching job as well as planning for her upcoming nuptials. Donnabelle had set her end of the year up to be one whirlwind of a time. She was in the midst of her first teaching job and had taken on the task of preparing her kindergartners for the school play. She was excited and overwhelmed all at the same time. Her kids were testing every ability and skill that she had learned about in college.

With all the excitement of a new job and planning a wedding it was fair to say that she was burning the candle from both ends. She didn't want this to hinder her and Lee's Christmas together, so she got to work, yet again. Donnabelle at the time was very into knitting. She wanted

to make something for Lee that would show how much she cared for him. So she had picked out a pattern to make argyle socks for her fiancé.

Christmas Eve quickly approached and Donnabelle was juggling as many balls in the air as one young lady could. With her students getting ready for the upcoming Christmas show and her wedding plans being finalized the argyle socks were repeatedly being put on the back burner. Christmas Eve day had approached and Donnabelle came to realize that she had only a sock and half done. She figured, this is not a problem she will wrap them up anyhow and share with Lee that she promised to get the second sock done later. The Christmas Eve exchange happened and Lee opened up his one and half knitted argyle socks. He told her he loved them, and she again stated that she promised to finish the second sock, he believed her.

Donnabelle and Lee moved many times during their time together. As they moved from city to city, expanded their family, ventured in new professional careers that sock and half were there with them. They ended up staying in Cedar Falls, Iowa. This is the last trip these socks would ever make. Lee became very ill and it was taking a toll on his body. Donnabelle knew that there was only so much more time she would have with her beloved husband and she wanted to finish what she had started those many years ago.

However, 60 years had passed and she was unable to knit anymore. She had let the idea go until one afternoon. Donnabelle was meeting with her girlfriends at Panera like she did every week and out of the corner of her eye she saw a group of ladies knitting. Donnabelle eventually mustered up the courage and shared her story with this table. She was hoping one of them was going to be able to finish up the pattern she had started in years past. One of the ladies had gladly taken on the challenge to complete the half a sock that was knitted with love many years ago. Holiday season approached just as it does every year. Lee was still very ill and was quickly losing his memory, but still managed to remember his family members.

Christmas Eve arrived; the house was filled with the ones nearest and dearest to them. After several decades together Donnabelle was able to deliver on the promise she had made on their first Christmas Eve together and she handed Lee the completed argyle socks. The holiday season had come and gone this year leaving an extra sense of love in the air. Lee passed away that January and although it was not a long time, Donnabelle was happy that he finally got to wear those socks she had stitched together with love many years ago.

Dear Donnabelle,

Thank you for being remarkably open with me during our time together. I felt so fortunate to have shared in that very personal memory of yours. I cherished our time together and I will never forget the emotions you made me feel through the telling of your story. Your sincerity has been eternally stitched into my heart.

Sincerely, Ashleigh

19

Weekends Away, Memories to Stay

Laretta Dykes, Western Home Communities Senior

Katie Kuesel, UNI Human Relations Senior 1E21

Family is the most important parts of Laretta Dyke's life, for as long as she can remember. Her home life was not the best, as it was not a very loving, safe place to be. However, there was a special place that holds many near and dear memories. Every weekend, Laretta would stay at her grandparents' house. Those days were spent under the care of her loving grandparents and shared with her energetic cousins.

As soon as school was let out, Laretta would be headed to her grandparents' house as quick as she could! She had five cousins that would meet her there. As soon as the boys arrived, in no time they would be wrestling. Laretta could never understand why they did that for the life of her! The kids also loved to play softball together. Because they were in town, there were three to four other families in the

neighborhood that they went to school with and played with. Another famous activity with the rowdy bunch would be roller-skating or ice skating. Although Laretta never had a pair that fit her quite right, it was still fun to try!

Friday nights would consist of walking to town to go to a movie. If they were lucky, their grandma would make an appearance with them! Saturdays are when the real fun began. The girls would get together and have a talent show or perform their own play. They would be singing all of the popular songs of the era, and would laugh and laugh for hours! Laretta and I were able to reminisce together and play some of the “oldies” like “Slow Boat to China” by Peggy Lee and Bing Crosby.

Some of the memories that still stick with her today are the times when there were thunderstorms while she was at her grandparents’ house. Her grandma was absolutely terrified of storms and would be the first one in the closet to hide in terror. All the while, the rest of the children were brave and were not even phased by the weather. These memories, as they were relived in her home with myself intently listening, seemed just as funny as they were when they first happened!

As the weekends would wrap up, the cousins would end their time together with a nice dinner. One of Laretta’s favorites would be her grandmother’s mashed potatoes and chicken. It seemed as if the weekends could never come soon enough. Still to this day, Laretta reminisces on the fond hours and days spent with her relatives. All of her weekend always left memories that will forever stay.

20

Bonding over the Brain

*JoAnn Kramer, Western Home Communities Senior
Brooke Safley, UNI Human Relations Senior 1E22*

When I first met JoAnn, I had no idea that we would have so much in common. We both are passionate about teaching and always knew we wanted to be teachers. Remarkably, we both have connections to someone with a brain injury.

JoAnn's daughter, Jennifer, was out riding her horse one day when she was suddenly thrown from the horse and her head collided with the frozen ground. She was only 10 years old. She was taken by ambulance to Covenant hospital and from there, life-flighted by the National Guard to Iowa City. There, she was in a life or death situation for about 3 weeks, until she stabilized. While she was recovering, JoAnn read Laura Ingalls Wilder to her as a way of connecting with her.

My sister, Abby, had a cancerous brain tumor in her left, frontal lobe and was diagnosed at 11. She was also treated in Iowa City and had surgery to remove her tumor. We both have this personal connection that has drawn us closer as friends. Both of our loved ones have had to persevere through their recoveries and lives afterwards.

JoAnn is an amazing advocate for others because of her experiences with teaching and her daughter. She is a former president of the United States Brain Injury Association and has traveled all over the U.S. to bring awareness to those with brain injuries and their disabilities thereafter. One such opportunity JoAnn had was to travel to Pennsylvania with the other state presidents of the organization. They held a workshop and worked together to find solutions for advocating brain injuries as a disability. This was a challenging trip for JoAnn. She did not really know anyone and they were housed in a very overwhelming environment. They were staying in a huge mansion, with three stories and rooms for every guest. However, this trip was important and she was glad that she pushed herself to go. They all had the common goal of advocating for those with brain injuries and helping them succeed in their lives.

I am very privileged to have been able to get to know JoAnn. We share many similarities that have made our time together sweeter. Having someone there that can relate to similar hardships is wonderful, and we have had a fun time comparing our experiences. Even while she has stepped back from some of her roles, JoAnn continues to make time for others. You can often find her chatting with her neighbors or playing tennis with some friends. Her heart is limitless for others and it shines throughout.

Thank you, JoAnn, for letting me be a part of your life these last 10 weeks. I have been very lucky to receive you as my senior friend and get to know you. I am so blessed that we have had similar life experiences and were able to connect on those. Thank you for opening your heart to me.

Love, Brooke

21

Just Down the Road

*Jerry Kramer, Western Home Communities Senior
Taylor Salisbury, UNI Human Relations Senior 1E23*

Jerry Kramer grew up on a farm in rural Iowa, just north of Waterloo. He was very fond of his family and his education. Walking a mile uphill both ways, Jerry would arrive in Bennington School House #8 every day. He attended this country schoolhouse all through elementary school. During his years at this school house, he had many teachers. The most influential teacher was Richard Hills. On Sunday's, Jerry would join his family at Mount Hope Methodist Church, just down the road from where he lived. It was a small church, but little did he know how important this church was going to be for him later in life.

Bennington School House #4, which still remains today, was where JoAnn grew up learning to love school. She also lived on a small farm and attended the

same church as Jerry. For years, their families had been friends, and all their life, they had grown up just down the road from each other.

Jerry eventually left the country school house and continued his education in a local Waterloo school, as did JoAnn. They grew up and learned to love education. Jerry would come to find he loved farming and would have to help out more after the passing of his father. Jerry and his brother played a crucial role in helping their uncles keep the farm afloat. Jerry finished his high school career and decided he wanted to go to Iowa State to further his education. When he realized this wasn't the life he wanted, he enlisted in the Army.

When Jerry returned from the service, he enrolled at University of Northern Iowa where he would major in History and become a teacher. Meanwhile, JoAnn attended University of Iowa. She would come home during the summers and play organ at the church.

One morning at church, Jerry thought what a beautiful lady she was and he knew she was something special. He claims this little girl he used to know turned into such a beautiful woman. From there, is when everything fell into place.

Eventually, Jerry and JoAnn were married in the same church as they grew up attending. They bought out JoAnn's family farm and raised their family there. Who would have thought that everything Jerry was looking for in a woman, would've been just down the road.

22

Finding Your Niche

*Ron Bro, Western Home Communities Senior
Stacey Sigwarth, UNI Human Relations Senior 1F24*

Ron Bro grew up in a farming family in southwest Iowa as the youngest of twelve children. He grew up working with his older siblings and his father on their

farm. However, when his father passed away when he was twelve years old, Ron and his mother relied heavily on the help of his brothers. Eventually, Ron and his mother moved to town, and this is where he first found hardship in finding his niche.

Ron found that making friendships in a new place was hard; he went through different groups of friends, some rougher crowds than others, and eventually settled in by joining the school's football team. He found friendships in this athletic bunch, and this helped him to adjust to life in town. However, this would not be the last time Ron struggled to find his place.

Once he graduated high school, Ron chose to follow in nine of his siblings' footsteps and attend the Iowa State Teacher's College. In making this decision, Ron had highly admired one of his older brothers' success in attending ISTC. This brother had majored in chemistry, moved onto the University of Iowa to further his degree, and then moved to Delaware where he worked for DuPont and helped to develop Teflon. His brother's postsecondary achievement inspired Ron to set his academic bar high, and he decided that he would major in physics. Although he had never struggled with academics throughout all of his schooling, this course of study came as a great challenge to him, as he found the math requirements associated with a physics major quite difficult.

As a student who was used to receiving high marks, his grades were slipping, and he found himself quite discouraged and ready to give up. Ron described this as one of the lowest points of his life; his self-confidence had taken a deep hit, and he was unsure if he could ever be proud of himself again. However, Ron decided to pick himself up by the bootstraps, and he declared physics as his minor, with a teaching degree in industrial arts as his major. This instance is where Ron truly found his niche. Ron once again flourished in his studies, receiving A's

and B's instead of C's and D's, and this is where he met one of the most influential people in his life: Willis Wagner.

Ron worked under Wagner, an esteemed professor in the department, as an undergraduate student assistant, which caused him to dig deeper into his passion with the industrial arts, and allowed him to learn and grow as a student and a teacher. The affirmations and compliments Ron received during his time at ISTC helped him to rebuild the self-confidence that had been torn down not long before. A compliment from James Hearst, an honored faculty member of UNI, still remains with Ron today, "You'll go far, young man, you'll go far..."

And far he did. Ron has studied and worked at high schools, colleges, and universities in Iowa, Nebraska, Oregon, Zimbabwe and Egypt, including spending 25 of his professional years teaching at UNI. He has worked hard for what he has achieved, by overcoming the hardships life has thrown at him, and expresses deep gratitude to everyone who has supported him along the way.

Ron,

I am deeply grateful that you chose to share your stories with me. While hearing about your life, I have considered more of my own: my hardships, my successes, and those who I owe gratitude to. Although you are a retired educator, you have continued to teach- maybe not academics, but ideals.

Thank you again for inviting me into your home so that I could learn about you, and in turn, myself. I wish you nothing but the best in all of your future endeavors!

23

A Miracle for Mary

Mary Bro, Western Home Communities Senior
Siri Hansen, UNI Human Relations Senior 1F25

Mary is very a special name. “Jesus, born of Mary...” the story began, as the high school acapella choir sang of the miraculous Christmas story. It told of the angel who came to Mary and brought her a message.

Mary is a very special name. It is also the name of a wonderful woman named Mary Bro, who sang in that high school acapella choir many Christmases ago. Mary Bro has always believed in helping others and accepting people as they are. She is a woman with a big heart and a beautiful smile.

Mary is a very special name. It also the name of Mary Bro’s best friend, Mary Jo. Mary Bro and Mary Jo did everything together. They loved each other like sisters. The two grew up and had their own children, and Mary Jo and her family moved to Washington while Mary Bro stayed in Iowa. Although they lived farther away, their friendship never grew apart. They would talk on the phone periodically to catch up. The two Mary’s were quite merry, you could say. Until one day, Mary Jo said 3 words, 3 words in a tone that was not like Mary at all, 3 words that Mary Bro didn’t want to hear, and 3 words that were not merry, at all. “I have cancer,” Mary Jo said.

Mary was a very special person. It has been over 10 years since Mary Jo passed away, but Mary Bro will always hold onto a card she received in the mail one Christmas, months after Mary Jo went to be with the angels. It read:

Miracles happen when you believe in Christmas. Holiday Blessings to you.

Love, M.J.

Mary Jo’s daughter had mailed the cards that her mother had written, but had never had the chance to send. Mary Joe had even signed, in her own handwriting, her initials on the card. To this day, Mary Bro reads the card with a tear in her eye and a smile on her face. Then, she delicately slides the card under the flap of the envelope and carefully sets it up on the shelf.

Mary Bro puts on her winter boots and goes to church to sing in the choir. Mary sings of the miraculous story of Christmas, and all the angels join in.

24

Cedar Valley's Hardest Working Man

*Don Scheer, Western Home Communities Senior
Holly Wanninger, UNI Human Relations Senior 1F26*

Don Scheer was born in North Dakota 87 short years ago. Shortly after his birth, he moved to Iowa to be closer to his mother's family following his parents' separation. He grew up in Meyer, Iowa. He began working on his great cousin Jim's farm, which was where he learned all about hard work and determination.

From waking up before the sun, to doing all the chores himself when Jim was gone several nights throughout the year, he did it all. He looked up to his great cousin Jim in many ways. Jim was somewhat of a father figure to Don as he grew up because he was not close to his own father. Don's great cousin Jim showed him what hard work can do for you and Don dreamed to be just as successful as him.

Since Don was in the eighth grade, he provided everything for himself - from clothing and school supplies to purchasing a Model A Ford. He took great pride in doing this. He did this not only to prove it to himself, but to also help his mother. His mother was a strong woman who worked hard for her family. Don loved helping his mother when he could, whether it was taking her to church on a Sunday, heating her classroom on early, brisk mornings, or simply driving her into town (at the shocking and quite frightening age of 12!).

Don worked very hard throughout his years in school. He pushed himself to take the hardest classes he could in order to better himself. He welcomed the

challenge and actually enjoyed gaining a better education. He pushed himself as he grew older to continue his education. When he met his wife and started his family, it all got a little harder. He had to work to support his family, build them a house of their own, and go to school.

Soon, school became too much for Don to handle so he decided to start working full-time and started prioritizing that aspect of his life. He began working at a small meat packing company in Waterloo called *Rath*. He enjoyed working there until an opportunity came about where he needed to take a large risk. He quit his job at *Rath* and interviewed at *John Deere*, knowing that he may not get the job, which would then leave him jobless and unable to support this family.

Taking that leap of faith paid off and Don got the job at *John Deere*. He made his way up the chain of management and *John Deere* was very good to him. They paid him well, sent him all over the world, and always respected his ideas. Don still thinks very highly of *John Deere* and actually had some of his own children follow in his footsteps and take jobs there.

Once Don was retired, he decided to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity five days a week, eight hours a day. This really showed me what kind of a guy Don is. Just when he finally had time to himself, he decided to go out and help others. He worked hard to give families all over Waterloo a place to live. He still remembers the places he helped build and put together. Although some aren't there anymore, he still reflects and recalls the memories that were made there and the people who he helped.

Up until about a year and a half ago, Don continued to work. He would help his family members with odd jobs that they had around their homes. He volunteered to help those in need, and kept active around the community. Since moving to the Standard Family Assisted Living Building, working has been one of the things he misses the most.

Don always gives credit to his hard work and passion when he talks about his success in the workplace. I can't help but feel motivated after talking with him each week after the endless amounts of success stories he tells me. His hard work, dedication, and optimism about everything he has encountered and experienced is truly inspiring.



25

Loud Actions

Alice Hansen, Western Home Communities Senior
Leslee Young, UNI Human Relations Senior 1F27

When you think of the Great Depression, you probably think of families struggling to make ends meet, fathers who work countless hours to put food on the table, and mothers who worry how they will survive the next week. When I asked Alice about the Great Depression, she reflected on what it was like during that time. Being poor was just something that she was used to; it was the norm in her life. She was not focused on the negative aspects that happened during one of America's worst economic failures; rather, she talked about a memory that stuck with her throughout her entire life. Alice is very vocal about being an introvert,

no pun intended! This is true about her whole family, she says. They are the type of people who like to sit back and watch situations unfold. The way that she talks about her father, Adolph, was that he was one of the quietest of them all. He was a hard worker who loved his family. Even though there were not many life lessons that were talked about, his actions were loud! A normal day at work, her father, a self-employed carpenter, returned home. Shortly after, he and Alice's mother, the bookkeeper, noticed that they were overpaid. Immediately, Adolph, a trustworthy man, jumped into his green panel truck and returned the money that belonged to his customer. This is money that could have been used in so many different ways to help his family. This was an action that spoke to Alice's heart.

While spending time with Alice, I have learned so much. She is shy, but outspoken, about her beliefs. She loves her family, and has a faith that can be seen for miles. The lesson that she learned from her father when she was a young girl taught her to respect others, be trustworthy, and be kind. She says that the best gift to give a person is to listen and to just be there. I am so blessed to call Alice Hansen a friend. She is someone who I strive to be like when I am older.

*May gratitude help you see one another
through the prism of love.*



Section 4



26

A Life in Music

*Harriet Picht, Western Home Communities Senior
Elizabeth Anderson, UNI Human Relations Senior 4A1*

“It’s funny, I haven’t talked about that in a while...” Harriet smiled at me over her cup of coffee, “I’ll probably teach school in my dreams tonight.”

From the moment Harriet Picht invited me into her home, I experienced firsthand her hospitality, quick-wittedness, and easy-going nature—attributes that her students were able to enjoy for the 26 years of her life that she spent as an elementary school music teacher.

Every Wednesday morning from our initial meeting in mid-September, I would quickly knock and then burst into her apartment. Harriet would shuffle into the kitchen to make us both a cup of coffee, and then we would sit around a little wooden table in her living room to chat. Sometimes this little table bore a partially completed jigsaw puzzle, tiny pewter figurines of Disney characters, or trains. As we talked, I found myself often glancing up on the wall, where an old violin had been carefully hung. This fiddle, varnish worn from use in places, strings slack against the bridge and tailpiece, was her father’s. Harriet began to tell me about her musical life . . .

Music was part of Harriet’s life from the very beginning. As long as she can remember, her father was always heading a band of some kind—fiddle in hand. Harriet dipped her own toe into public performance at the age of five, when she entered and won a singing contest on WMT radio in Waterloo, called “Kiddies’ Review.”

As she grew older, she and her sister Rita sang with her father’s band, which was called Uncle Harry and the Cedar Valley Hired Hands. This band played in

many different dance halls, for weddings, and occasionally for barn dances held in actual barns! When I asked her if she remembered hearing her father practice in their home, Harriet laughed, “Oh no, never!” She explained that he always had musical ideas in his head that he was just able to play, and that he played popular songs from the radio by ear.

Throughout her life, music has woven itself into many of the memories she recalls. With every snippet of story she tells me, a little more of her passion for music shows through. When Harriet was seven, she took up piano lessons under the direction of Sister Mary Anthony at St. Patrick’s, her elementary school. Piano lessons were taught during school time, and Harriet and her friends would often play for each other and give small recitals as they learned more pieces.

Later, when she was in high school, she began to play the organ—but not the electric kind! Harriet learned to play on a pump organ. This instrument had two large foot pedals that she had to pump with her feet to fill the bellows of the organ with air in order to make a sound. Between singing in chorus, variety shows, with her father’s band, and playing the organ for St. Patrick’s church services and weddings, Harriet interwove music into every nook and cranny of her life—family, friends, and faith!

Having enjoyed music as a significant part of her own life, Harriet knew she wanted to share this with others by becoming a music teacher. She attended UNI (then called Iowa State Teachers College) as a voice major, where she met Merle Picht, whom she married two years later. Harriet left school to work, and have three wonderful children with her husband. Twelve years passed, and she continued to work, care for her children, play the organ, and sing.

Though so much time had passed, she knew she wanted to do more with music. It was such an integral part of her life, and marriage and children didn’t change that, they only strengthened it! When her youngest son was four years old,

Harriet returned to school to finish her degree, graduating in June 1966. That fall, she began teaching in the Cedar Falls school district, and over the next 26 years she shared the gift of music with many children.

As I sit across the table from Harriet Picht, I look at her father's violin and think about the wonderful memories she has as a result of his music. As she grew up, her music came with her. Her family spent time making music together, and she sang and played in her community, school, and church home. Major events in her life came accompanied with their own musical inflections. In turn, Harriet has shared this same joy by providing children with opportunities to explore, make and experience music. Her musical life has blessed countless others.

27

Learning to Cook

Bernie Huss, Western Home Communities Senior
Ellen Barbaresso, UNI Human Relations Senior 4A2

Bernie Huss grew up in Grundy Center, Iowa. Her father was a blacksmith and worked extremely hard to provide for his family. Bernie's mother passed away when she was three years old, leaving behind five children. Her father never remarried and not only was he the provider for his children, he then had to step up and fill the shoes left empty by his wife passing. He would often come home from work and have to cook supper for his children. His favorite meal to prepare was steak well-done.

Growing up, Bernie saw how hard her father worked to provide for her and her siblings. She wanted to find a way to help alleviate some of the burden that being a single parent put on her dad. At the age of fourteen, Bernie decided to help

her father out by learning how to cook. The first thing that she learned to cook was eggs. She learned to cook them many different ways. One night, one of her brothers complained about her cooking eggs often. Her father very kindly and lovingly told him, “If you don’t like it, then cook something else.” This was enough to keep him from complaining. She eventually learned to cook complete meals like pot roast with all the vegetables. Often she would rush home after school to start cooking for her family.

Learning to cook at a young age taught Bernie how to provide for her, Tom, and her daughters. Cooking was one of the many things that she taught herself while growing up without a mother. These things helped prepare her for motherhood.

28

Hillcrest Park Drive-In Theatre

Bernie Huss, Western Home Communities Senior

Kailyn Bettle, UNI Human Relations Senior 4A3

Today, the Hillcrest apartments stand where the Hillcrest Park Drive-In Theater once stood. The memories made by college student in these apartments are created on top of where families and friends used to come together to create memories of their own.

Almost every weekend, Bernie Huss and her husband Tom would pile their three children Kim, Kelly, and Kris into the back of the station wagon. They brought blankets, candy, and even popped their own popcorn instead of paying the ridiculous price for a bag of popcorn at the theater. The Huss family then made

their way to the theater joining the many other young couples with kids that filled the drive-in.

Before the movie began, the kids would pile out of the car and spread out their blankets so they could lie down for the best view of the screen. Bernie and her husband arranged themselves in the back of the station wagon, watching over their children who usually fell asleep before the second movie could even begin.

The best part of these nights for Bernie was carrying her sleeping children back into their house. They may have been dead weight, making them difficult to carry up the steps, but they were peaceful and content, and so was Bernie.

Dear Bernie,

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me this semester. It has been so great getting to know you and hearing your stories. I look forward to our time together every week. It is so nice to be a listener and know someone is listening to me in return. Your strength and your faith in God are truly inspiring and I know my faith has grown from hearing how you give your life to Him.

Thank You and God Bless, Kailyn

29

A Real-Life Rosie the Riveter



*Lura Treloar, Western Home Communities Senior
Andrea Bone, UNI Human Relations Senior 4A4*

Lura knew this three-and-a-half-hour drive was going to be a long one, but she also knew it was going to be well worth it. It was a beautiful Easter weekend in 1943, Lura and her sister were on their way from Burlington to Ogden for what was going to be a very special and memorable weekend. She had been waiting for this weekend for quite some time, and her family and friends were busy preparing

for it. This weekend was the weekend that Lura would become her best friend's wife, and she couldn't be more excited.

Lura first met Louie when they started ninth grade together and she knew right when she saw him that he could be the one. Because Lura lived in the country, she had attended a country school, but after 8th grade, it was time for her to start high school in town. Little did she know that this would also be the time for her to meet her soul mate. The two became best friends and spent all their high school days together, mostly when Lura went to watch his sporting events. All this time spent together came to an end when the two graduated. Louie enlisted in the United States Air Force and was sent to Camp Caffee in Arkansas and Lura moved to Burlington with her sister.

After some time, Louie decided it was time to make Lura his wife. He asked his commanding officer for a three-day pass, and although his officer said getting married wouldn't be worth it, Louie was hitchhiking to Burlington in no time. He may have had to ride with some strange, smelly people, he was on a mission to make this beautiful lady his wife. Lura and Louie's wedding took place in the Lutheran Church in Ogden, and although it wasn't a large wedding, it still was a celebration of the love Lura and Louie shared. Lura's family had prepared a great dinner for their friends and families to celebrate the newly-weds after the ceremony.

Once the wedding festivities of the weekend were over, it was time for Lura and Louie to go their separate ways again, but they knew that April 19th, 1943 would be a day they would always remember. Soon after parting, Lura left her sister in Burlington and moved to Arkansas to be with her beloved husband. From that day on, Lura followed Louie wherever the United States Air Force took him. The two traveled to Delaware, Texas, California, and many other places, and they couldn't be happier.

Traveling with her husband came with some responsibilities. Lura worked in many factories that produced materials for the war. She remembers wondering what the different materials were used for and what type of damage they may cause. Lura was a real-life Rosie the Riveter and worked her butt off every day to do her part and help serve her country. To this day she feels great pride for herself and all the other real-life Rosie the Riveters she worked with. Marrying her best friend and having the opportunity to help with the war will always be some of her best memories. With every visit, I hear more and more stories that prove to me how great of a woman Lura is, and someday I hope to be half as great as her.

Dear Lura,

I want to thank you so much for spending time with me this semester and letting me get to know your story. From friendships to hardships, I learned so much about life through your stories and have a much greater appreciation for all things that life entails. I have such gratitude for this experience and I hope that you feel the same way. I will never forget the time we spent together, learning about each other's stories. Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of your story.

Love, Andrea

30

Cut Through the Choppy Water

Stan Oschner, Western Home Communities Senior

Josh Burk, UNI Human Relations Senior 4A5

Life used to be hard. We have all heard it from our grandparents or elders at one point or another. People used to work harder than they do now to put food on the table. The Midwest used to have more farmers, which meant lots of chores. Stan grew on a farm where the expectation was to help out his parents with hours of work every day. Stan, his siblings and his parents all shared the load in taking care of the animals, looking after crops, and keeping the farmhouse clean.

Stan went to a one-room schoolhouse every day with the other kids in the area. With classes of three or four students per grade level, academic competition was high, and Stan took it very seriously. He and his friends would practice cursive, algebra tables, and read about the Civil War together and discuss it with Ms. Wallace. Ms. Wallace adored her students and loved how hard Stan worked and praised him for working well with his classmates.

High school was a transition. Stan went from having three classmates to 33. Competition grew stronger, and Stan wanted to prove that he was capable and ahead of the pack. Stan was successful here, as he was in his younger days at school both academically and socially.

However, Stan did miss the opportunity to play sports. His classmates would talk about the post-route touchdown pass in football practice, or the deep three-pointer drained at the end of the basketball scrimmage. Stan would smile along and internally wish he could be there playing ball with them.

Stan took the bus home and stared out the window, dreaming of dribbling up the court and making that last-second shot. He got off the bus and was greeted not by a ball and a court, but instead by farmland and cows. While his friends got to work on the court, Stan got to work at home.

Stan's work ethic became engrained into who he was. It became as inseparable from him and unique as his own laugh. This led Stan to college right out of high school. Being the intelligent and hard-worker that he is, Stan went to the University of Nebraska to study engineering. Stan was met by culture shock of an entirely new level. Going from a class of three to a class of 33 was a big change; going from 33 to a school consisting of over 30,000 was ridiculous. But being the tenacious character that Stan is, he adapted and succeeded.

Stan met Dale after he graduated college and moved to Iowa to work for John Deere. Stan and Dale swiftly became as inseparable as Stan from his own

work ethic. The two loved to be outdoors and enjoy nature by biking wooded Iowa trails or running a path by the river. Most of all, they loved being out on the lake with Dave's boat and their water-skis.

On one beautiful Saturday afternoon, it was Stan's turn to be on the water-skis while Dave steered the short, sleek motorboat. Stan grinned as he felt the sun beat on his face, heard the wind whip around his ears, and felt flecks of water tease his ankles as he tore across the lake. Stan closed his eyes. Time slowed for a moment. He thought back to the hard work he had been putting in all of his life on the farm, at school, and in college. Stan thought about how much he loved his parents and appreciated them and his teachers for pushing him to be the best he could be. Stan thought about his friends and how just because they worked in different contexts doesn't mean one side had it better than the other. Stan thought about all of the fun he had growing with his family at home, with his friends at school, and that he was having right now. Stan opens his eyes and smiles at his friend. It's a beautiful day.

Dear Stan,

Thank you for sharing your afternoons with me and letting me into your life. You have truly had a great one, and your journey isn't over yet. Thank you for encouraging me to contact my old friends and catch up, it was worth the time. You and I had some great conversations about balancing work, family, and fun that I really needed to hear from someone who has done it so successfully in his life. I will always strive to find the right balance, as you have in your life. Thank you for sharing your experience and your kindness.

Sincerely, Josh

31

Friendship Has No Barriers

*Calleta Koefoed, Western Home Communities Senior
Ellie Embray, UNI Human Relations Senior 4B6*

This story begins when a new girl moves to town. The walk home from school was quite boring – until this new girl joined and started a friendship that could never be forgotten. Calletta and Beatrice, or ‘B’ for short, sparked a friendship through these walks home from school.

The two hold many of the same memories, however B wouldn’t ever know the sound of Calletta’s voice or laugh. She wouldn’t hear a truck come down the road, sound of a bicycle wheel crunching the gravel or the hum of the band playing in the park on Wednesday evenings.

B was legally deaf in both ears, however, that couldn’t stop this friendship from forming. Calletta and B worked on their communication and soon learned that if B couldn’t read Calletta’s lips, they could resort to writing down their messages.

Their story started with the long walks to and from school but grew into something that would last a lifetime. In the warm months, the two would go to the local park during the day. Recently built by Mr. Maytag, ten cents could get you a day full of swimming or tennis. You could also find the two at the town movie showing or soaking up the bands’ tunes in the square. The two socialized with each other at every event possible – even though they didn’t attend the same church. Calletta would join B at her house if her family was out of town. B wasn’t involved in organized sports, but the minutes spent walking together or summer hours at the park contributed to the strength of their friendship. Without a car to travel any faster than their walking pace – the two spent the time getting to know one another.

Calletta reflects on what she admired most about her best friend. When she thinks of B, her determination to succeed stood out the most. Calletta surrounds herself with individuals who have thought about their goals, and have taken measures to pursue them. Today, B lives with her husband who was a professor at Princeton. They write when they can to keep updated on one another’s life. The

two formed a friendship that had no barriers, and stemmed from a simple walk home.



32

Beauty Lies within the Friendship

*Dorothy Brown, Western Home Communities
Senior*

*Alissa Fairbanks, UNI Human Relations Senior
4B7*

Dorothy loved school and being around people, especially her best friend Shirley. They were in the same class and even the same grade, but Shirley had things that Dorothy was very jealous of. She had a bicycle, a pony, and even a pony cart that her family took her to school in, while Dorothy just walked. Unfortunately, Dorothy also had quite the lying problem in first grade.

One day Dorothy decided that she wanted to ride in Shirley's pony cart because she had never been in one. However, she knew that she needed to get home after school because her mother, Gladys, would be waiting for her to help with chores. She thought and thought for a while and finally came up with a plan to ride the pony cart. She came to school that day and went straight up to the school teacher and said, "Miss Clara Curtis, I'm supposed to ride home with Shirley today after school." The teacher looked at her and said, "Dorothy, I never heard anything from your mother or Shirley's mother about you riding home with Shirley today."

But Dorothy just continued to tell her that she was told she is riding home with Shirley and that her mother must have forgotten to tell her.

Well Miss Clara Curtis believed Dorothy and at the end of the day, let her ride home with Shirley. Dorothy was so excited that she finally could get a ride in the pony cart. But that excitement quickly came to an end when Dorothy's mother called Shirley's mother asking if Dorothy was over there. After about an hour of watching down the road for Dorothy to come home after school, Gladys finally called the school house and heard what Dorothy had told Miss Clara Curtis. It didn't take Dorothy's mother but minutes to get down to Shirley's house.

Not only was Dorothy in huge trouble with her mother, but Miss Clara Curtis gave her the only paddle she ever received. Shirley moved away in the fifth grade but they remained friends far beyond that. Shirley passed away from cancer several years ago, but their memories of friendship will forever be cherished.

“To make a friend, you must be one.” - Dorothy Brown

33

A Leap of Faith

***Bev Ridder, Western Home Communities Senior
Taylor Hauser, UNI Human Relations Senior 4B8***

Sometimes one decision can change your entire life. Sometimes you don't realize it until far down the road. When Bev Ridder was 12 years old, her neighbor and mentor, Mayme Benzow, invited Bev to attend Sunday school at Calvary Evangelical church in Waterloo, Iowa. Mayme saw that Bev attended all the activities the church had to offer. Going to church, Sunday school, and other

church activities became a regular part of Bev's routine. She found a home in the church.

Bev began to build a strong relationship with God and met new friends while attending church activities while Bev strengthened her faith she met the love of her life, Ralph. Ralph was a few years older than Bev and was a regular at the church. The two fell in love and married in 1949. Their marriage was one of faith and love. Through good times and bad, the two remained devoted to God and devoted to each other.

The couple passed along their strong values and their strong faith on to their four daughters. The girls were raised in the Calvary Evangelical church. Two of their girls were married there. Eventually, the family moved churches and went to United Methodist church on Kimball Avenue in Waterloo.

Bev and Ralph's children got very involved in Orchard Hill church in Cedar Falls, which encouraged the couple to move there later in life. The two agreed it was one of the best things they did. Orchard Hill was more contemporary and delivered a message, not just a sermon.

Being involved in the church has always been important to Bev, and it has helped her strengthen her faith in many different facets. Faith is not always something that comes easily. Bev and her family have experienced their fair share of hardships with the loss of her husband, and the loss of her grandson, and two of his children. While these times have been testing of her faith in God, Bev has trusted Him through it all.

In her 88 years of life, Bev has experienced some of the highest peaks and some of the lowest valleys. One thing has remained consistent through it all: her faith in God. Had it not been for Mayme when Bev was a little girl, her life could have turned out very differently. She took a leap of faith by going to that church,

having never attended before. What she got out of was far beyond what she could have ever expected: love and faith to last her a lifetime.

Bev-

Thank you for sharing your life and stories with me. I admire your strength and your faith. The love you have for your family radiates when you speak. You have fostered a love and care for them, and it is obvious in your stories. You are a great example of what it means to live with gratitude. I have truly enjoyed meeting with you every week. I will miss our visits. *Best wishes, Taylor*

34

The Past Explains the Future

Karl Koch, Western Home Communities Senior
Brandon Hersom, UNI Human Relations Senior 4B9

Growing up was never easy for Karl. His parents came from Denmark but moved to the United States, where they eventually got married. They lived in Chicago where Karl and his older brother were born. When Karl was three, his mother passed away and his father decided to bring him and his brother back to Denmark to stay with their aunt and uncle. When they arrived in Denmark, their father told them he did not know how long they were going to stay. He moved back to the United States where he became a farmer in Iowa. Karl just lost his mother, and now his father was thousands of miles away in a different country.

Karl and his older brother never saw eye-to-eye growing up, and they still don't get along. They never agreed on anything and his older brother always told Karl what he could and couldn't do based on what he wanted him to do. His brother is 4 years older than Karl and he never let Karl forget it. He would tell Karl not to do things because they were wrong but then he ended up doing them himself. He is very hypocritical. Karl and his brother still do not have a good relationship because of all those things, despite them living down the hall from one another.

When Karl was old enough to go to school, his aunt and uncle had him go to a private Lutheran school. He never liked school because he never found anything he learned to be relevant. He was a very smart student but felt like education was pointless. Something that also contributed into Karl not liking school was bullying. The kids at his school started to make fun of him because of his last name. They called him a rooster or made clucking noises at him because Koch sounded like cock-a-doddle-doo.

Some of the bullying eventually led to fights. There was a patch of trees in a square in the school playground that was known as the “ring.” That is where all the fights happened in school. Throughout school, Karl was never comfortable bringing home any friends because of how different and strange his aunt and uncle were. They did everything differently and Karl never felt comfortable having someone come home with him. He did bring a few friends home however, and they never said anything about his aunt and uncle but he knew his friends weren’t comfortable being there. Karl believes they never said anything to him because they wanted to be polite.

When Karl turned 25, he moved back to the United States and back to the state of Iowa. This is where he met his wife and they had two sons. Their oldest son died at a very young age and it was a very hard time for Karl. He was able to eventually move on with his life with the help of God. He began reading the Bible and became a Christian. Karl is now very understanding of what happened to his son and he forgave his brother and those who bullied him while growing up. Karl is living life the way God wants him to live and he will always be a huge inspiration in my life.

35

A Guide for Graceful Aging

Anne Paxton, Western Home Communities Senior
Karl Kramer, UNI Human Relations Senior 4B10

Anne Paxton is an anomaly among the residents of the Western Home community and other people her age. When she moved to the Western Home this spring, her daughter who lives nearby asked her how it was. Anne took one look around and told her daughter, “It’s full of old people!”

Anne has always had a very youthful and positive outlook on life. Anne has lived during some troubling times in America, having lived through the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War and Vietnam, and the current political tribulations that have beset our world. Her advice has stayed the same through all of it: “Humility, honesty, and respect.”

Many of her favorite memories are the ones she has about her father’s cabin that he built near the source of the Mississippi River up in Minnesota. Her father built it when she was young and her aunt and uncle built one close by as well. Anne spent a lot of time there, running around in the woods, having picnics with her cousins, and swimming in the shallow waters of the many lakes, though her time there hasn’t stopped. Anne’s family has worked on the cabin over the past 87 years since it was built to add features like running water, electricity and a small shed to keep all of the tools there. Anne’s children and grandchildren have enjoyed many summers there, too.

A memory that sticks out the most was one day when Anne was about eight years old. Anne, her brother, and a few cousins who were visiting at the same time were walking around a dam on a nearby river. Anne heard a big splash and turned around to see that her brother had fallen in the river. With a whip’s crack of her arm, she reached out and grabbed his shoe, possibly saving his life; that river was one of many sources of the Mississippi, and a very strong river that her then four-year-old brother likely wouldn’t be able to swim out of.

That cabin was also nearby the site of an old Native American settlement. Years after the incident at the dam, Anne would dig in certain places around the forest to find old Native American pottery. She had a small collection that she was hoping to increase one day, and she found a small, uncovered mound of dirt. Minutes after she and her cousins started digging through, they realized that the mound used to be covered by poison ivy plants and that their roots were still in the dirt.

They got out of there as fast as they could once their hands started burning, and Anne has had terrible reactions to poison ivy since about two years ago when she finally got a shot that has helped the pain out a lot.

Anne has always had a positive outlook on life and has said that many of these experiences helped keep her young. She would also probably cite her various family members and her late husband Ben for keeping her young. Ben was always a very happy man and kept Anne very happy as well until he passed away this past year. Despite his loss, as far as death is concerned, Anne says that, “We’re all going to konk out some day, all we can do is hope it’s later rather than sooner,” and that a person can “never be prepared” for it.

I hope to someday age as gracefully as Anne has.

Dear Anne,

I was originally a bit surprised at this project, though looking back on it, I am such a better person for having met you. I lost all of my grandparents fairly young, and you so happily dispense years and years of wisdom in a way that I haven’t been able to enjoy for a very long time. While I hope to never stop visiting with you or eating your delicious cookies, thank you for letting me into your life for the length of this project.

Karl

36

You Should Go with Me

***Mary Mortensen, Western Home Communities Senior
Shaley Landt, UNI Human Relations Senior 4C11***

Mary had just graduated from Cornell College in Vermont. She and two other girls that she graduated with had moved to Clinton, Iowa. They all got hired at the same elementary school and got an apartment together. They all had a great time teaching and living together, but life goes on and her two roommates got married and went on their ways. Now, it was time for Mary to get her own home. One afternoon, her dad came up to Clinton to help her apartment hunt. They were just driving around town, looking for anything that was for rent. Just as they were

losing hope and ready to call it a day, is when they saw a really pretty looking house that had a sign in the window that read, “Rooms for Rent.” Her and her dad went in and the lady who owned the house was more than glad to lend her a room.

Two short years later, Mary was taking her class out to recess when the principal came out and said that she had a phone call. Back in the day, there were no phones in the rooms, it was just one phone in the middle of the hallway, so she was curious as to who would even be calling for her.

So, she walked into the school and took the phone call. “Hi, Mary!” said the lady who owned the house she lived in, “There is a handsome fella standing here who is looking to rent the other room in the house! Would that be okay with you?”

Mary thought to herself, why would she call me. She proceeded to say, “I do not care, he can have the room.” And they ended the conversation. Mary spent the rest of the afternoon anxious to get home and meet this fella. When she got home, she went up to her room because the fella was in his.

All of a sudden, the fella showed up at her door and said, “I heard that you eat out every night and I was wondering if I could grab some supper with you.” Of course Mary didn’t care and every night after that they would grab supper together and became good friends. Mary was going with someone at the time, so that is why they stayed good friends.

One very cold Saturday afternoon, after an Iowa football game that they two had gone too, he said to her, “I think you should break up with him, and you should go with me.” Mary knew that breaking things up with the other fella would not be easy, but she did it anyways. She told him that she had found someone else and he took it a lot better than she had ever imagined. They ended things on a mutual understanding and she started going with the other fella. A year later, they were engaged to be married. She did not continue teaching after they got married and his job relocated them a lot. He is now passed and she lives at Stanard Assisted

Living in Cedar Falls and they have five wonderful children who are grown and have families of their own.

Dear Mary,

I cannot thank you enough for sharing your stories with me, they will be cherished forever. I have appreciated every story that we shared together, more than you will ever know. Here is a story that really touched my heart and I wrote it for you, so you could cherish it forever, just like I will. Once again, I cannot thank you enough for the time you have spent with me and sharing your stories with me. You are a huge part of my story that I will never forget. Thanks for letting me be a part of your story!

Your College Girl, Shaley



37

Two Peas in a Pod

Jo Grover, Western Home Communities Senior
Sabrina Lippens, UNI Human Relations Senior 4C12

Jo Grover loved school. She was a good student and learning came easy. Her favorite subject was history, but her favorite teacher was the science teacher. These are things she still remembers today. However, there is one aspect of school she will never forget: meeting Joan in Kindergarten. The two instantly became friends and their friendship grew into something special. In fact, they became “sisters.” Their friendship still lasts today, 79 years later.

Growing up, Jo and Joan did everything together. They stayed at each other’s house two or three nights a week. Jo especially enjoyed Joan’s bathtub because, for a while, Jo’s family didn’t have one. They ate foods at one another’s house they didn’t get at their own home. They also rode bicycles together; Jo didn’t have a bike because she lived on gravel, so getting to ride Joan’s mom’s

bike on the pavement was special. They would even ride a streetcar into town to go ice-skating. Clearly, the two did a lot together.

However, that isn't all the girls did. The girls would roller skate at the school and walk their dogs together. They would lie in Joan's bed reading *Count Dracula* to each other, scaring one another from sleeping that night. They would also ride the bus into Waterloo to watch a double feature every Sunday. Jo even went on vacation with Joan because she was an only child. The two did so much together, yet never fought. Their friendship grew; some people would say they became like two peas in a pod.

These memories haven't faded from Jo's mind and probably never will because of the importance they hold in her heart. However, there is one memory in Jo's heart that is bigger than the rest: the day she mistakenly introduced Joan to her future husband. One winter day after Jo was recently married she went to get a Christmas tree from a nursery. Joan happened to live right across the street from the nursery. Jo arrived at the nursery to find out no trees were cut so she would have to wait thirty minutes. At the same time a young blonde boy arrived in a work truck to get a tree for his employer. He too was told he had to wait thirty minutes. Jo, being social and friendly, invited the young man over to Joan's house while they waited. Before the day was over the young man, Arine, gave Joan his number.

Joan and Arine got to know each other, going on double dates with Jo and her husband, Bob. One holiday Arnie was selling pots to earn an income while attending college in Iowa City. Bob, wanting to support Jo's best friend's husband, bought pots and gave them to her for Christmas. Jo would have rather gotten a coat for Christmas but used the pots for several years, knowing she was supporting a future family. Joan and Arnie grew, falling more in love every day. Years later, they took each other's hands in marriage. They now have five children and

numerous grandchildren. Without Jo buying a Christmas tree that day, Joan and Arine may have never met.

The friendship they share means so much to Jo she named her daughter after Joan. Joan lives in Cedar Rapids now so they two are still able to get together and talk on the phone. Their friendship that started in Kindergarten, 79 years ago, still lasts today and will continue to last when the two meet in heaven.

Dear Jo,

I want to thank you for the privilege of knowing you and learning about your story. We all have unique stories and it was a pleasure getting to know yours. I will never forget your story about Joan because those friendships are one and a million. So I wrote you the story so you have it to cherish, along with your friendship. I will never forget the stories you shared, just as you will never forget your friendship with Joan. Thank you for letting me be a part of your story.

Sincerely, Sabrina

38

He Let Me Be Me

*Sue Hoffman, Western Home Communities Senior
Megan Manderscheid, UNI Human Relations Senior 4C13*

Sometimes, when one least expects it, life unfolds like a fairytale. Sue Hoffman shared with me her unexpected and long-awaited love story. It is a story of unconditional love; a story that teaches us one never knows what is just around the corner in life.

The year was 1996, and Sue had been living and working as a nursing aide in Cedar Falls for a while. Originally from Nebraska, Sue had come to Cedar Falls because her daughter, Teri, lived in town. Teri had young kids at the time and hired a babysitter to watch her children during the day. The babysitter informed Teri one

day that her husband's father would be in town for a few days from Arizona, and that he was not very familiar with Cedar Falls. Teri offered her mom, Sue, to show Elno around Cedar Falls and set up a lunch date that week for Sue and Elno. This was without ever asking Sue if she was free that day or if she would be willing to show this complete stranger around town. Therefore, it was not surprising that Sue was shocked when Teri told her she was to go to lunch with this man, whom she had never met, and show him around. After some thought, Sue decided to be a good sport and said she would do it for her daughter.

They hit it off at lunch, but Sue was not looking for love. Her thoughts at the time were, "55 year olds do not find love." She had been divorced for many years and had not ever imagined remarrying. Plus, Elno lived in Arizona, so they could not be together even if they both wanted to. They exchanged contact information, and Elno promised her that he'd keep in touch, but Sue didn't really believe him. After all, they had met one day ago, and lived almost 1,500 miles apart. So that was that. Elno flew back to Arizona the next day, and they would likely never see each other again.

However, the story does not end there. About one week after Elno's visit, Sue received a letter in the mail from him. Of course she wrote back, and the correspondence continued for three months. Elno was so charmed by Sue that he called her up after these short few months and told her he was selling his property in Arizona and moving to Iowa. She was elated to hear the news. Things moved quickly from there. On, Thanksgiving of 1996, the couple got engaged, and five short months later they were married. When some family criticized the couple for moving too fast, they argued that at their age, why should they wait? Frankly, they didn't need anyone's permission.

The couple was married for 16 years until Elno passed away in 2013. The 16 years they spent together were some of the most exciting for Sue. Sue explained to

me that Elno made her dream of traveling to Sweden and visiting her family members there a reality, and together they had the trip of lifetime. She likely would not have gone had Elno not pushed her out of her comfort zone.

I want to end this story with a quote from Sue, “Elno let me be completely me. He loved me no matter what, with no conditions attached. It was the true kind of love, that in my case, took 55 years to find.”

Dear Sue,

I want to thank you for the privilege of knowing you and learning from your many stories. This story, in particular, stuck with me because it made me realize how life is so unpredictable and we oftentimes just need to go with the flow. It also taught me to never give up on love. I wrote this story so you would have it to cherish, along with the many memories you shared with Elno. I will never forget this semester which gave me the opportunity to get to know you. Thank you for letting me be a part of your ever-growing story.

Sincerely, Megan

39

A Year to Celebrate

Linda Ochsner, Western Home Communities Senior

Erika Murphy, UNI Human Relations Senior 4C15

Linda and her family have always been close. Her three boys and husband Stan, are her life. One mid-July summer, it was Linda and Stan’s 25th wedding anniversary, which is a milestone in marriage worth celebrating. Only this year was special, because all three of their boys had reached a benchmark also. Their youngest, Chad, had just graduated high school, Darren graduated from Iowa State University and their oldest, and Scott had just received his Masters Degree from Purdue. Since the whole family was feeling accomplished, they decided instead of having a couple smaller parties for everyone, why not throw one big one?

This party was going to be one filled of generations. Linda and Stan invited all of their family, neighbors, close friends, and coworkers, while the boys invited all of their friends, classmates, and girlfriends. They cleaned the piled up storage out of the garage and stacked it high in their boat, and pulled the boat into the neighbor's driveway. At the time, Linda still worked at Daisy's on Hudson. Her coworkers always wanted to have a party, so they could all make some of their yummy potluck recipes. They finally got their chance, and each Daisy girl made a different kind of salad for Linda's party. The salads went well with the delicious pulled pork sandwiches which kept the guests coming back for more. The food was only a small piece of this great gathering.

Linda got to wear a beautiful white jumpsuit with a corsage to celebrate their anniversary. For mid-July this was the perfect day, not too windy (which is rare for Cedar Falls) and not too hot, so that jumpsuit fit the scene just right. Just when she thought things could not get any better, their friends from Illinois pulled up. Why this was so special was because the last time they had seen them was their wedding day 25 years ago. Oh what a day that was, old friends blending with the new, generations crossing lines and getting to know one another, it was the most fun time.

Linda will never forget just how perfect it all came together. Overall, it is the people that make up the party, and she felt so incredibly blessed to have all of her friends and family together in one place. In the end, it's not what you have, but whom you share it with, and 25 years later Linda and Stan are still sharing their lives together.

Linda,

I loved learning about you and your family. Getting to spend time with you was truly a privilege. Along the way, we established a friendship and made memories that I continue to tell me friends and loved ones about. We exchanged many laughs and opinions surrounding our views and values. I did not know that I

would end up having so much in common with you and I am grateful it turned out that way! I am lucky to have gotten to know you and to listen to your stories.

Sincerely,

Erika

40

Surviving Hardships

Marvin Brewster, Western Home Communities Senior

Madeline Masters, UNI Human Relations Senior 4C14

Marvin is a survivor who has endured many hardships from a young age. He lost his mother to cancer when he was a young boy. As a result, his father remarried and Marvin and his brother survived years of torture from their step mothers. Their step mothers beat them, locked them in a 100 degree attic, poisoned their milk with rubbing alcohol, and tried to kill them. Marvin turned to school to escape his home life.

Going to school was Marvin's favorite. Since he didn't have much of a home life, he used school to benefit that. School was Marvin's home away from home and he would walk 3 miles, in dirty overalls just to be there. It kept him busy, off the streets, and away from troubles at home. At school, Marvin would find extra work to do such as helping teachers, volunteering in younger grades, and mentoring students.

In Mr. Don Wieland's shop class, Marvin discovered he had a passion for woodworking. He would make bookshelves, desks, chairs, and stage equipment for the school. Marvin used his woodworking skills outside of school too. He took advantage of these skills to build exercise equipment for a child in need. Marvin even built a deck for his paratrooper friend. He also built items for his children and grandchildren. Marvin's home is filled with objects he built, and he continues to build. His stories and achievements are displayed in the pieces he created. Today,

Marvin collects pop cans and makes airplanes and whirligigs out of them. In fact, as a token, he made me one.

After graduating from school, Marvin joined the National Guard, where he continued to survive hardships for 17 years. He was a master sergeant who would have lost his life in the National Guard if it weren't for leaving after Kennedy was assassinated. Marvin got married and had two kids. He survived another hardship for sending his son to college, but not sending his daughter. Even today, Marvin continues to survive hardships. He recently survived a stroke, which caused him to lose part of his memory and taking ability. He also recently survived falling and shattering his hip bone. Surviving these hardships has made Marvin a stronger person.

Dear Marvin,

I would like to thank you for your advice, helping me, serving our country, and allowing me to know you and your story. Even though many of your experiences were difficult, I appreciate you sharing them with me and how they made you a stronger person. Your experiences are important, unique, and truly capture a story of surviving hardships. Your story taught me that we don't know the hardships others face until we learn their stories. I will bring this knowledge to my future classroom to impact my students. I value the impact you and your story have had on me. Thank you!

*Sincerely,
Madeline*

41

Responsibility and Snowballs

Bob Olson, Western Home Communities Senior

Nate Nelson, UNI Human Relations Senior 4D16

Bob looked up at an overcast sky, the afternoon sun trying to shine through. He noticed small white dots meandering down to the ground. Fresh snow covered everything, the ground, the trees, the houses and even his shiny safety patrol badge.

He opened his mouth, moving his head back and forth trying to catch some snow on his tongue. His stargazing was abruptly interrupted by the sound of children laughing and playing. He instantly regained focus and held his arms out so his classmates wouldn't cross the street without his permission. As soon as the children had crossed the street he went back to trying to catch the pure white snowflakes.

POW! Without warning a snowball was hurled at him, hitting him square in the face. A freezing sting started from his face and moved down to his neck where the debris of the snowball had fallen. His face cringed with pain as the frozen snow came in contact with the warm tissue of his neck. In shock, Bob stood there frantically looking around to see who had launched the snowball at him. His eyes became fixated on Mary. She had another tightly packed snowball clinched in her right hand. She tossed the second snowball, barely missing, and turned and ran down the street to her house.

Right after the second snowball was thrown the bell rang releasing Bob from his position. Taking off his safety patrol belt, he started after Mary. The cold dry air fills his lungs, as the sound of the crunching of the snow beneath his feet echoes in the air. Mary turned and ran into a house. When he reached the house he grabbed two fists full of snow and squeezed them tightly to form a solid sphere of white dense snow. He hurls them at the house with all his might, one hitting the front door and the other hitting the siding. He quickly ran in the opposite direction toward his house, feeling a sense of justice as he ran.

The next day at school Bob was called to the principal's office. When he arrived the principal was waiting for him. The principal was well aware of the situation at hand, and was extremely disappointed in him. Bob pleaded his case to the principal stating that she had thrown the first snowballs and he was off the job when he had thrown his own snowballs, but the argument fell upon deaf ears. The

principal then took back the safety patrol belt and badge, and sent Bob back to class.

Bob learned a lesson that day, just because he didn't have the belt and badge on anymore it didn't give him the right to chase Mary home and throw snowballs at her house. Yes, he was off duty at the time, but he still represented the safety patrol and the school, much like if a police officer does something bad when they are off duty, it still looks bad for the police department. People, including Bob, have a responsibility to treat others with respect even when they aren't doing the right thing.

Thank you to Bob Olson for meeting with me on Friday mornings and telling me stories. Also, thank you for the advice on how to become a better teacher and mentor. I will use your insight and wisdom to become a better teacher.

42

Divergent Thinking

*Berdena Beach, Western Home Communities Senior
Alison Nichols, UNI Human Relations Senior 4D17*

Berdena Beach grew up on a farm. Most children were older, so a lot of her time was spent with her dad. She was the daughter and the son. Dad called her 'Honey' mostly, but a lot of times she overheard her dad talking to others about how she loved to help on the farm with chores and he many times said, "She's my boy". God was on her mind because every night she would pray the traditional prayer, "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep". She was always thinking about where her soul would go. Berdena, at the age of six, had three imaginary playmates. She

thinks about these friends from time to time, especially when hearing the song, “My Little Playmate”. Their names were Honey, Boy, and God.

She would spend her time outside with these friends playing games, climbing trees, and finding different leaf shapes. Most importantly, through these friends, she saw multiple perspectives. Divergent thinking is a thought process to create ideas by exploring many solutions. This is what Berdena did; this was the purpose of her imaginary friends. Honey and Boy: these two friends were her personas. She talked with them most. These talks usually resulted in, “What do you think Boy?” or, “What do you think Honey?” and when they had their discussions, they many times asked each other, “What would God think?” or, “Would God like that?”

Berdena does not know when these imaginary playmates left her, but she always remembers the imaginative talk. I had an imaginary friend, as well. I had this friend during my early elementary years. My childhood was similar to Berdena’s in that all the children that lived near me were older. My friend was a boy named Gary, most times referred to as Imaginary Gary. He spent time with me at school during recess as well as at home when I played outside on the slides. I remember telling many others about this friend, but I only remember one response that I received from my older sister, “Imagination was only used in writing and that we cannot make our imagination real.” To children, like Berdena and me, this imagination can be a reality.

Imagination is misunderstood. An imaginative child thinks abstractly. They have a curious, but disciplined mind. Sometimes, imagination in a child gets squished because it is not how the child is supposed to think, according to adults. Growing up, and even today, Berdena Beach realizes that children are being told not to feel certain ways. She urges people that you should not tell a child how they

should think or feel. Imagination can help a child with their emotions, their thinking skills, and reality itself.

Thank you Berdena . . .

For sharing this story with me as well as allowing me to share this story with others. I visualized your story and it took my back to my own younger childhood years. The message from this story truly resonates with me because, as a future teacher, I will need to keep an open mind as well as need to give an opportunity for my students to explore their imaginations.

Sincerely, Alison

43

Judy Moody Goes to Kindergarten

Judy Moody, Western Home Communities Senior

Emily Nicholson, UNI Human Relations Senior 4D18

Judy Moody entered Kindergarten in the fall of 1941. The four-year-old had watched her two older sisters go through kindergarten, and she was excited to learn from her teacher! Her mother signed her up for the morning session of half-day kindergarten. She was relieved that her friends from the neighborhood would be going to the morning session with her.

Judy describes the classroom as stark compared to what we see in kindergarten rooms today. It was a big room, but there were few decorations. There were chairs scattered around the room and these chairs moved depending on the activity. Judy recalls sitting on the large carpet and having her teacher read a story to the whole class. They would read a different story everyday.

By the time spring rolled around Judy and her classmates had become quite comfortable. They were still young kindergarteners that wanted to please the teacher, but they all knew each other well. Judy had become friends with a young boy in the class whose mother had given him a new pencil. This wasn't any ordinary pencil. This pencil had rainbow marbling and a bright pink eraser. After

seeing his pencil Judy knew that this shiny, new, colorful pencil HAD to be hers. So she took it.

Judy was thrilled on her walk home from school at noon because she knew that she made her first major score. She was so excited to show off the pencil to all of her friends. By the time Judy walked in the door her mother was waiting for her. Judy instantly knew that her mother was aware of the special pencil that was now burning a hole in her pocket. Judy was told to turn around and, “march that pencil right back to school,” and leave it with the teacher for the following day.

When Judy made it home for the second time that day, all her mother had to say was “We will talk about this when your father gets home.” That’s when Judy knew she was really in trouble. Her father was never involved unless it was serious.

As soon as he heard what had happened he sat her down and had two important questions for her. “What were you thinking?” and “Did you learn anything?” He never got angry, but his disappointment left a knot in her stomach for days.

Judy learned a valuable lesson that day. The disappointment from her father was something she never wanted to experience again. She was lucky to learn to never take something that doesn’t belong to you so early in life. It helped shape her into the honest and trustworthy woman she is today.

44

Student’s Daily Commute

Willie Irvine, Western Home Communities Senior
Jonny Olson, UNI Human Relations Senior 4D19

Little Willie had completed his first winter at Geneseo Consolidated School and was enjoying the warm spring weather on another afternoon bus ride home

from school. The model A bus was lined with a bench on each side facing one another for Willie and all of his schoolmates to share on their journey home.

At Geneseo Consolidated School, high school students drove the buses and one of the Pachenka twins drove the bus for the northwest area of the district, which is where Willie lived. The Pachenka boys were Czech and the notorious troublemakers of the community. No one ever knew who was driving Willie's bus because the twins would always switch with one another, continually pranking the riders and today was no different.

The bus was only about a mile away from the Irvine Farm and began chugging up the unmarked road known as *Old Mud Road*. With an unlicensed driver and muddy conditions, the bus had little hope of making its route. The sky was clear but the road ahead wasn't. The bus began to slide and before Willie could blink his eyes the bus was sideways and the kids were in a hog pile on one side of the bus and scrambling to escape. Kids began screaming to get off the bus and eventually began crawling out the back door. One by one they filed out and one by one they saw the steam emitting from the front of the bus. Fearful of an explosion the kids ran only to find out they were safe near the bus. The Pachenka boys continued driving the route the following morning.

This is a comical narrative Willie enjoys sharing even today. The details he can recall are countless. It was scary in the moment but now he enjoys recalling that entertaining spring afternoon. It was one of the many life experiences that contribute to Willie's belief to not take things too seriously because you may look back on it one day and laugh.

Thank you Willie for opening up your lifetime of experiences and knowledge to me. I have genuinely enjoyed hearing about your vibrant past. Your message of not pursuing life so intensely has really resonated with me. You're quote to 'take care of what you got and the rest will be okay' has shown great

meaning through our time together. If any residents haven't gotten the chance to socialize with Willie, you ought to! He is always ready for a challenger in Wii bowling.

*May gratitude inspire an eagerness to
appreciate the goodness and serve the well-
being of one another.*

45

The Fun Group

*Judy Finkelstein, Western Home Communities Senior
Danielle Palmer, UNI Human Relations Senior 4D20*

Judy Finkelstein was born in Illinois but has been an Iowan most of her life. Raised as an only child, she was very dependent on friends for playmates and doing age appropriate activities. She always wanted and had a lot of friends. She made many friends through working as a teacher, being a church member, and working in retirement on several projects. Her closest friends today are a part of the Fun Group.

Judy's best friend's husband passed in 2008. She formed the Fun Group shortly after the passing of Judy's husband in 2010. They started with twelve and the group is now made up of about twenty widows. Friends of friends joined and they got to know each other quite well. Many, but not all, of them live in the Western Home Community. The twenty ladies are always there to support each other during all sorts of difficult times that may occur. On top of this they do many fun activities, thus they named themselves the Fun Group.

The Fun Group tries to get together about once a month as a whole group. The ladies do a variety of activities, such as throwing parties, going on trips, getting tickets to events, game nights, and much more. Their most recent meeting was at a group member's home. Each person brought their own food to eat, and the smooth wine and hot coffee was provided.

In between these whole-group monthly meetings, some ladies might do other activities. If a member wants to go to an event or do something she just needs to post on the listserv. It is emailed to the entire group and if someone wants to go they can reply. Sometimes they pick each other up on the way or just meet at the destination.

Not too long ago a member of the group had open-heart surgery. Judy and her friends sent her emails and cards during this time to show concern and give support towards a quick, well recovery. Judy's best friend also recently had surgery, but on her knee. The group brought her meals so she didn't have to worry about cooking and could focus on recovering.

It is said that as we grow older we really need friends and a support group. Spouses die and children are gone creating their own families. Throughout all of our life it's important to have loved ones around us. But especially as we get older, the importance of having a person or group of friends becomes more significant. This helps keep one mentally healthy and active. This group is full of ladies who can call each other their true friend. This is a tight knit group who are caring and are there for each other through thick and thin. Throughout life some friends come and go, but these ladies are stuck like glue. They are unique. They are loyal. They are joyful. They are the Fun Group.

Dear Judy,

I want to thank you for the privilege of getting to know you. It was a pleasure hearing about your amazing life and the continuing great things happening. I hope to have as loving and supportive friends as you do when I get to

be your age. You speak so much about how loyal, fun, and positive they are. From what I can tell you are just like them. You are so full of life and optimism. You inspire me to live life to the fullest and cherish every friendship.

Your friend, Danielle

46

The Rocking Chair

Homer and Ruthanne Leymaster, Western Home Communities Senior

Emily Pargeon, UNI Human Relations Senior 4E21

Roarke Roarke.....Roarke Roarke.....Roarke Roarke Everyday Homer would get home from school or from working on the farm and hear his father's rocking chair in the living room. From 1932 to 1939, because of the Dust Bowl, a huge drought that caused many dust storms, the chair stopped rocking. This was during the Great Depression.



pieces.

Homer and his family were farmers in Aurora, Nebraska during the Dust Bowl and times were tough for many farmers. Their crops were failing water was scarce, and money was tight for the Leymaster family. One night, Homer and his family came home and there was dust all over the floor. They had to use brooms and dust pans to clean it all up. Since there was always dust and dirt in the house, as Homer's father would rock in his rocking chair, the dust and dirt ended up sanding down the rockers on the chair. This caused the chair to stop rocking and it was taken to the basement in many

After the Dust Bowl ended, Homer continued his schooling at Aurora High School where he met Ruthanne. Homer and Ruthanne grew up ten miles apart from each other and never met until high school. They were both farm kids who grew up participating in 4H and worked hard on the farm. After attending the University of Nebraska, the two got married in 1947. Homer and Ruthanne were married, they helped Homer's parents move into a town near Aurora, Nebraska and the farm was sold. While they were moving, Homer found the old rocking chair in the basement that was still in pieces. He decided to take the chair to his house to fix it up.

Homer worked hard on putting the chair back together and learning more about it. He found out that his great grandpa had bought the chair from a catalog. What is interesting with this type of chair is that you could buy the specific pieces you wanted from the catalog and then make it look how you wanted it to look. Homer's great-grandpa had done this several years before. When rebuilding the rocking chair, Homer wanted to show where the dust had sanded the rockers down, so when he redid the rockers, he used a lighter color wood to show the difference.

After all of Homer's hard work, he finally finished the chair and it looks beautiful. The rocking chair has been passed on to three generations and the chair is expected to go to Homer's son and then his grandson. On the back of the chair are brass plates with all of the Leymaster men who have had the chair or who are going to have the chair, plus their birth and some death dates. The rocking chair currently sits at Homer and Ruthanne's apartment at Windhaven and is displayed and used regularly by the window.

47

Dreams

Joe Nelson, Western Home Communities Senior
Lindsey Pothoven, UNI Human Relations Senior 4E22

As a young boy, Joe Nelson dreamed of one day becoming a submariner. Growing up in small town Iowa however, Joe had never seen a submarine before, let alone the ocean. Instead, he gained his knowledge of submarines through the heroic stories of his neighbor, who had served in the Navy in his youth. These stories made submarining sound exciting, adventurous, and something that Joe just had to be a part of.

When he was of age, Joe enlisted in the United States Navy. Finally, he was going to get the chance to fulfill his dreams. As he walked into the recruitment office and told the men sitting behind the desk his plans, all they could do was shake their heads. They told him that instead of being a submariner, he would make a great navy pilot. He tried to persuade them to reconsider, but there was no room for arguments. Even after his Optometrist told him there was no possible way he would be able to fly with his bad eyesight, the Navy didn't change their mind. After years of planning out his future, his dream was crushed.

Learning to fly came easy to Joe, although it was not something he enjoyed. He spent countless hours up in the sky learning all of the right maneuvers and techniques. The view from the sky was different from that on the ground. It was also very different than the view from a submarine, a thought that Joe was hard pressed to forget. Still, he continued on because it was his duty to do so and was soon shipped out.

It was during this time that Joe met Bob. The two were stationed on the same aircraft carrier and soon became the best of friends. They did everything together and soon got the reputation of being the ship's mischief makers. While on duty, the sergeant would even make sure they were placed on opposite sides of the ship so as not to cause trouble. Joe soon came to realize that life as a navy pilot was not as bad as he had once envisioned. This was because with friends like Bob, he couldn't complain with the direction life had taken him. Even though his

boyhood dreams had changed, his life was enriched with a friendship that would last a lifetime.

Dear Joe,

I want to thank you for the privilege of getting to know you and learning about your life. Your story about joining the Navy really stuck with me. It helped me see that there is always a silver lining in the clouds of life. Thank you again for welcoming me into your home. It has been a pleasure to learn about the many stories that make up your life. Thank you for serving our country.

Sincerely, Lindsey

48

Hardship without Complaint

Marian Christianson, Western Home Communities Senior

Haley Smith, UNI Human Relations Senior 4E23

As Len Froyen once said, “Gratitude emerges from the relief of having done what had to be done and doing it in spite of our doubts and a few glimmers of hope.” Often times we must encounter experiences that we don’t want to face, this is no different for Marian Christianson. When Marian was growing up she lived on



a farm in Nebraska and attended a one-room schoolhouse. Times were tough and her family was forced to move to Iowa due to the crops being in drought and mass amounts of grasshoppers. After moving to Iowa and graduating school at the age of sixteen, she stayed home for a year, working as a secretary at the school. After living at home for a year, she moved to Kansas City and began working at an airplane factory as a riveter, where she met the love of her life.

After only six weeks of dating her and Milo decided to get married. Because they weren't able to get time off work, they went over to the judge's house on Halloween night and were wed. They chose not to tell anybody they were getting married beforehand due to the disapproval they would get from their families and friends. People thought at the ages of eighteen and nineteen, the two were too young to make such a big commitment, but they didn't care what others had to say, they were in love and that's all that mattered.

After getting married they decided to tell their families and both families began to become accepting of the two. Although Milos' parents had not met Marian prior to their wedding, they ended up getting along great. But like all stories, things couldn't stay perfect forever. Shortly after the couple wed, Marian got pregnant with their first child. Around the same time they had received news that Milo would be leaving for the first time for the services. Five months after getting married, Marian would be alone for the first time in her life. Marian had no family around and was working at the factory while pregnant when Milo left. As she told this story to me, she explained this experience to be the biggest hardship she had ever encountered in her life.

Marian has grew up working on the farm in constant hardships, she had moved in the midst of her teenage years to a new home, where she had to meet all new friends. Yet, her husband leaving was the hardest thing she has ever had to go through. Marian remembers this moment like it was yesterday, she remembers crying as she said goodbye and worrying about what the future had to hold.

When Marian gave birth to her first child, she had moved home to Iowa, to get help from her family. There she gained the support and care of others that she needed until Milo returned from the services. Once Milo had returned home from the services, he found himself jobless while Marian was pregnant with their second child and was not to work. Luckily, Milo eventually found a job at the wonder

bread factory and worked there for less than a year while Marian stayed home and took care of their two beautiful children and their house. Milo left the Wonder Bread factory to work at Jens Olesen Construction Company in Waterloo where he worked for the rest of his career. Milo worked as an officer, a bookkeeper, and eventually became a partner in the company.

As we all know, hardship does not last forever. Hardship teaches us to learn from each experience we encounter as well as be thankful for what we have gained when the hardship has past. Like all hardships, the hardship that Marian and faced had past with hard work and time. The family of four eventually became a family of five as Milo and Marion welcomed a third child into their lives. Milo continued serving for his country throughout much of their lives, allowing the family to travel often and live in many different places. The couple eventually came back to settle down in Iowa. After seventy-two years of marriage, Marian still recalls Milo leaving for the first time as her largest hardship, but she stresses how much this moment taught her about love and patience. Marian always tells me that she is a very blessed woman and has lived a wonderful life, and it's hardships like her husband leaving, that make her realize this.

Marian,

I cannot thank you enough for the opportunity I have been given to work with you. Through our times together I have learned so much about you, which has also allowed me to learn so much more about myself. From our talks about the worst times to our talks about the best times, I have gained so much gratefulness that I was able to work with you. I will never forget the stories we have shared together and the amazing times I have spent with you. I look forward to passing your beautiful stories on to others as well as continuing our friendship and sharing many more good times together. Thank you for letting me add to your story in life, but even more than that, thank you for adding such an amazing piece to my story.
Haley

49

Depression & Donuts

Wanda Nielsen, Western Home Communities Senior
Aleya Stanbrough, UNI Human Relations Senior 4E24

Wanda Nielsen was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1927. The beginning of her young life shared the same beginning as the Great Depression. She was raised happily by both of her parents along with her brother who was seven years older. As long as Wanda's family was near, financial issues were of no worry.

Wanda's mother and father ran a donut shop called Dawn Donut. They sold cake donuts rolled in sugar, as well as cake donuts dipped in vats of rich chocolate. Wanda recalls the heavenly smells of the donut shop that wafted into their apartment windows above the business. Often there were times her brother would dress up in a baker's uniform, complete with the tall white hat, to sell donuts wrapped in cellophane outside of the donut shop.

Inside of the shop, Wanda can remember the fresh donuts stacked high on metal racks. The donuts towered over Wanda like mountains. There were also large kettles full of hot oil for the donuts to be fried in. The bakers her father hired always had a friendly smile for Wanda as they dipped the raw dough into the oil. There was also a school-aged boy in the shop, who was older than Wanda's brother. Her father hired him to sugar the donuts. The boy would graciously smother the fresh warm donuts in a large sugar-filled bowl, happy to have a source of income.

Wanda's father was a generous and well-liked man. Wanda remembers him being of small stature, but that could be due to his crooked spine or the hump on

his back. He had a kind heart and always treated his workers with care and respect. Wanda is sure that he paid his workers more money than he kept for himself. He taught Wanda to value hard work and the meaningful retributions that follow.

It is hard to say what helped Wanda's family the most throughout the years of financial hardship: the hard work, the donuts, or the good will of her father.

50

Not Just the Soldiers Moved

Mary Helen Curtis, Western Home Communities Senior

Ann Strom, UNI Human Relations Senior 4F25

Mary Helen grew up in small town Iowa on a farm. After she graduated high school she attended Iowa Wesleyan University to major in home economics. While at school Mary Helen was actively involved in Alpha Xi Delta where she met many of her lifelong friends. Mary Helen also met her husband Milton at school. When they finished school Mary Helen and Milton lived in the same small town that she had grown up in. That is until WWII when Milton was drafted into the army. He was sent to the east coast and Mary Helen quit her teaching job to follow him.

Mary Helen followed her husband, Milton, to each base he was stationed at during WWII. She picked up and moved from small town Iowa to the east coast when Milton got stationed in Newark, New Jersey. During WWII, wives of active duty soldiers were not allowed to live on base so Mary Helen rented a room from a woman off base. While she was there she worked for a plumbing and heating company. One of the things she remembers the most was when she went out to eat

she would rarely get served by the servers. Mary Helen was confused as to why she could not get served and talked to her landlady about it one day. Her landlady figured out that it was because Mary Helen did not tip the server, which she had not done in the Midwest, so she did not realize she needed to. This led to the landlady going with Mary Helen when she went out and helping her get service and pay. Milton was not stationed in New Jersey long.

When her husband was transferred to Savannah, Georgia, Mary Helen again moved with him. On their way down to the base they spent the night at a house and ended up getting bed bugs that got them sent home on furlough before they ever got to base. They were sent home to kill the bed bugs and when they were gone they were told to return to base so Milton could report to work. When they finally got to the base Mary Helen got a job at a local nursery school.

Living in the south, she became very aware of the racial segregation present. She taught at the white school and whenever they would have a teacher from the black school come and substitute the parents would get angry and demand to see that teacher's health certificate. Another time the racial divide was obvious was when Mary Helen called the superintendent of the black school, a Tuskegee graduate, Mr. Brown, when she was talking to her principal. Mary Helen was immediately reprimanded by the principal of her school, Mrs. Flowers who said, "He is not Mr. Brown. He is only to be referred to as Brown and his wife by her first name we have elevated them to that level of respect and will give them no more." This incident really showed the racial divide in the respect between the races, that a couple, both with degrees from Tuskegee, did not have the respect to be called Mr. or Mrs. by other teachers.

After the war, Mary Helen and Milton moved back to small town Iowa where Mary Helen returned to teaching and eventually became the first female on

her local school board. Mary Helen has experienced much in her life and has been awarded with many honors to celebrate her accomplishments. I am lucky to have gotten to know her and share part of her story.

51

I Hope You Dance

Betty Newport, Western Home Communities Senior
Megan Wellman, UNI Human Relations Senior 4F26

Betty Newport was born in 1918. She grew up in Peoria, Illinois. There she attended high school, as well as Bradley University where she got her Associate's degree. She also met a boy named Larry Nyberg there. Even when they were apart or seeing other people, she always knew that he was the one.

In 1938, they were married. They had a great love, together for over sixty years. Including Peoria, Betty and Larry also lived in Decatur, Illinois, Bettendorf, Iowa, and Phoenix, Arizona. They spent six months in Bettendorf, and the other six months of the year, during the colder months, at their house in Arizona. Larry passed away in 1999.

Betty later found a companion in a man named Wayne, who had also lost his significant other. They enjoyed each other's company. Their relationship went from having dinner once a week, to having dinner nightly. They fell in love and were married. They too lived in Bettendorf, as well as spent time at Betty's home in Arizona. After Wayne passed away in 2005, Betty moved to Cedar Falls, Iowa to live near her daughter.

One thing that I have enjoyed during my visits with Betty is listening to her share stories about her love with these two men. But, it has not just been two love

stories that I have been fortunate to hear about. There is a third love that Betty has shared throughout her life that I am going to focus on in this story. This love is a great, lifetime love for dance.

When I heard that Betty loved to dance, I was so excited! I too have a love for dance, and was involved with competitive dancing for fourteen years. Betty began dancing at six years old. Her older sister was a dancer, and she too fell in love with it. Betty started out being a ballet dancer. When she was sixteen years old, her ballet instructor passed away. She was one of Betty's favorite teachers and had been a big influence on Betty's dancing. The ballet classes were not the same without her teacher.

She then got into ballroom dancing. She shared her love for dancing with her first husband Larry. She began to teach him how to dance and enjoyed leading him around their living room. Together they took dance lessons with Arthur Murray. Through these lessons, Larry finally learned how to lead and was able to lead Betty around for a change! When they went down to Arizona for the winter months, they began aerobic dancing three times a week in Sin City.

Other dance styles Betty enjoyed were tap and line dancing. When she moved to Cedar Falls and into the Western Homes, she shared her love for line dancing with the other residents; teaching them. She did this up until three years ago when she had heart problems. She is no longer able to dance quite like she used to, but she never fails to continue dancing. She told me, "When I hear music I can't seem to sit still! I always find myself moving to the beat and bouncing my legs. I just love it!"

Whenever we talk about dance together, Betty lights up and smiles. It has been amazing having this connection with her. In Betty's living room she has a piece of art that reads "I hope you dance". She told me that she loves that saying and when she first shared her love for dance with me, she looked at me and said,

“So Megan, I have to say to you, I hope you dance” and that will always stick with me.

52

The Well-Rounded “Smart Cookie”

Marjorie Goodman, Western Home Communities Senior

John Wheeler, UNI Human Relations Senior 4F27

Marjorie Goodman excelled at school her whole life and knew from the sixth grade that she wanted to be a teacher. She says she soaked in everything she could so that she could be the best teacher the state had ever seen. One teacher in particular inspired Marjorie in the way that she taught. She put her heart and soul into teaching which, for Marjorie, showed what it meant to be a great teacher. The name of this teacher was Ida Jones who taught seventh and eighth grade, and left a legacy with Marjorie that made her the teacher she wanted to become. She went on to teach for forty years starting in 1943 and would still be teaching today if she were allowed to. All school stuff aside, Marjorie did have a love life after all of her schooling was over with. A man in the Armed Forces by the name of Cecil Goodman stole her heart and never looked back.

A scene from Marjorie’s life I want to tell comes from the relationship she had with her eventual husband Cecil. Now, Cecil and Marjorie had known each other for quite some time before they started dating, but Cecil was dating another girl named Virginia who Marjorie thought was a little “bratty.” Marjorie didn’t enjoy the likes of Virginia because she would call her bad names and wasn’t very nice around her. But, Cecil eventually broke up with Virginia when he got deployed for the military.

During his deployment, Marjorie and Cecil would write letters back and forth to each other to stay in touch. Marjorie even kept the first letter Cecil ever received all those years ago. She has it hanging up in her home to this day!

Anyways, Marjorie's father would always joke and say, "Marjie, you got another letter from your boyfriend!" Marjorie always said it wasn't her boyfriend, just a friend but we all know that her father was right, and right he was. So, Cecil came back from the military and started dating Marjorie and they grew closer and closer together until he finally proposed to her.

Cecil and Marjorie started their lives together and they were inseparable. The two lovebirds brought three girls into the world and raised them by showing solid work ethic, respect, and honesty. These traits have stuck with Marjorie her whole life and I still see that today. When talking about the hardship chapter in the book *Gratitude*, she said her family never really had hardship. She had the necessities to live well. If she saw any hardships, they were with the other families that were in the community. She would help people out here and there which would make her a better person because it made her feel accomplished. If she didn't help them, they wouldn't be who they are today.

One thing I will take away from speaking with Marjorie is how optimistic she is about life and how you can make a difference by using a little common sense and by being honest. Wise words of wisdom to gain from Marjorie: "don't look to get angry and don't be two-faced. People want to see you for who you truly are. That will improve your credibility and trustworthiness."

Overall, Marjorie was a well-rounded smart cookie. And by smart cookie, I mean that's what she says when someone has impressed her or maybe has even been a smart aleck. Either way, smart cookie is the phrase that best describes my friend Marjorie Goodman. From knowing so much academically to being a great

friend to her classmates, she exemplifies what it means to be a well-rounded individual. All in all, I would've been honored to have her as my teacher growing up. I've learned so much in the short amount I've had with her. I can take away so many memories that she has openly shared with me to better my future.

Dear Marjorie,

I want to thank you for spending part of your week every Friday with me to talk about the important things in life and our daily questions. I enjoyed listening to what things were like for you growing up as well as some stories about Virginia! When I listen to you talk about Cecil, it brightens my day because I can see that it makes you happy. You usually laugh about little details of the stories.

In my own marriage, I want to model how you and Cecil loved each other and made memories with each other. Someday, I will share the memories I've had with my wife to a random college student and I will remember the impact you've had on me. Thanks for letting me be a part of your story, and now you are a part of mine.

*Your Friend,
John*

eing a great friend to her classmates, she exemplifies what it means to be a well-rounded individual. All in all, I would've been honored to have her as my teacher growing up. I've learned so much in the short amount I've had with her. I can take away so many memories that she has openly shared with me to better my future.

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Your Friend, John

53

For Edwin

Esther Westendorf, Western Home Communities Senior

Micah Zeimetz, UNI Human Relations Senior 4F28

Esther rolled onto her back and stared at the ceiling. She turned her head to look at the clock barely illuminated by the full moon outside. It was now past midnight and Esther had been unable to sleep since going to bed around nine. This was the first night she would spend in the home of the Kasemeier family. Esther's father had rented out her services as a farm hand to the Kasemeier family and sent her packing earlier that afternoon. Upon the hour of her departure, Esther received a letter in the mail.

Dear Esther,

I am writing to let you know that I will be returning to Iowa tomorrow at noon. I will be home for twenty days. I know this is unexpected, but I truly cannot wait to finally see my darling again. Yours always, E.W.

E.W. stood for Edwin Westendorf, Esther's fiancée of three years. They had met in February and decided in just a few short months that they ought to be married. With the celebration arranged, they excitedly awaited their wedding in January. In December, Edwin was drafted and sent to fight for the United States in World War II. They were devastated, but understood the need for Edwin to serve his country. They knew they would see each other again, but they had no idea when. Little did they know that three years later, Edwin would be returning to Iowa for just twenty short days.

The deal between Esther's father and the Kasemeier family required that Esther care for the household duties of the family for an entire week. She was not allowed to leave without express permission from Mrs. Kasemeier. Esther had mentioned the proposition of leaving for a short time to Mrs. Kasemeier earlier that

day only for Mrs. Kasemeier to scold her and assign her additional tasks. To the rest of the inhabitants of this small Iowa town, Mrs. Kasemeier was often seen as a witch. And while she did not have a crooked nose, a pointed hat, or a giant wart, Mrs. Kasemeier certainly had the attitude.

Esther did not know what to do. She sat up in her bed and stared at the wall in front of her. The wall was empty save for a single mirror placed directly across from where Esther was sitting. She looked at herself for what felt like forever. Was she going to miss what could be her last chance to see Edwin for the next couple years? A tear crept from her eye and fell onto her nightgown. She knew her parents would be furious and that she would never be able to return to the Kasemeier home.

Her entire life, Esther had been told who she should be and what she should do. Her dad made her work on the farm with the rest of the farm hands and required her to go out and help other families. Had anyone ever asked her if this was the life she wanted? Not that she could remember. Esther did not want to be just another farm hand. Esther did not want to be a servant for other families. Esther did not want to just do what everyone else told her to do. Esther wanted to be herself and she wanted to be with Edwin.

Esther wiped the tear from her face, pulled the covers off, and stepped out of bed. She changed into her outdoor clothes and gathered her things into her suitcase. As she slowly crept down the stairs she noticed that Mrs. Kasemeier had fallen asleep in the living room. Her snores echoed through the silent house. Esther tiptoed past Mrs. Kasemeier and reached for the handle to the door outside. As if struck by lightning, Mrs. Kasemeier awoke, jumped out of her chair, and spun to face Esther. "Where are you going girl?!" Mrs. Kasemeier shouted.

"I'm going to see Edwin" Esther said smiling as she let the door slam behind her and ran off into the night.

54

Acts of Love

Julie Bailey, Western Home Communities Senior
Laurelin Berkley, UNI Human Relations Senior 4F29

“Good afternoon, Ms. Bailey,” I heard from the door of the library. I smiled to myself; I knew that voice. Sandy was here.

“Good afternoon sweetheart,” I replied, looking up from my office desk. I nodded to our brand new brown book cart. “That cart needs re-shelving. I’ll be there to help you in a minute.” Sandy pushed the cart away, its shiny wheels gliding across the floor. She was a trusty student, dependable and delightful. She walked with a spring in her step as her skirt tossed and turned around her legs and her sandy-blond curls bounced around her face.

Sandy liked coming to the library. She always said to me, “what a delightful way to relax: books in my hands, and you as my companion.” As the librarian, I sometimes found it hard to connect with students. I tended to concern myself with keeping the library quiet. But Sandy was special. She was meticulous, never misshelving a book, and a fine conversationalist. We often worked together, and her maturity impressed me. For a girl of only eighteen, she was refreshingly articulate and considerate.

Closing my office door, I made my way to the opposite end of the library to help Sandy. Quite suddenly, I had to stop. I leaned against a shelf, breathing deeply, trying to make the books around me stop spinning. Lightheadedness was not uncommon for me. I waved some air in my face and cautiously continued walking, but a few seconds later the feeling returned, my foot slipped, and I fainted.

“Miss Bailey?” I heard, echoing in the distance. “Miss Bailey are you alright?”

Opening my eyes, I saw Sandy, staring at me with wide, scared eyes. “My goodness, what happened?” she asked.

“Oh nothing,” I replied. “Just a slip. I think I will have some water quickly. I’ll be back to help you soon.”

“No, no.” Sandy said, “I’ll be right back.” She scurried off, leaving me to sit there, between two stacks, hoping to God she was not making a fuss. All I needed was water; nothing more.

Soon I heard the tapping of Sandy’s shoes coming down the next aisle. She had a cup of water. She handed it to me, I thanked her, and she returned back to her cart to shelve.

What a simple kindness that was.

* * *

Bracing myself for the cold, I walked out the door my niece was holding for me. I couldn’t walk quite as fast as I used to, most women in their 80’s can’t, but I still made my way out to the street. I enjoyed visiting Main Street in Cedar Falls, my small town. Scattered with charming shops and charming people, it was a consistently beautiful destination in my small town. I was full from lunch, but ready for a little walk with my niece and Carol, an English teacher and friend of mine.

Making our way across the street, I started to step off the curb. As if in slow-motion, my foot slipped. My whole body slammed on the ground before I could think. And all I remember is fear. I can still see the heads of people pouring over me, making phone calls as I lay helpless on the curb. It makes me shudder.

Before long, I was on an ambulance, headed to the hospital. I learned quickly that I would not ever be the same. Old bodies like mine do not heal the same way young bodies do. After a day in the hospital, a visitor came in.

“Miss Bailey?” she asked, standing in the door frame.

“Julie Bailey, yes,” I replied. I did not recognize the woman. She looked to be in her middle ages, with dark blonde hair and a practiced smile.

“Hi. It’s Sandy. Do you remember me? I helped you in the library at Cedar Falls High School.” It took me a minute, but I did remember her. I recalled how she had given me water when I fell at school many years before. It was strange to see her again, yet reassuring to see her smile. I needed support, and she was offering it.

During my two weeks in the hospital, Sandy came to visit me at every mealtime. She provided endless conversation and support. During our time together, she told me about the recent loss of her mother and she talked about the joys of raising her son. She constantly went out of her way to help me, making one sacrifice after another. She showed me acts of love that I had not seen in many years. She sat by me through a time of great need in my life, and I cannot adequately express my gratitude.

Sandy, the way you treated my changed my life. Thank you for your kindness and love. Acts of love such as those which you showed me are the most powerful forces in our lives. I hope others have been fortunate enough to experience such acts in their own lives.



Section 5



55

An Ace in the Hole

Sue Debower, Western Home Communities Senior

Ross Allsup, UNI Human Relations Senior 5A1

The first time I met Sue, I knew we would get along perfectly. I showed up to the west lounge at Windcove Retirement Home not knowing what to expect. Right as the clock struck 3:30, Sue burst through the door and in a strong voice called out, “Where is Ross?” I was taken back for a minute; I was not expecting such an enthusiastic welcoming. I was relieved to see such a heartwarming face walk through that door. It gave me flashbacks of when I was a kid and my grandma walked into the house. Excitement rushed through my blood as I couldn’t wait to get to know this person. Finally, we went back to her room to introduce ourselves and discuss.

Sue showed me some carvings that her late husband had done. There were ducks, geese, and fish all in the cabinet. They were beautiful, and I told her how I loved to hunt and fish, so I could really appreciate the craftsmanship that got put into them. After that, I knew I was blessed to be paired up with her. We sat down and began to exchange the details of our lives. She opened her cigar box and saw that I put a deck of cards in there. Hunting was not our biggest connection; it was the cards.

Sue loves to play cards. She plays all different types of card game with numerous people. Some of the different games she plays are Mahjong, Bridge, Cribbage, 500, and Gin Rummy. Almost any day of the week, Sue is playing cards somewhere. This didn’t come as a surprise to me. Sue has such a welcoming and inviting personality that it was no shock that she was involved in so many card groups with other seniors from the Western Home.

This lifestyle was something I had seen before. My grandma was the same way. I remember as a kid her trying to teach me many different card games that she played with her friends. Sue and I decided that since we both loved cards, we would do the questions quickly at the beginning of our time, so we could get right to playing cards after.

The first game we played was Gin Rummy. Sue told me she hadn't played it in a while and was hoping I could help her remember how to play it. My second visit we sat down and played. It didn't take her long to remember how to play because she beat me, twice. We had a lot of fun and she decided to take it upon herself to teach me a new game that I hadn't played since I was really young. She decided she was going to teach me how to play cribbage our next visit.

I knew it was going to be an enlightening experience. As I left her house the second time I thanked her for meeting with me and that I was excited to play to learn to play cribbage. She answered back with "I'm looking forward to it, and I'll beat ya!" All I could do was smile because it was such a familiar phrase that I hadn't heard in a long time. My grandma used to tell me the same thing. When it came to cards there was no mercy with her, Sue was the same way.

The last person to try teaching me to play cribbage was my grandma. It wasn't only a coincidence that Sue was going to be the next. Sue was excellent when it was time for me to learn cribbage. I think it's because she just has a knack when it comes to communicating with people.

The first game we played, she skunked me. Which for those who don't know, it is not a good thing if you are on the losing end of it like I was. She ended up beating me both games we played that day. Even though I lost it was still one of the best days I'd had during this semester at UNI. Sue and I continue to play cribbage every time we meet. I look forward to it just like I looked forward going to my grandma's house when I was a kid. Sue is such a compassionate and kind

person with a contagious smile. Meeting with her is one of the most positive experiences I've had at UNI.

Sue,

Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to meet with me. This experience has been one of the most influential and positive experiences I have had in my time at UNI. I really appreciate you taking the time to teach me cribbage and share different stories of your life with me. Most of all, thank you for being the ace to fill a hole in my life that had been empty since my grandma passed away.

Sincerely,

Your friend Ross.

56

Farm Camp

Susan Runkle, Western Home Communities Senior

Kailey Balducki, UNI Human Relations Senior 5A2

“A country schoolhouse, transformed into living quarters. Bunkbeds stacked in groups of four and orange crates scattered around the room, holding our possessions. Ten weeks of hoeing weeds, picking produce, traveling to the market, and forming friendships.” This is Farm Camp; this is where you would find Susan in the summer of 1945 as a member of the Crop Corps.

In 1945, the farms in northern Ohio lacked the needed help of the men who had volunteered or been drafted into the service. At that time it was understood that women could help out wherever necessary, including on the farm. A typical day on the farm began as the sun came up and breakfast was eaten. Walt, the farmer, drove the grey car down the road to pick the girls up. The seven girls headed to the field to spend the day hoeing and picking tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, and cabbages.

For lunch, they would sit under the big maple tree, and eat the food they packed the night before. At the end of the day the girls would return to the

schoolhouse, taking turns sitting in the back of the trunk with the lid open, feet dangling over the side of the grey car, just above the ground.

Once they got home they would shower and eat dinner. After dinner, the girls would take turns doing dishes and cleaning up. The night would end after the girls had participated in activities such as badminton and charades.

Seventy-one years later, and Farm Camp still holds a special place in Susan's heart. Farm camp was the first job she held away from home; a job that reassured her she could have a job and be successful. It was at Farm Camp where Susan learned the importance of cooperation and enjoying the company of other classmates.

She reached out to the camp girls on her farm as well as surrounding farms and built lasting relationships with girls who were different than her, with peers whom she had not yet known, and with upperclassman. Farm Camp is only one snapshot of Susan's life, but it is a moment that has helped write her life story.

57

Dealing with Adversity and Acceptance

Marleta Matheson, Western Home Communities Senior
Sam Bergan, UNI Human Relations Senior 5A3

"Who would have thought there were other people like us in Cedar Falls?" Davis said. Marleta was thinking the same thing. Together they have helped families, children, and the community to spread awareness of the issues that they overcame together. It was a long struggle, but Marleta and Davis have continued to reach out to more people that face similar hardships in life.

Thirty-four years ago was a different story. That was when Marleta's daughter Laura went through with the transgender procedure. Along with changing

her gender, she changed her name to Davis. If she had been born a boy that would have been his name anyway.

Marleta always knew that her Laura was not your typical girl. She was always sort of tomboy who did not want to wear dresses and play with dolls. However, Laura's decision still took Marleta by surprise. Before the procedure, Laura did not know what she was. Since she was about four years old, she felt like a boy who looked in a mirror and saw a girl. Throughout school, she definitely had friends that were girls, but she had other interests than her friends. Laura was not interested in boys like her friends were. Even after going on a date in high school, she simply did not have the feelings expected of her. She did not know why she felt this way, but she was certain that something was not right. Perhaps she might be just a homosexual girl with a mother and stepfather.

When Marleta received the news of Laura's decision to go through the transgender surgery it was a shock. After all, they had been writing back and forth for years. Since Laura lived in California, the only communication back home to her parents was through periodic letters in the mail. These had been distant years of frustration and discontent, but now Laura had made up her mind. She had always been supportive of her daughter's gender identity, but this was difficult news. Charles, who was Laura's stepfather, was in denial of the situation. Perhaps it was because Laura was not his biological child, or maybe it was that he was not Laura's father for the first twelve years of her life.

This was a life decision, not only for Laura, but for Charles and Marleta as well. They had loved their daughter for so long, and now it felt like they were losing her. Marleta wondered if she would even see her daughter again.

Even after more letters between Laura and her parents, the issue seldom improved. Laura firmly settled on her decision. Marleta consulted her church pastor on the issue. After sharing her story, the pastor made only one suggestion.

She should ask Laura if there was anything she could do to change her daughter's mind. She already knew Laura's response. By realizing her inability to change Laura's mind, Marleta began to accept her daughter's decision, and so did Charles. Additionally, the pastor reminded both of them that Davis would essentially still be the same person. They would not be losing a child because Davis would still have the same memories of love and support that Laura had.

The family went through a few years of grief and adversity. They were still a family, regardless of gender. Marleta and Charles realized that they could not fully live life without accepting Laura's decision. After doing so, they felt more like the family they wanted to be. The outcome has been one of happiness and success for Davis and both parents.

58

Awakening

Sharon Little, Western Home Communities Senior
Nicole Boleyn, UNI Human Relations Senior 5A4



Sharon Little spent most of her life wishing that she was a creative person. She always thought it would be nice if she could play an instrument. In the winter of 1997, Sharon went to bed one night unaware of the gift the Lord was about to give her. The next morning as she was lying in the dark she realized that it had snowed during the night. She wanted to write a poem about it because she felt like the words needed to escape from her. A *December Morning Sky* was the first poem that she ever wrote which was about the snow that had fallen outside of the window while she slept.

She began to write poems that accompanied the journaling she was already doing for spiritual reasons. Two years later Sharon found that she had written enough poems to fill an entire binder! For the Christmas of 1999 an idea occurred to her to give each of her children a binder filled with her poetry and with the help of her daughter-in-law Laura she made them for her children. A few of the poems in the binder were *A December Morning Sky*, *Butterflies and Moonbeams*, *Campfire*, *Circus Clowns*, *Goodbye Mr. Snowman*, and *The Clan Little*. As time went on her poems began to tell stories that corresponded with the changing seasons. A phone call that Sharon would receive in the middle of the night while she was out of town was about to change everything.

In 2004, one of her sons died suddenly while she was at a convention in Louisville, Kentucky. The death of her son came after she had lost her only daughter and husband years before. The time after his death was one of the darkest times of her life where she struggled with her anger at God. The anger and sorrow she experienced during this time made would make her close the door on the gift for the next ten years.

In 2015, she wrote a poem called Note-Worthy which is about her journey through darkness after a close friend helped her reconnect with her spirituality. She has learned that God never leaves us because we are the ones that choose to shut the door. Her poems are sporadic now where they one flowed freely. She is in a peaceful spot now where she is waiting to fully reconnect with her gift.

59

Warm and Fuzzy Feelings

Marty Halupnik, Western Home Communities Senior
Margo Christianson, UNI Human Relations Senior 5A5



“He told my mother, ‘Buddy and I had a little accident, tell Martha I will be right back,’ and we were wondering if he actually would come back.” Marty said this as she retold the story of their first date to me. It is a date that will never be forgotten, but their adventure that would last a lifetime.

Dale and Marty attended Iowa State University together and met through a friend. Marty’s best friend’s mom owned a house which she rented rooms out to male college students. It was their freshman year. A group of her girlfriends and guys from the house were meeting up to go to Veishea together. While they were at Veishea it began to down pour, so they ran back to the house. As the women sat inside, the men smoked their cigarettes on the front porch. Dale gazed into the house through the window. This is when he saw her. He decided at that moment he needed to ask her on a date.

A week later Marty received a phone call. The man on the other end explained that he met her at Veishea, got her number from a friend, and wanted to ask her on a date. She could not remember which guy he was, but knew she would be in good hands considering their mutual friends.

The night of the date Marty got home late from work and went straight upstairs to get ready. When Dale arrived she was still getting ready so he sat with her family as they played a game of Bridge. Buddy, Marty’s 3-year-old brother, beat on Dale’s back as they shared a seat in the rocking chair. Dale teased Buddy

back by tickling him; as the sound of giggles roared in his ear a warm sensation spread across his back. The tickling had caused Buddy to lose control of his bladder and pee his pants. The back of Dale's clothes were wet and the front of Buddy's pants were too. Dale stood up and announced to Martha's family, "Buddy and I had a little accident, tell Martha I will be right back," and left to go change his clothes.

When Marty came down stairs she sat in the rocking chair and listened as her parents retell the story. She was hysterically laughing at the comedy of the story and she began wondering if he was actually going to come back after an experience like that. She realized then that she was sitting in the same chair her brother had peed on minutes earlier. When she got done changing Dale did come back and they went on their date.

For fifty-seven years Marty and Dale went on many adventures together including living all over the continental United States, going on short term mission trips, having three beautiful daughters who brought many grandchildren into their lives, and much more. The beginning of their relationship was marked by a comical, but yet troubling start and this represents most of their relationship. They experienced his heart problems, losing friends and family, and continually challenging each other's views because of their different backgrounds. Through all of the joys and sorrows they learned and continued to have a relationship full of love, laughter, and warm and fuzzy feelings that will never be forgotten.

*May gratitude become a mainstay virtue
and life-offering pathway to happiness.*

60

Remembering Pearl Harbor

Berdena Beach, Western Home Communities Senior

Kate Deakins, UNI Human Relations Senior 5B6

I was eleven years old at the time, my father always read the newspaper and listened to the news at night when I was growing up. I was accustomed to listening, it was part of family culture to be interested in the news. I credit the radio with sharpening my imagination because there was no video with the radio, you provided your own image.

It was about four in the afternoon and I remember there was an interruption in the radio program. The announcer broke into the program with a very excited voice and said, "The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor." I wasn't aware of how big of a deal it was, but I knew it was something. I ran out of the house to tell my dad the news and I remember hearing the screen door slam as I ran out because we weren't supposed to slam doors.

My parents were doing the farm chores outside, and as I ran towards them we met in the farm yard. My father was coming towards me and he was carrying an old three tined pitch fork with hay. As we met in the farm yard, I said the Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor and my father stopped. He was very quiet and he put the pitch fork down in the ground, putting his hands over the top on the handle and put his head down and said, "oh pshaw." This expression was one that people used in place of swearing, but it meant how awful.

I remember the silence and look of utter dismay on my fathers' face. It was the first time I had ever seen that look on someone. My mother came running from taking care of the chickens, she stood there and was silent too. It was the beginning of a great learning time for people in the United States.

Everybody worked together after this time. Nobody called anybody names, or tried to tear each other down. Every day we worked was for whatever we needed to do to help our country. It was marvelous what people did together. I remember when they ran empty freight trains across the country for propaganda. We weren't ready for the war, but gradually the manufacturing changed and began to develop goods for the war. In our family, we saved aluminum foil, string, everything, you never knew if you were going to need it. Rationing tickets were handed out for shoes, sugar, and other things, but they were limited too because we had to share.

The things I remember from these stories deeply affected me emotionally, but made a great change in my life. It was a paradigm shift for our country, life would never be the same again.

61

A Woman Who Loved to Travel

Doris Crandall, Western Home Communities Senior
Rebecca Eslick, UNI Human Relations Senior 5B7



Doris Crandall was a woman who loved to travel. She has been to numerous places and has specific memories from each. Most of the places that Doris has visited are New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Mexico, most of Europe, Panama Canal, and the majority of the United States. While Doris and her husband raised their family, they took three different trips with their kids that were each three weeks long.

Doris and her family went to the East coast for three weeks. This trip took place in August 1968. Her daughter was 15, middle son was 11 and youngest son was 9. She decided to do this trip when her kids were old enough to appreciate it and to learn from it. They camped the whole time while on this trip. They stayed in an area did the memorials and site seeing and then moved to their next location.

Their first stop on this three-week long camping trip was in Williamsburg, Virginia. In Virginia, Doris and her family went to a lot of the war memorials. Once they were done in Virginia, they went to Washington DC. When they got to their campsite in DC, her husband said they should not camp by the little creek and they should move up.

He made a good call because that night it rained really hard and flooded the area where they were going. A few of their things got wet since they were on the ground so they set them outside to dry while they went into DC for the day. Back in the day, you could leave your things out and not have to worry about them like you have to today.

In Washington D.C., they got to tour the White House and went to a lot of the memorials. One specific memorial that stuck out in her mind was the Statue of Soldiers. It was a misty rainy day when her family and she visited that specific statue. While she was in D.C., with her family, she decided to take them on the bus tours. The bus tours took them from memorial to memorial. They bought an all-day pass and was able to go as you pleased seeing them. They got off the bus and could spend as long as they wanted at the memorial as buses generally came by to do another drop-off/pick up every half an hour. There were some memorials that they stayed at for much longer, like the Washington and Lincoln memorials.

Camping in New Jersey and spending the days in New York City was wonderful. Doris' kids loved the automat. The automat was a way of getting food but in a different way. You opened a door paid for the item and then took the item.

A close second favorite of her kids was getting to go all the way up into the torch of the Statue of Liberty. The family took a ferry to the island. Only one was allowed to climb all the way up in the torch at a time, they all took turns so they could see the wonderful view. They did a bus tour in New York City and it went down into the Harlem area. Doris was intrigued by what she all saw and how people were living. One day in New York City they got to see the musical Radio City, and a different day they saw True Grit with John Wayne. After their three days in New York, her family packed up and started to head back home.

While on the journey home they stopped at a few other places but not for as long at their other stops. They visited Niagara Falls and Michigan. After the stop in Michigan, they finished their journey home so her kids could start school. Her kids still have memories of this trip and sometimes still talk about it.

Doris loved to travel and wanted to share her love with her family. She also wanted to allow her students to learn a lot more than just reading about the memorials and other attractions that they visited. A quote from Doris is “traveling is a wonderful experience”.

Doris has taught me to live a little and not be afraid to try new things. She told me that I will probably love what I try or at least like it, there was never a time that she tried something new and hated it. She said the worst thing that will happen with trying something new is you really do not like it and won't do it again, but at least you know rather than saying “I don't know, I have never gone zip lining”

Dear Doris,

I have loved spending my Friday afternoons with you. I loved hearing about your trips and hearing about how you started skiing when you were in your late 40's. You have made me realize that I can still look forward to fulfilling my dreams and that I have a lot of life left yet to live. Hearing that opened me to the fact that I can still learn things and I should not be afraid to try new things. I have also really enjoyed getting to teach you how to play the card game garbage, it was so much fun getting to play with you. Sincerely, Rebecca

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Childhood Memories

Uyentha Duncan, Western Home Communities Senior

Jessica Ewing, UNI Human Relations Senior 5B8



When you think about families and the years Uyentha grew up in you may have a certain picture in your mind. Uyentha though, did not have what you would call a typical childhood for that time. She did have a father and a mother who were happily married and two sisters. Yet it was unusual still because she spent most of her childhood living just with her father. The reason she spent most of her childhood with her father is because her younger sister had diabetes and at the time, it was a hard disease to manage. Her mother spent a lot of time and energy making sure that her sister's disease was managed. Therefore, her mother and sister spent a lot of time in Iowa City at the hospital for weeks at a time.

Her parents decided it would be best for the other two daughters not to go with her mother and younger sister. Because her mother was gone taking care of Uyentha's younger sister, Uyentha's older sister stayed with neighbors. The neighbors were able to get her sister to school each day. Uyentha was not yet in school when her mother first started to go to Iowa City and her dad needed to work on the farm he owned. With her sister able to get to school and Uyentha who was not yet in school she was with her father almost all the time. This gave her opportunities to help her dad out with jobs around the farm.

It was highly unusual for families to be split apart like this, especially a father raising his child. She never felt like she was missing out though. Her father

knew it was important for her daughter to keep busy and out of trouble. She kept busy between school when she got old enough to go, piano lessons, and helping her father out with the farm. It was expected that she was to do these things, but never felt like she was forced, she remembers really enjoying them.

She remembers her father being very protective of her, she says, “Because he needed me on the farm to help out.” She recalls a story about a young boy working with her father and wanting to scare Uyentha with a snake and her father would not let him because he needed her to continue to help. Uyentha feels she had a great childhood and grew up well even with the unusual circumstances. It wasn’t until her adult years when she realized that her family’s way of doing things was not necessarily the typical way.

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Life

Rita Sommers, Western Home Communities Senior
Kira Hendrikson, UNI Human Relations Senior 5B9

Growing up you learn a lot from your parents. Whether it’s how you want to be like them or how you are not going to be like them when you grow up. You don’t get to pick your parents, siblings or even the life you were given. If you did, I’m sure most of us at some point would not have picked our parents to be our parents or our siblings to be our siblings. We wanted our best of friends to be our siblings and their parents to be our parents because they seemed so much cooler than our own, but that is not how it is. We get dealt our own hand of cards whether it’s a good hand or a bad hand. How you approach life is totally up to you.

The first time I met Rita, we were both nervous about what the one was going to be like and if we would be accepting of one another. Our first meeting was just a get to know you meeting and neither of us thought it was go to take

long. We dove in and in almost three hours later we had told each other some of the hardest obstacles that we've had to overcome in our lives. We've both had a lot of hardships dealing with family and loved ones.

Even though our stories are completely different we are able to try and understand what one another has been through or is going through now. Over the past ten weeks I've come to adore Rita and how strong she is with everything she has had to overcome. She gives me strength on my hardest and longest days because I know if she can do it, so can I.

One thing that has really shown in our meetings every week is how caring and kind she is. She's been through so much with her husband dying and having to raise two children, one of which has borderline personality disorder and the other being quite shy and reserved. She met another man and he passed away as well.

Even through all that she has been through, she still tries to be as caring and kind as possible. She is one of those people that has a big caring heart and puts other before herself. Now that her children are older and out of the house she can start to care and be true to herself, just like her husband would have wanted her to.

You don't always get dealt the best hand of cards nor the worst, but always keep in mind that someone somewhere has it far worse off than you.

*May gratitude flourish as a gift
of goodness and grace in your life.*

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Love Finds a Way

*Barb & Gordy Ubben, Western Home Communities Seniors
Jerry Hunter III, UNI Human Relations Senior 5C10*

After meeting with Barb and Gordy for all of these weeks I have come to realize that love somehow finds a way. Barb and Gordy have known each other most of their lives, and they were only a couple years apart in high school. They both ended up marrying their high school sweethearts. Barb had two wonderful sons, but



though she went through a divorce. This did not slow her down though and she raised both of her sons by herself. She worked hard at Standard Distributing Company to support herself and her two sons. Gordy had 4 children, 2 boys and 2 girls. Gordy unfortunately went through a divorce as well after 27 years of marriage.

They ended up meeting sometime later at the wedding between Gordy's cousin and Barb's sister. Gordy was going to leave the reception early, but Barb stopped him and was able to convince him to come join her on the dance floor. She was able to convince him to join her and they danced from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. that night. They were able to really reconnect that night, and afterwards Barb's sister was telling her she needed to get herself an Ubben man, like Gordy.

Barb did just that, and Gordy and her started dating not much long after. They could only meet when they had chances to, because Gordy was working so much. He worked at his family gas station, Ubben DX station, drove the school bus 3 times a day, work at Land of Lakes at night, and had a lawn mowing service

during the summer. He also raised 200 head of hogs. Gordy also had 3 kids still in college he was trying to support while trying to find time to spend with Barb.

Barb and Gordy soon got married after 2 years of dating. Gordy proposed on Halloween. He was very nervous about being rejected since he had gone through the divorce. They had a big church wedding, but only with their family plus Barb's boss from Standard Distributing. They had a huge reception at John Deere Supervisors, at least half of Hudson showed up. Gordy and Barb have been married for 25 wonderful years.

After hearing their story about love and loss it gives me hope that everything will turn out okay for everyone. I can only hope that one day I can have someone I love and a family that these two have. Soon I will graduate and have my very first teaching job, and hopefully someone I can share many experiences with.

I can't thank Barb and Gordy enough for letting me come visit with them every week just to talk about life. Getting to know both of them has really made me feel what it is like to have grandparents in your life you can visit and talk to. My grandparents died when I was young, so it was never an experience I have had until now and I cannot thank them enough.

*Grow gratitude
to say "yes" with your life.*

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Child of God

Jean Swiggum, Western Home Communities Senior
Brittany Johnson, UNI Human Relations Senior 5C11

Jean Swiggum grew up as a preacher's daughter. Her faith in God and relationship with Jesus is and always will be the most important thing to her. All of the obstacles and hardships she faced helped her to feel the love and comfort of God. She knew that her mission was to help people and to pass on the love of God to others. She needed to share with the world that God loved and saved her.

When she was a little girl, she attended a Bible Camp where she had the privilege to meet the president of the Lutheran church in China. Her life goal was to be a missionary for China. She soon realized that this goal would never become a reality because China was completely closed to missionaries. She thought that maybe South America could be an option to share the love of God with the world. After finishing college, Jean came to the realization that the church wasn't sending women missionaries to South America.

At Luther College, she met her husband Peter who became a minister. Although she was never able to become a missionary in another country, her life's work happened right here in the Midwest. She taught Religion Class and English as a Second Language Class. She was highly involved in her husband's church, and actively volunteered in her community including being a tour guide at the Norwegian museum, volunteer at the school, and a volunteer for the Decorah Reads program where she would discuss a book with a middle school student.

God had a way of putting Jean right where she needed to be. If you ask Jean who she is she will say, "My ethnicity is Norwegian but my heritage is American

and being a child of God.” She lives every day with the assurance of God marked with the cross of Christ forever.

66

The Three F’s

Margaret Shay, Western Home Communities Senior
Zach Lillquist, UNI Human Relations Senior 5C12

In the materialistic, we-want-everything-fast-and-now world of 2016, we get sucked into the black hole of “more”. We want more gratification for ourselves; we want to earn the most glory; we want to make the most money; we want to be the best, be it all, and do it all. Society tells us to do whatever it takes to be successful and to push anyone out of our way to de-clutter the path to the top. More often than not, we forget about others and the stories they possess-- the ones they are longing to tell. I’m thankful for Human Relations class and for Margaret Shay, but to try and encompass everything I have learned from Margaret into one story would be nearly impossible. I will, however, do my best to recap the life-lessons I’ve learned from Margaret in our weeks together.

Before we even had scratched the surface of getting to know each other, Margaret told me that there are three things in life that we should never take for granted: our friends, our family, and our faith. These three F’s mean the most to Margaret; they are what get her through the good and the bad, the easy and the hard, and the hurdles that life throws at us. Margaret lives to love the Lord, love her family, and love her friends. She’s at peace knowing that these three are constants in her life.

Sometimes, though, we are dealt a hand of cards that we don’t know what to do with. While we can have our faith, family, and friends, the hardships we face in life often involve one (or more) of these three things. Years ago, Margaret’s young

son went to be with Jesus. I, myself, cannot fathom even thinking about the dark time this was, but Margaret kept the three F's at the core of her day-to-day life, and she persevered through it all. Her friends supported her, her family grieved and celebrated with her, and God never stopped wanting her love.

Margaret and her husband, Lee, soon welcomed a beautiful baby girl into the world, Leann. She was the apple of their eye and brought them so much joy. She now travels the world (literally) and has two sons who are active in sports and driving their grandma crazy. Margaret has told me time and time again that her favorite blessing is being a grandma.

However, before Margaret had grandchildren, tragedy struck again. She lost her husband, Lee, twenty-six years ago. Losing the one you wed, she says, was the most excruciating thing she has ever gone through. To have someone who you had spent years doing life with be gone gives me a heavy heart. But yet again, Margaret relied on her close friends and family, and most importantly God, to get her through that time. She still thinks of Lee every day, and has turned her wedding ring into a family ring to remind her of her blessings that may not always be in close proximity but are also with her. The day she told me the story of her ring brought tears to my eyes. What a beautiful way to celebrate life and remember her family even when most people would turn and run.

Margaret's diligence to be faithful through trials has inspired me deeply. Her love for the Lord is truly amazing. It's a raw, genuine type of love that is rare to see in this day and age. She doesn't care about making herself look good or taking glory for her good deeds (Which, by the way, she has quite a bit. She would never say it, but she does amazing things for the community!). We have bonded over stories of a God who saves, loves, calls out, challenges, restores, and renews. From talks of guardian angels to people who act as God's greatest servants and blessings,

we both celebrate and cherish the idea that God knew we would cross paths. I can't help but smile each time I think of this.

I think the greatest thing of all that I have learned from Margaret is just to simply *love others and cherish those around us*. It's the selfless kind of love that means the most. Even when things are going poorly and we only want to give up, we are to remind ourselves that we have people around us who also love us. Our faith, friends, and family can help us get over any hurdle and climb any mountain. I thank God for this reminder, and I thank God for a beautiful human being like Margaret Shay.

Margaret,

Thank you for reminding me of what is most important in life. I thank God that we met and can be encouragers to one another. I'm grateful for your stories, wisdom, and time we've spent together.

Blessings always,

Zac

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The Storyteller

Lee VerMulm, Western Home Communities Senior

Alena Loan, UNI Human Relations 5C13

Lee is a man full of stories. This is not a thing I inferred over a period of time, but something that I was informed about when I first met Lee. He told me how he loved telling stories, especially to his grandchildren. He even takes the time to type up stories for his grandchildren to read in the future, which will become something very valuable to them. I was granted the opportunity to hear some of these stories, and even though some may seem small and silly, they have taught me much more than I had ever expected.

Lee and I were able to bond over our careers, his past and my future. Lee was a high school English teacher, and I am currently studying to be an Elementary teacher. We may have chosen the same career path, but our journeys to becoming teachers have many differences. My journey was a change of heart after one semester of college, and that got me to where I am now; close to graduating with an elementary education major and a literacy minor. Lee's journey to becoming a teacher started back in high school.

Lee attended a small-town school with a graduating class of about 36 students. Lee enjoyed high school, not academically, but the people and activities. Especially his high school history teacher and the school's music program. It was within those specific people and activities that he was able to find himself. Lee was encouraged by his history teacher to go to college and become a teacher himself. Without this encouragement, he would not have considered going to college. Thankfully, Lee attended college and became a high school English teacher. Music is something Lee still practices and enjoys to this day. He is in the UNI New Horizons Band and the church choir.

The impact that his history teacher and school music program made, can still be seen in Lee today. Believe it or not, Lee has made an impact on me as well. I was fortunate to hear many stories from his past teaching experiences and each one had a message that was valuable to me as a future teacher.

One of my favorite stories Lee told me was about his first years of teaching. Lee considered himself to be a good speller and he didn't struggle with public speaking, but when he was asked to teach others these skills he was not sure how to approach it. These skills came naturally to him; he had never thought others would struggle with them either. It was then that he realized that teachers can't approach a class thinking their students are on the same path as them. He knew he

had to get to know each student so he could understand their path and how they learn.

He started taking the time to know the students. He would open his door at 7am every school day, even though school didn't start till 8:05am. Students would come in and talk to Lee, and the students would recognize that he was investing time in them. Lee still takes the time to know people to this day. He makes an effort every Sunday at church to have conversations with the youth.

Before teaching, Lee did not understand the road others traveled, but as he became aware of this he developed a method of teaching that would contain enough differentiation for each student to find their own path. It was Lee's third year of teaching when he created "The Town". "The Town" taught writing and speaking skills by transforming his classroom into a fictional town. Students were in charge of this town and they created newspapers, held elections, and gave speeches. Lee had seen all his students engaged in this method of teaching, even the ones who struggled in the beginning. Lee said "The Town" allowed every student to find their own path and be successful.

As a future teacher, I will always remember to get to know my students so I can learn their path. Lee and I talked about many things and he told me many stories, but no matter the subject we always related it back to our careers as teachers. His stories and experiences have taught me valuable lessons. I am thankful for our time together.

*Lift up your heart with gratitude,
celebrating the sheer joy of living.*

68

Rejoice in the Lord

Greta Magee, Western Home Communities Senior
Ashlea Malek, UNI Human Relations Senior 5D14

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! This is a portion of the bible verse that Greta lives by. Through this story, you will see how relevant this is to her life, and how her faith has guided her life in every situation.

Greta's first husband, Kent, left for Des Moines for an in-service training and an annual physical. He worked for Iowa State Patrol (ISP). He passed the physical in the morning and participated in the three mile walk that afternoon. That same evening, Greta received the phone call that he suffered a massive coronary while eating dinner with his friends at The Ground Round. She tried her hardest to get to Des Moines, but it was too late. Kent passed away on April 10, 1990. His sudden passing at age 43 was extremely hard on Greta. Only prayers and God's unfailing love saw the whole family through.

One year after Kent's passing she joined a support group at Nazareth Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls. This group was a blessing to her because she was surrounded by others who were experiencing the same feelings as she was from the loss of her husband. Although this was comforting, it was still hard to open up to strangers about her grief. Greta asked the Lord, "Really? Is this the appropriate time and place to meet someone?" Raleigh was also in this group. He had lost his wife of 30 years to cancer. God responded, "YES."

Greta and Raleigh had much in common. He was a teacher, worked for the state as a hearing officer dealing with those who had lost their driver's license. He had served in the military, as Kent had, was a Christian, and grew up on a farm. His mother-in-law was the one that encouraged him to join this support group. Outside of this, his mother-in-law was also Greta's neighbor. Kent and Greta often talked with her and her husband when they went on walks. She was a seamstress that helped Greta with some projects of her own.

During Kent's funeral, Greta had asked her to stay in her home because at that time there were reports of break-ins and robberies while families were away at funerals. Then Greta discovered that Raleigh had attended Kent's funeral. They had never met though. Kent and Raleigh sometimes crossed paths by working at the patrol office. For some reason, he felt compelled to attend Kent's funeral. He did not know why, but he arrived late and sat in the balcony at the funeral. God already knew all of these connections. This was God's plan the whole time. Greta believes this was God at work, not coincidence like so many people believe. He was working in their hearts long before they knew each other.

Greta and Raleigh helped each other do the hard grief work from their loved ones' passings. They started dating that fall and married the following summer in Dubuque with both of their pastors. Earlier, Greta had written a new list of requirements a spouse would have to have if she were to marry again. Raleigh met all of them except for one, and Greta's girls thought it was a valid reason to not marry. Raleigh had four adult children, two were married and two that were getting married the following year, but what really bothered them was he was thirteen years older than their mother, Greta. Greta questioned God a lot through the next few months and finally turned it all over to Him. She trusted that His grace would carry them through. His grace had in the past so it would this time too. Although it took time, the girls eventually accepted Raleigh and their new extended family.

Life was good again. Greta and Raleigh lived their life together traveling and spending time with their families. They visited almost all 50 states in 10 years. In 2004, the Lord joined them on their next journey which wasn't so great. Raleigh had early signs of dementia. Doctors confirmed vascular dementia and a form of Parkinson's disease. Times continued to be hard. Greta continued her life by caring for Raleigh which took an emotional, mental, and physical toll on her. On December 20, 2014 Raleigh passed away.

Greta has made a choice to choose joy every day. Greta could not control many defining moments in her life. They happened, and she had to determine how to respond. She has made it clear that she will continue to praise the Lord for stepping into those moments with her. Greta's life verse is Philippians 4: 4-7:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Greta,

Thank you for sharing your story with me. I am beyond thankful to have had the opportunity to get to know you and how your life has shaped you into the person that you are. From this story, I learned that things are never by coincidence. God is always at work and knows what we need before we even know. I have applied this story to my own life, and even when I may have my doubts in my faith, I know that what has happened is a gift from God and His plan for my life.

The Bible verse that you live by has become a crucial part of my life throughout the last few weeks. It is one that will stick with me for the rest of my life. Your dedication to your faith is extraordinary and something I will admire for the rest of my life. Thank you again for sharing your stories with me. You have taught me valuable life lessons, and I am a better person because of you.

Thank you, Ashlea

*May gratitude inspire you
to be a good steward of your blessing*



69

A Life of Giving

*Lois Wishmeyer, Western Home Communities
Senior*

Alyssa, UNI Human Relations Senior, 5D15

“Is this actually the church you go to or just another place you volunteer?” a friend asked Lois Wishmeyer one day at church. With a small chuckle Lois replied that this was in fact the church that she went to for her weekly service. It would be no surprise to those who know Lois even the slightest bit if this was just another place on her long list of places that she volunteers at.

Lois has been volunteering for decades. Just a few of the places that she volunteers at include Sartori Hospital, the Cedar Falls Visitor Center, and Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center (GBPAC). When Lois is asked if she has a favorite place it’s impossible for her to name just one place because she’s the type of person that loves helping others.

One of the places that she’s volunteered at the longest is Sartori Hospital in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Lois organizes a group of volunteers to take patients in the hospital various places in wheelchairs. Lois walks 4-5 miles each time she volunteers there. With this volunteer experience alone Lois predicts that she’s volunteered at Sartori for fifty years.

When asked why she began volunteering, Lois explained just how when her children were young she was wanting to do something helpful. The perfect opportunity came along. On the weekend mornings Lois delivered flowers and mail to hospital residents. She explained, “You don’t just take flowers to the person. You talk too.” Not only does Lois volunteer and complete the needed tasks but she also gets to know the people she is with.

So why does Lois keep volunteering? She excitedly rattled off a long list of benefits that volunteering offers. First, Lois said she loves helping people. Quickly after saying that she added more personal benefits such as meeting new people and being able to talk to a wide variety of people. Clearly volunteering isn’t just about helping others but also becoming a better person as Lois described the benefits volunteering gives her.

Volunteering for Lois isn’t just something to do. She does it because she enjoys the people that she works with as well as being able to help people. When asked about the people that Lois volunteers with at GBPAC Lois replies, “They are just great people!” With a quick glance at Lois’ month calendar it’s clear that almost every day of the month Lois is helping people.

It’s evident that volunteering hasn’t just paid off for the people she helps but for herself too. It’s impossible to guess Lois’ age because she volunteers almost every day of the week. She’s incredibly active and she’s not the only one in her family that is this active. Her 98 year old brother Max is very fit. She tells an astonishing fact saying, “Max still skips steps when he walks upstairs!” Hard work must run in the family.

In the future Lois continues to volunteer. She exclaims, “It keeps me always having something to do.” Clearly volunteering is much more than just “something to do”. Lois has helped people in many ways big and small. As President Barack Obama says, “The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something.

Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope." Lois has surely given the world hope.

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A Dance to Remember

Richard Roberts, Community Senior

Aaron McMurphy, UNI Human Relations Senior 5D16

This story begins on a brisk day in October when Richard Roberts just nineteen at the time, he spotted a beautiful young blonde at the Melcher Dallas Homecoming Football game. Later on at the homecoming dance, Richard finally sums up enough courage to go and talk to the mystery woman. He walks up to her and says, "Loretta would you like to dance?"

She responded, "My name isn't Loretta. Loretta is my cousin's name, but I would love to dance." The next day the two met at the Pleasantville town square and spent hours driving around and talking.

"It was a rocky start but it ended up working out." Richard recalls.

After that night their relationship flourished. A year later in October, Richard and Marjorie were married. Richard worked many jobs to provide for his family. He drove into Firestone Tires and worked the night shift and then decided to be a milk delivery man at Anderson Erickson because of the small pay increase. He did this while trying to provide for his wife and raise a family.

At the age of 30, Richard was fed up with his laborious work and petty pay. My grandpa enrolled at Truman State University. He worked a part time job, lived in Kirksville, Missouri during the week, being as studious as possible and traveling home to his family each weekend. He then received a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education and Health.

Richard's story and my own have many similarities. I met my fiancé and love of my life not at a high school dance, but in a dance class for Physical Education Majors. We didn't hang out at the town square, but we did spend a lot of time driving around. After a nice dinner in Iowa City my plan was to head back to Cedar Falls.

Instead, I took many wrong turns; we got lost and ended up in the wrong direction for two hours! During the journey of this car ride we were able to be ourselves, tell our favorite stories and just laugh. We both declare that it was a game changer in our relationship. The detour from Iowa City back to Cedar Falls catapulted us to the next level, just like when my Grandpa and Grandma first got to know each other by driving around in the car.

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The Down Low Trombone Quartet

*Western Home Communities Chapel
Brent Mead, UNI Human Relations Senior 5D17*



On November 13, 2016, the Down Low Trombone Quartet from the University of Northern Iowa performed an hour-long concert at the Western Homes Community Center Chapel. The Down Low Trombone Quartet is made up

of four UNI students: Brent Mead, Nathaniel Welshons, Seth Nordin, and Tom Rauch. Our program featured works from across the world, different time periods, and works originally written for different ensembles. Preparing for a concert is always a unique, and challenging period of time.

The quartet rehearsed for four hours each week since August in order to prepare for the concert. During rehearsals at Graham Hall in Russell Hall, the four of us students brought in new music each week that we'd like to perform. After playing through each piece, we highlighted the positives and negatives of the performance. We learned how to work cooperatively as we determined what we needed to improve on, whether or not to perform a certain piece, and what to prepare for next rehearsal. With any team project, there are hurdles that each group encounters in order to improve. There were moments where each student let each other down.

Group work usually brings sighs of distress from students. Usually, a member of the group lets the rest of the group down by not doing their fair share of work. Alternatively, one member might take control and demand that he/she do all of the work because of a lack of trust in the other group members. Group work is difficult because it requires trust between each member to perform his or her assigned tasks. The Down Low Trombone Quartet faced all of these issues.

October usually brings a lot of stress for musicians. In addition to the heavy academic workload, October generally is full of concerts. Student musicians usually have two to three concerts a week in addition to rehearsing for the next week's concerts. This is when we, the Down Low Trombone Quartet, found ourselves struggling to keep up with all of our responsibilities. Each week, it seemed that a different member wasn't playing well. We were frustrated with each other.

As a group, this was a defining moment. We were at a crossroads between giving up, lowering our expectations, and pushing through and succeeding. We decided on the latter. We worked with each other, became more flexible in scheduling, and encouraged each other on our bad days. This built up a rapport between us four musicians that will never be broken.

Fast forward to our concert on November 13, we all felt great. We arrived at the chapel thirty minutes before the beginning of the concert and met a few of the audience members. We shook hands, introduced ourselves, and became encouraged by all of the lovely smiles. As we performed, we all felt connected with the audience. Performing for the elderly is fun because this demographic seems to be more appreciative and attentive.

After the concert, we met the audience members and received many compliments. Wonderful people with big smiles came up and asked us all questions. Questions like “How long have you been playing trombone?”, “Why does your trombone look different?”, and “How do you pick out your music?” were asked following the concert. We loved answering all of the questions because we love spreading the love of trombone music. We’ve performed for college music students, high school band programs, and community members but we always enjoy performing for the elderly.

What a lovely experience it was to prepare a program for the members of the Western Homes. It changed our lives for the better because we learned more about group work, perseverance, and the purpose of music. We felt like we changed lives at the concert. For that reason, we are eternally grateful.

•
*Continue to locate footprints
of gratitude in your life.*

72

Legacy

Cherie Dargan, Western Home Communities Senior
Trey Thiele, UNI Human Relations Senior 5D18

If you were to ask me what Cherie Dargan was meant to be I would tell you that she was meant to be a writer. From a young age, Cherie was infatuated with books, even going so far as to call one of her best friends growing up her school's librarian. She had an affinity toward writing and chose to embrace that affinity by joining the yearbook and journalism class.

When Cherie graduated high school, she put writing on hold for a while. She focused on her new marriage, her newborn children, and facing the challenges placed before her in dealing with divorce and the struggles of continuing her own education and entering a struggling job market. As Cherie overcame the obstacles in her life, she finally became a teacher. It was through this that Cherie was able to do something I value even more: teaching others to write. She saw her challenge to herself, to teach others and to communicate the value in their work into their own lives.

Cherie's legacy doesn't stop with her career as a teacher however. In retirement, Cherie has decided to become a more active member in her community as well as ignite a spark for her writing she never quite had the time for. Just recently, she was published on an article on her mother. Through this publication, Cherie embraced the first step in her legacy as a writer and communicating her life,

as well as her entire family's lives, into a written medium. Cherie has felt as though her calling as a writer focuses on telling the stories of her mother, of her grandmother, and of all those family members whom she wants remembered. With all of the stories she's told me of her family I can see this is something she is passionate about and will accomplish with some hard work and some time.

Cherie has been a writer in the making through generations of hard work, determination, education, and the stories of those around her. It is through each and every one of these stories that Cherie is able to shape her own life as a person and as a writer.

I have been gifted the opportunity to be able to spend an hour or three for the past several weeks with Cherie and it is something that I can honestly say I've been looking forward to each and every week. Thank you very much for all the time you've spent with me and for all the stories you've told.

73

Bob's Bus

Robert Beach, Western Home Communities Senior
Sierra Perkins, UNI Human Relations Senior 5E18

Bob Beach came to Cedar Falls in 1947 after serving in the United States Navy. He came to the university when it was still the Iowa State Teachers College to pursue a business teaching degree. When he came to the university, he met with the Dean of Students in order to secure housing. At the time off campus housing had to be approved by the Dean who helped him get in contact with a man he knew had a room for rent. T. Wayne Davis took him to look at the room and they agreed

that Bob would move in. On their walk back from campus Davis asked him if he was looking for a job to which Bob replied, “I’m always looking for work.”

Bob worked his way up at the Bookstore and was offered a full time position after graduation, which he accepted. Over the years he took over more responsibilities in the store and became the manager of the bookstore.

One of his favorite memories comes from times when the Maucker Union was built. Many of the shops on the College Hill feared that the new venues in the Student Union would pull customers from their businesses. Bob offered an interesting solution to the problem, a bus that would pick up students from around campus to the College Hill. T. Wayne Davis purchased a double decker bus from England and it was to be shipped to Chicago in the winter.

Bob traveled to Chicago to pick up the bus with a driver since there was a special license needed to drive the bus. The driver, much to Bob’s surprise, was missing one of his hands. When they arrived to pick up the bus, they found out that there was some engine problems and they could not drive it back to Cedar Falls. A worker at the docks helped Bob and the driver find a mechanic shop that would be able to work on the foreign bus. They arrived at the mechanic shop to find out the bus was too tall to fit inside the garage to work on it. Since it was winter in Chicago they needed to find a way to fit the bus inside the garage. Their solution was to deflate the tires and push it into the garage; it barely made it. With the bus inside Bob and the driver were told the night shift would work on the bus overnight and it would be ready in the morning.

When Bob arrived in the morning he was told that the night crew had not shown up and the day crew would look at the bus as soon as possible. By the time they were finished Bob was more than ready to get on the road but they had another feat. They were not sure that they would be able to drive the bus into Iowa so Bob called the Department of Transportation to find out. The Department of

Transportation told him that they were not allowed to drive the double decker bus into Iowa, but he was not going to report them. They decided to take their chances.

Due to the size of the bus they were forced to take the long route around the city in traffic in order to avoid going under bridges and road signs. After leaving the city they were finally on their way and in the clear until they reached the Iowa border. Not too far into Iowa, they were pulled over by an Iowa State Trooper. As the trooper approached they were nervous because they knew their double decker bus was too high to drive on Iowa's roads. The trooper was very nice and gave them a ticket for having a light out but allowed them to continue on their way to Cedar Falls.

When the bus was brought to UNI, it was used to pick up students from the dorms around campus and Hillside Jennings and take them to the College Hill. The bus was free for students because it was used as advertisement for the bookstore and other businesses chipped in to help with gas. Many students used the bus for many years being fixed up regularly. When the bus was too badly damaged to repair any more Bob sold the bus. He fondly remembers the fun time of bringing the bus to Cedar Falls and the people who helped him operate and repair the bus.

*Accept gratitude's blessings
as a right now experience of life.*

74

ry's Greatest Hardship

*Rosemary Beach, Western Home
Communities Senior*

*Chelsea Bernholtz, UNI Human Relations
Senior 5E19*



her divorce was a magical line that opened a new river of opportunities. Although Rosemary claims that her life is basically free of hardship due to luck and great friends, she does look back upon her divorce as a confusing and disorientation time of her life. Rosemary was so unhappy in her first marriage that she had filed for divorce nearly three years before she finally gave them to her ex-husband, John. When asked, Rosemary cannot even recall which straw broke the camel's back. What she can recall, is the fear that caused her to stay. The uncertainty of what would happen to herself and her children when they were so comfortable in their family home on Panther Lane had her stuck fast in her emotionally draining marriage, “Most people stay married because being divorced pushes you out on your own. And it’s a whole new world.” After surviving such an unpleasantness for so many years, Rosemary’s claims that her divorce was a magical line that opened a new river of opportunities.

Initially after the divorce, Rosemary didn’t leave immediately because she didn’t have anywhere to go! This made for an uncomfortable situation since at the time divorce wasn’t nearly so easy to come by. Rosemary’s friends had to testify in court to act as witnesses and justify her reasons of why she wanted to leave. During

this process, Rosemary heard from the very mouths of her friends that her ex-husband had committed adultery and they had known all along and decided to spare her feelings until the divorce actually happened.

After the divorce was finalized, her ex-husband moved out and left her the children, as was custom at the time. Rosemary called being divorced “an education” as she jumped in with both feet to try and help her family survive. Although she had full custody of a 7th, 10th, and 12th grader, Rosemary never received child support and found herself financially supporting a family for the first time by getting her first ever job(s). Rosemary would work seasonally in Hudson detasseling corn beginning at four in the morning. After that, she’d send her children off to school while she went to work at the Waterloo Savings Bank, which she described as “a cage, like in a jail.” After a while, Rosemary was lucky enough to be given a job as the secretary to the principal at North Cedar Elementary where she stayed for seven years. In the evenings those first few years, she also worked as a waitress at The Depot until 2 a.m. where she made many friends and she considered was healthy for her to do. These jobs not only provided for her family, but helped Rosemary to become the essential part of the community that she is today!

Although these jobs helped Rosemary to continue to provide the quality of life that her children had come to expect. However, having never had to worry about bills and mortgages, Rosemary did not know how to pay the mortgage, and her ex-husband had neglected to tell her it was not paid off. One day, the sheriff approached the house and let Rosemary know that the house was scheduled to go on sale in a few weeks due to the bank no longer receiving payments. With nowhere else to turn, Rosemary had to set her pride aside and ask her loved ones for money, despite how hard it was.

Thankfully, her sister, a few cousins, and a friend all donated a few hundred dollars to pay off her debt. Also, a couple that Rosemary continues to be close to signed a loan for \$7000 for Rosemary to be able to save her house. And although this is a huge amount of money today, back then the commitment and love of her friends meant so much more. In order to pay off the last of her debt, Rosemary's wage of \$1.25 an hour was garnished for years.

However, due to her resilience and strong bonds of friendship, Rosemary is proud to claim that her children are survivors and managed quite well. Her hardship turned her into the strong, dedicated woman that she is today. Without having struggled herself all of those years, Rosemary may not have grown into the compassionate volunteer that she is today, and that would be an extreme loss for the Cedar Falls community that is so blessed to have her.



75

A Blind Date

*Mary Lou Snyder, Western Home Communities
Senior*

Lindsey, UNI Human Relations Senior 5E20

Mary Lou Snyder grew up in Des Moines with her mother. When she graduated from Des Moines Roosevelt High School, she knew she finally wanted to leave home and go to college elsewhere. She studied at Iowa State University and was a home economics major. She loved college because students were focused on their studies and there were many opportunities to do things with friends. When she graduated from college, she moved to Waterloo and found a job at an upholstery shop.

Mary Lou had a friend Jan. Jan was at Iowa State and in the same sorority. Jan also lived in Waterloo. Jan's husband, Lowell, was an engineer at John Deere, and they were determined to set Mary Lou up with an engineer, too. Mary Lou met Bill for the first time on a blind date in Lake City, Iowa. Bill had recently bought a new boat. They had dinner on the beach alongside the Cedar River. Looking back, Mary Lou remembers that Jan had made a casserole and packed fine china and glassware, which was a little elaborate for the setting. On the date, she discovered that Bill had also attended Iowa State, but they had never crossed paths before.

Bill called Mary Lou for a second date, and they went to a movie at the old theatre in Waterloo. Mary Lou remembers that the movie was miserably warm because there was no air conditioning, but instead giant fans. During the movie, her contact lens fell out, and she remembers thinking that Bill probably wondered what in the world she was doing, as she searched for it.

To her surprise, he called her for a third date, which was to accompany him to a birthday party. For whatever reason, Mary Lou decided to wear a long-sleeved black dress. When they arrived to the party, she was mortified because she was clearly overdressed. At the party, people were dancing and she felt a little hurt when Bill decided to dance with another girl the whole night. After that, she wasn't too keen on continuing to date. Bill called Mary Lou a few days later, and it turned out that he didn't know how to dance. The other girl was teaching him. After the misunderstanding had been resolved, they continued to date. Mary Lou and Bill finally danced together at a New Year's Eve party that year.

When Bill proposed, he asked Mary Lou, "Do you think you can put up with me for the rest of your life?"

She responded by saying that she would have to talk to her mom, because they were very close to each other. She ended up saying "yes," and they got married in 1960 at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Waterloo.

Mary Lou and Bill Snyder have four children: Julie, Holly, Deb, and Alan, as well as several beloved grandchildren. They are both very active in the Cedar Valley, and Mary Lou especially enjoys spending her free time wood carving.

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Reflection

Carl Boice, Western Home Communities Senior
Megan Salyars, UNI Human Relations Senior 5E21

On Friday, September 19th, 2016 I got in my car and drove to Carl's house feeling anxious, nervous and awkward. To be honest; I felt like I was going on a blind date that was going to end badly. Our meeting time was at 4 pm and I parked my car in front of his home at 3:55pm exactly. I remember this because I was running around frantic that day and was surprised I made it early. I parked my car on the street, took a couple deep breaths and walked to the door.

Before I could even knock on the door Carl had already appeared and was welcoming me into his home. I stuck out my hand, introduced myself and told him it was a pleasure to meet him. Carl, being the gentleman that he is, took my hand and said it was a pleasure to meet me as well. As we walked through his home, he introduced me to his lovely wife and we went to the back porch as it had been our meeting area. I have learned to enjoy our little spot.

During our first meeting Carl and I talked about many things. To be honest, it felt like we laid our secrets out within the first ten minutes. Carl grew up in Philadelphia during World War II and was raised by his grandparents. His father had left when he was young and was never heard from again. I realized that I am very fortunate my parents are still married. This is one of the many things Carl has made me reflect upon within my life.

Another thing is how the younger generation is not as exposed to the performing arts as my generation was. In Carl's free time, he is an usher at the Gallagher-Bluedorn Theatre on the University of Northern Iowa's campus. Carl and I started a conversation about a program the university offers to local schools that allows students in the local area to come watch a live performance for a minimal cost.

When I was in middle school and high school my community promoted band, speech and theater. I thank my school for giving me the opportunity because if not for them, I wouldn't have been able to see a dozen of performances and I can't imagine someone going their whole life without seeing one. Performances like these help take a student's imagination to a different world. I know when I go to performances I am captivated by what is on stage. What I hear, see, smell and even emotionally feel takes me to a different place.

One of the major things that Carl and I have talked about is relationships. A few years ago Carl volunteered his time in the foster system. When talking about this time in his life I could tell that volunteering with those children was very meaningful even if it was emotionally draining. When reflecting on the stories he told me about some of the situations those children had to experience, I couldn't help but think about my future as a teacher.

All people have a very unique past. Personally as a human being, specifically as a teacher, I want to be a person my students come to when they need advice. When they need to tell someone some exciting news. When they need someone to help them reflect on situations.

It's hard to put into words everything that I have learned with Carl; but I can say this. Every meeting I learned something about myself or a different way to view the world. I feel this opportunity of having our small chats has impacted my life immensely and I will always reflect on simple things because of Carl. Carl has

helped me define who I want to be as a person and as a teacher. I honestly don't think Carl will ever know just how much he has touched my life and helped me grow as an individual.

"We don't learn by doing, we learn by reflecting on what we've done." - Author Unknown.

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F.B.I. Forever Beautiful Intimacy

*Evelyn Boice, Western Home Communities Senior
Steve Schroeder, UNI Human Relations Senior 5F22*

This is a story about Evelyn and her husband. It goes a little something like this. When Evelyn was about 17 years old she applied for a job out in Washington D.C. to work for the FBI. It was a secretary job, which she was very good at. When she moved to D.C. from Iowa it was a life-changing decision that she will never regret. She had to be approved to live in the Bureau approved housing that the FBI provided for the employees. She moved in right across the hall from a guy named Carl. Carl was from Pittsburg. He was something very special to Evelyn. He had been living there for about a year more than she had so he was able to show her the ropes of how things go around there.

Over the time they had together in Washington D.C. they fell in love. He knew that she was the one so they decided to get married in Washington D.C at a young age. Carl was 19 and Evelyn was 18 and in D.C. you had to be 21 years old to get married without your parents' consent. Carl's father left when he was about 10 years old so they weren't quite sure how they were going to get the consent to get married. They had to get approval from a judge for them to get married so they did. On February 7, 1959 they had their wedding day. Their wedding party consisted of all FBI people; even their photographer was an FBI agent. The

employees for the FBI got discounts on all of the wedding things so it was a pretty good deal for Carl and Evelyn.

They lived close to the Air Force and Naval Base, which was a nice neighborhood. They spent 2 years in Washington D.C. together until they were about to have their first daughter. That's when they moved back to Iowa where they continued their love story together. Carl worked at a machine shed and Evelyn continued her career as a secretary. As I said before, she was very good at being a secretary; she's got 60 years of experience to back that up! All 5 girls in her family were secretaries so clearly it was meant to be, just like Carl and Evelyn. Sometimes love finds its own way to showing us the path, in Carl and Evelyn's case, the FBI was the path that led them to live a life full of happiness and love for each other. This will forever be a beautiful, intimate (F.B.I.) love story that will be a part of the rest of their lives.

Dear Evelyn,

I want to thank you for the privilege of knowing you and learning about your life story. We all have a story and it was a pleasure getting to know yours and for me to tell you mine. I will never forget your story about how you fell in love. Love has a way of showing us the path that we are meant to go on and hearing your story inspires me to let love show me the path as well. Everyone has a story and I am grateful for you letting me be a part of yours.

Sincerely, Steve

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How I Got Hear

Bev Fish, Western Home Communities Senior

Makenzie Sterk, UNI Human Relations Senior 5F23

Bev Fish was born on October 18, 1949. She was born as a beautiful, bright eyed baby, but something was different about her. From the moment, she was born

the doctors and her family wondered why she wasn't responding. They would talk and make different noises to her but she wouldn't respond. In 1949, there wasn't a lot of screenings new born babies went through compared to today. They soon figured out that she was born with a hearing loss.

She received her first hearing aid at the young age of three. Due to her situation, she couldn't be placed in a regular school; Therefore, when she was four she attended the Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs. This was a boarding school environment located six hours from her parents. After two years, she attended a public school where she repeated first grade. She spent a lot of time in speech therapy practicing to enunciate words. One blessing that came out of her situation was that she learned how to become a gifted lip reader. To this day, she still prefers face to face communication due to her ability to read lips. There were many times where she missed the punch line in a joke, but would laugh anyways. She never enjoyed talking on the telephone because she wasn't able to read lips or see the other person.

Overtime she became very used to her hearing aid and so did others around her. She stated how wearing her hearing aid was just like putting on glasses. It was so familiar to her and no one even noticed. As she grew up, she amazed herself each and every day. She attended The University of Northern Iowa, but at the time there were no accommodations for her. She had to work very hard to succeed in college. In 1990, she inquired information about Cochlear Implants and how they worked. That same year she underwent a four-hour surgery to get those implants. She struggled at first with them, but about seven months later she started to hear sounds that she never heard before.

She doesn't see her hearing loss as an issue anymore but rather she views it differently now. She never wanted to talk about her hearing loss, but today she

realizes how her experience can help others who may be in the same situation as her. She notices now she jumps into conversation more often and is willing to talk about her experience. She knows she has had many ups and downs with her situation, but she is thankful that they made her who she is today.

Dear Bev,

Thank you so much for sharing your story with me. I am so thankful to have met you and to have learned about your life's ups and downs. You are truly an amazing person and you are so strong. I wrote this story about you so you can always have a piece of your life in print. I will never forget our visits or your friendship. Thank you for welcoming me into your home and I look forward to keeping in touch.

Sincerely, Makenzie

*You have been a joy in my life.
Thank you for introducing me to ways of
growing myself.*

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The Man She Never Expected to Meet

*Marlene Engen, Western Home Communities Senior
Jenzen VanderHolt, UNI Human Relations Senior 5F24*

Marlene Engen grew up in the small town of Lake City, Minnesota surrounded by her friends and family. She was literally raised by a village of the people who cared about her the most.

After high school she moved to Minneapolis and lived in a women's only facility. There a man by the name of Lee Engen whose quiet personality caught her

eye. He was sitting there all day waiting in their lobby because he had given his buddy a ride from Cedar Falls, Iowa to visit his girlfriend.

This confused her so much, she marched up to him and asked him why he was there. There must have been something between the two of them because, after only “48” days of knowing each other, the two of them were married. To this day Lee is Marlene’s best friend, but she didn’t know how the two of them were ever brought together until she met another man many years later.

At the age of 33 with three kids and an amazing husband, she came to realize she needed to fall at her knees to another man. This powerful meeting took place because of her friend and many coffee fellowships between the two of them and one other woman.

This woman was named Silvia and she had something different about her. Maybe it was her energy or the way she talked about a divine being called God but, whatever it was, Marlene’s friend invited her to come and meet Silvia. Before the meeting took place, Marlene’s friend warned her that, this lady was “crazy” and that she just had to meet her to hear the things she would say. However, what Marlene didn’t know was that Silvia would introduce her to the real ruler of her heart.

After meeting with Silvia many times for coffee, Marlene began to realize that, maybe what she was saying wasn’t so idiotic. Was this lady so “crazy” as her friend thought? Or, maybe what she was saying was actually the truth? As Marlene began to ponder these questions, she began to feel a tugging at her soul. Maybe it could be described as someone knocking just waiting to be invited in.

After feeling this tugging and a hole in her heart for so long, Marlene finally pulled a Bible off the shelf and opened it up. Before that night, the Bible only confused her with the words that, didn’t seem to make any sense. However, something jumped out of the page at her and struck her to her core. She realized

that, the person knocking at her heart's door was Jesus and that night, she invited him in to be her personal Lord and Savior.

From that moment on, she is a changed woman. No longer does she feel that knocking but, she feel whole. Her personality has become one that showers others in the truth of God's love for his children. She has witnessed to countless people about her love for God even the college students who have worked with her for Nazareth Lutheran Church. For ten years she has poured into her college kids just like Silvia did all those years ago.

As she looks back on her life she realizes that God has an even bigger plan than she ever could've imagined. Which, includes him putting Lee in the lobby of the apartment that, day when the two of them met for the first time. As well as blessing her with three amazing children and three grandchildren who she adores. Marlene Engen is a true testament of God's love for His children. She gives her all pouring into the people she loves the most and even the ones she just meets on the street.

Marlene,

Thank You so much, for pouring into me as much as you have poured into those students who had worked for you. You have no idea the positive and loving effect you have on people. There are countless times I walk out of your house, knowing that the two of us being paired together wasn't a mistake but it was God's plan. I wish you all the love and can't thank you enough for this amazing experience.

Love, Jenzen

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Answered Prayer

Lee Engen, Western Home Communities Senior

Ariel Williams, UNI Human Relations Senior 5F25

One thing you should know before I start this story is how I prepared for this experience before meeting Lee. I knew this experience was going to be one that I wanted to learn and grow from in my faith. I have recently lost my grandpa, so I was seeing this as an opportunity to have someone else to gain wisdom from. I began praying after the first day of class when this field experience was introduced. I asked that God would give me a community member that was firm in their faith. I asked God for someone that would be able to share what they have learned in their walk with Him. God answered that prayer with Lee Engen.

The very first time I met with Lee he asked me one question, and I knew this was the answer to my prayer from God. He said, “I have one very personal question for you... Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?” I remember feeling caught off guard that he would just openly ask me such a straightforward question. However, I felt so much joy and peace for what was to come because my answer was a solid yes. I proceeded to share the story of how God revealed his Son, Jesus Christ, to me and how I responded with full surrender to the one true King. Every meeting with Lee since then has been filled with questions and answers surrounding our faith. One story came to me at a time when I needed it the most.

Lee Engen has worked many years at John Deere as a Union Representative. He has loved his job and had many opportunities to be a witness to Jesus Christ. He never let his faith waver in times of persecution. He shared this one specific opportunity with me. One employee was going to a hearing to discuss some actions that needed to be addressed. Lee was supposed to represent this man for his wrongdoings. Now Lee could have handled this one of two ways. He could have judged the man and made him feel bad about what he did, or he could show grace and mercy and help the man to get better.

Lee chose the latter because of his understanding of the Gospel. While they were walking back from the hearing, Lee said a very simple sentence to the man. “You need to get yourself right with Jesus.” That was the only thing Lee said to the man after representing him at the hearing. What the man did with that after Lee has no idea. About a year later, Lee is walking down a long hallway in Deere’s. He hears someone call his name from an office area. Lee goes to the man without any idea what the man wants or needs.

“Lee do you remember who I am?” the man asks.

“No, I can’t say that I do,” Lee replies.

“I am the man that you represented at a work hearing a while ago. Do you remember what you said to me after?”

“Oh yes, I know,” Lee remembered.

“Well, I just wanted to let you know that I did just that,” the man concluded. The simplicity of Lee’s statement just one year ago is what planted the seed of Jesus Christ in this man’s thoughts. Lee did not do anything extravagant, and he didn’t even share the Gospel right then. Instead, Lee allowed the Holy Spirit to do the work.

Lee told me this story to help me to feel encouraged when I share the Gospel. He has told me multiple times, “It is not our job to convert people, but only to tell the story.” In my season of life, these were the exact words that I needed to hear. This story, and many others, helped me realize that as the body of Christ we simply need to be committed to the call of sharing. So I share this story with you to glorify the work that God is doing in the hearts of His people. Lee has been such a blessing in my life and so many others.

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Hard Work Pays Off

Tom Thompson, Western Home Communities Senior
Wade Shive, UNI Human Relations Senior 5F26

Tom Thompson worked hard his entire life, from when he was in grade school, high school, and beyond. He was always one to try new things and learn as he went along. Some of this came from work he chose to do, and other times it came from work he did not always choose to do. Growing up on the east side of Waterloo, work was always around him. Different companies making different tools and equipment were all over that area of Waterloo, and are still around today.

After doing jobs as a teenager, like working for this older brother, Tom was ready to start something else after finishing high school. Not able to enlist into the military, Tom decided to find a work apprenticeship with a company in Waterloo. He applied a few different places with the help of people in the area, and patiently waited to be called about the possibility of getting one of the opportunities. This came when he was called by John Deere and was able to start his work as a tool and die apprentice. This job came with a lot of learning experiences that helped Tom be the best tool and die maker he could be, and ended up securing a job at Deere where he would eventually retire from.

Tom very much enjoyed working at John Deere. He was given many experiences in the years he was there and was able to do a lot with that he had learned and the people who had taught him. He learned almost everything by doing it with a hands on approach, and that was important for him and helped with his success at the company. Tom would be called at odd hours during the day, even sometimes working for many hours at a time, because of the jobs he was able and had the knowledge to do.

Tom enjoyed his work because he was always doing something different, or working on a different kind of project. That was the best thing about his job, was

that nothing was ever the same. He could come in one day needing to work on something, or come in another day needing to do something completely different.

Tom saw a lot of things working at Deere in the many years he was there, some good and some not so good. John Deere is indeed a 24/7 operation and things did happen, like strikes, layoffs, or accidents. He saw a few gnarly things in his days



at Deere, but luckily nothing that he was directly involved in. Tom was very fortunate to have the experience and time working at John Deere, and was able to enjoy it because of the diverse experiences and the ability to learn new things and make the most out of his time there

82

From Hardship to Friendship

Kathy Thompson, Western Home Communities Senior
Hannah Herington, UNI Human Relations Senior 5F27

Hardship: severe suffering or privation. Tragedy: an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress. Two things that no teenage girl should have to be faced with, but Kathy and I both know just how hard it is for a young girl, thirteen or fourteen years old, to conquer these feats. On our first visit with each other, I shared with Kathy that my dad died in a snowmobile accident when I was fourteen. She shared with me that her dad also died when she was thirteen unexpectedly. From there, it was like a snowball effect: we continued to find things that we both had in common and at every visit, we learned more and more about each other. At every visit, there are two things that I love hearing about: her marriage with Tom, and her grandkids.

While growing up, Kathy and Tom were in church youth group together and they were a young couple in love. Tom was four years older than she was, but that did not prohibit them from spending time together. They had a group of friends from youth group that would get together and have potlucks. I told Kathy that I was envious of this because even though I am a fairly social person, I did not have a group of friends to rely on like Kathy did! Shortly after high school, Kathy and Tom got married which was pretty common for their generation. They started their own family and bought a house. Tom worked quite often, so Kathy made friends with the neighbor across the street—her mentor. She was six years older than Kathy and found her advice to be very helpful as she was trying to manage a nursing job and raising the children with Tom.

As Kathy and Tom grew older, they became grandparents! Chloe and Callan are the two that I hear the most about, all though they are proud grandparents of others as well. I have learned a lot from Chloe and I have yet to meet her! As Kathy told me, Chloe has problems with her hearing which has affected her behavior and learning in school. When she first started school, they had her in the special education classrooms. Fortunately, they realized that Chloe was way too advanced to be in that classroom and they moved back to the classroom with all of her friends! What I am able to take away from this story is to learn about all of my students before making any judgments about their learning abilities. When Chloe was moved back into the regular classroom, she excelled in her test scores and the results were way above her grade level!

This taught me a very valuable lesson for me as a future educator, but many other discussions with Kathy have taught me how to be a humble, loving woman going into the ‘adult’ world! Sharing our hardships turned into a friendship to last a lifetime.

Dear Kathy, From the bottom of my heart, I have truly appreciated sharing my stories with you and hearing of all the experiences you have been through! I think it is safe to say that we have learned many lessons from one another! I will always remember this experience as one of the best memories of UNI. As we both move forward with the rest of our lives, I hope to continue to visit you every once in a while. I also hope that Ms. Chloe learns from you, as I did with my grandmother, and also from you! Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your story that you have to share with her and the other grandchildren!

Sincerely, Hannah



Section 9



83

Shadow of Death

Anonymous Jane, Community Senior

Ashley Baker, UNI Human Relations Senior 9A1

After retiring from teaching in 1992, Jane was asked to be the Circle Chairwoman at her church. This required her to head the devotions at the monthly district meetings. At this point in her life, Jane felt she was straying away in her faith but this position provided an opportunity to feel the passion she had once felt. Each month, Jane chose a new topic to cover in her devotions. She researched Bible verses and tied in a personal story for topics like love and faith. The rest of this story is Jane's account of the events that challenged her faith and later became a story for many to learn from.

After getting married, Jane and her husband, John, were blessed with three sons. Their eldest son, Dave, was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes at the age of seven. They were able to manage his diabetes when he was younger however when he hit puberty things got a bit out of control.

At the age of sixteen, Dave met Taylor and soon after started dated. Then on a beautiful autumn day seven years later, they got married. As Dave got older and became more independent, he remained active by going into construction but he was not living a healthy lifestyle necessary for a diabetic outside of work. His condition made Dave a hard person to live with and eventually Taylor asked for a divorce. Their two daughters were old enough to know what was happening and took their separation very hard.

At the age of forty-six, Dave started having more severe health problems which led the doctors needing to amputate one leg. He got along just fine with his

prosthetic but he was put on disability pay. Since Taylor and Dave were divorced at this point, the responsibility of taking care of Dave fell back on his parents.

Eventually, the doctors had to amputate his other leg. After this operation Dave did not try, he stayed in a wheelchair and had to go live in a care facility because he couldn't take care of himself enough. Around this time his eyesight and kidneys started failing and he had to receive dialysis treatment three days a week for three hours at a time. He hated it. After some time doctors told him he needed a feeding tube. It was at this point that Dave said, "No mom, I'm not going to do this."

Dave asked Jane to send for the Steve, younger minister at their church, so Dave could speak with him. He asked the minister if it was considered suicide if he took himself off dialysis. Steve told him, "No, you have control over your own medication." So Dave quit the treatments.

He said, "I'm so tired of people asking me how I feel and I say I'm okay but I'm really not. It's got to be better. It's got to be better than what I'm going through right now." After taking himself off dialysis, Dave lived ten days.

During this time his ex-wife brought the girls over, he ate what he wanted to eat and did the things he wanted to do. These were the happiest days of his life, being reunited with the woman that he loved and staying with his daughters. On his final night, Taylor called asking Jane and John to come down as Dave was asking for them.

As they walked in Dave heard Jane's voice but asked, "Dad?" John said, "Yes?" and Dave just seemed to be satisfied that they were both there. With the windows open on the hot but stormy July night, Dave became restless. Jane rubbed his back and started reciting the 23rd Psalm.

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,*

He leads me beside still waters,

He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake . . . ”

As she read the next line of

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...”

Jane began to cry and couldn't finish reading. She is not sure he heard her but he settled down. Fifteen minutes after arriving home, their other son came over and said, “He died right after you left.”

Jane tells this story to show how her son encouraged her faith after seeing him go through all of what he went through. It was his choice and he was a Bible student and in the end, he knew he was ready. He went peacefully. Jane believes that it took a lot of faith to stop doing something knowing you will die from as you quit.

*Greet gratitude
at the breath of dawn each day.*

84

What Margaret Wants You to Remember

Margaret Willoughby, Western Home Communities Senior

Tiffany Bean, UNI Human Relations Senior 9A2

5 things that Margaret Willoughby wants you, her seven grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren to remember:

- 1. Always share what you have*
- 2. Don't be afraid to try new things*
- 3. Establish a faith that strengthens you early in life and will continue to strengthen you as you meet both adventures and challenges. Have it become a faith journey and not just a onetime thing because you grow in your faith*

4. *Volunteer as much as you can because when you do you find yourself in situations that help you grow while you are doing a service to other people.*
5. *Being positive includes a feeling of gratitude and if you feel enough things to be thankful for it limits the things that would bother you.*

Always share what you have.

“There’s ALWAYS something you can share.” Whether it be food or clothes, there’s always something. Margaret helped take care of a young lady named Frosty, and twins when she was twelve years old. The father of the children was considered the town drunk. The children didn’t have much so Margaret’s sister and mother made five little dresses for Frosty. Forty to fifty years later Margaret ran into Frosty at City Centennial. They were both in separate groups. Margaret thought she recognized this women, she said, “Frosty?” Frosty turned around and said, “Oh Margaret, I still have all the love that you gave me.”

Don’t be afraid to try new things

Margaret took a three week trip to Europe by herself. She went to Scotland, England and Wales right after she retired. Margaret has cousins that live in England. She brought as little clothing as she could bear. She had one dress, and two shoulder bags of travel clothes. After she met one of her cousin for church, she mailed the dress home. She referred to herself as a “65 year old hippy with a britrail pass.” She had a wonderful time on the trains and made great conversation with the conductors. She had no idea where she was staying, she went from one place to the next. She had never traveled like that before, learning a lot from the natives and more about the places she was staying at than she would have if she would have planned everything out. She was living life in the moment.

When Margaret was 65 years old she auditioned for a comedy play at the Old Creamery Theatre. She got the lead part of the older woman. She had to travel

about 1.5 hours before and after a show. Everything all worked out, but attempting that at the age of 65 is a stretch. She did stay in the Amana Colonies when they performed there and she made it an adventure. She tried different restaurants every day! ***Establish a faith that strengthens you early in life and will continue to strengthen you as you meet both adventures and challenges. Have it become a faith journey and not just a onetime thing because you grow in your faith***

Margaret grew up in a Christian faith. She usually attended church twice a week. Several times throughout her life she has called on her faith to help guide her in understanding. It helped her come to terms with her parents and husband's death along with the big decision of moving into a retirement home. Her faith is what reassured her that things would all work out. When having a strong valid faith you are able to help others because it's easier to share your beliefs and experiences.

Volunteer as much as you can because when you do you find yourself in situations that help you grow while you are doing a service to other people.

Margaret believes that you should contribute to the community as much as you can. When you are contributing some of your time, you are pushing yourself a little bit which results in getting abilities or skills you didn't realize you had. You don't have to give a lot to feel ownership in something. If you have ownership you are more likely to take part and make sure it succeeds. Growing up Margaret thought she owned part of an elephant. Her and her siblings sent in a nickel to the Des Moines Zoo to help buy an elephant because of her donation to the cause, she believed she owned part of that elephant when the Des Moines Zoo finally reached the funds it needed to purchase it.

Being positive includes a feeling of gratitude and if you feel enough things to be thankful for it limits the things that would bother you.

Margaret is such a positive woman. Throughout middle school she had three best friends. They practiced playing basketball all the time together. When it was finally time for the girls to go out, Margaret found out that she had a heart condition. Her friends went on to play basketball and she found the positivity and cheered for her best friends.

85

The Work of God

Jean Thompson, Western Home Communities Senior

Nesh BenSaad, UNI Human Relations Senior 9A4

It was the year 1943 and Jean Thompson was residing in Yuma, Arizona. Since the Americans were victorious at the Battle of Ramelle, her husband did not have to be shipped out. Instead, his division was split up for rest and thus Jean used this time to be closer to her husband. She traveled all the way to Colorado Springs on a bus holding only one suitcase in hand with everything she owned in it.

A year later, Jean's husband was put on high alert due to the movement of German troops. The soldiers had to be ready to deploy at a moment's notice and as a result, their wives had to go home. In late 1944, during the wake of the Allied forces' successful D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, it seemed as if the Second World War was all but over. On December 16, with the onset of winter, the German army launched a counteroffensive that was intended to cut through the Allied forces in a manner that would turn the tide of the war in Hitler's favor. The battle that ensued is known historically as the Battle of the Bulge. The courage and fortitude of the American Soldier was tested against great adversity. The surprise attack caught the Allied forces completely off guard and resulted in mass casualties for the troops.

Shortly after returning home, Jean went into labor. Little did she know, she was pregnant with twins. However, she experienced complications during the delivery and despite the twins being born safely and quickly, she hemorrhaged badly. Her children were born prematurely so they had to be put in an incubator. Jean's husband was about to be shipped out, but he received a red card stating that his family was in critical condition.

Jean's husband was a machine gunner, a dangerous job during the war. After receiving word from his family, he received a ten day pass (not including travel) to come home and see them. This action alone allowed him to miss the Battle of the Bulge and saved his life. Jean is forever grateful to God for allowing her husband be alive and to have her kids grow up with a father.

*Make gratitude
an intention of your heart.*

86

Cedar Falls, a Changed Town

Lloyd "Bud" Fosse, Western Home Communities Senior

Jeremy Christian, UNI Human Relations Senior 9A5

The year is 1949, and there was a young 25 year old Bud that just moved to Cedar Falls. He traveled everywhere around the world, and he decided to move to Cedar Falls after the war was over. He decided to walk down Main Street. Main Street was a lively place with plenty of people walking down the street. There are several grocery stores, more than the eye can see, as well as a butcher shop.

There was also a theater for entertainment purposes. If you were lucky enough, you could catch a show every now and then. Another thing that was special to main is that it had a lot of small stores, like a clothing store, record store, and a chocolate shop. There were also four taverns on Main and they had to be a certain distance away from the university. The trolley system was actually fairly useful. This way people wouldn't have to drive downtown. Fast forward to the year 2016, and I'm walking down Main Street.

It seems that everything that we have talked about has changed. There aren't any grocery stores left on Main Street and it's filled with other small stores and restaurants. Another thing is that there are more than four bars on Main Street. There are a lot of bars on Main Street now, especially without the restriction of bars within the university's radius. The trolley system has changed a little bit, but now there are buses that drive around Cedar Falls.

Going back to the year 1949, 1st Street was another place of interest. Although vastly different than what it is now, First Street used to be lively. In a stretch, you could see about six different car shops. However, over time, Bud saw that most of these car shops started to merge together, especially since all the stores were right next to each other. There also used to be a lot of gas stations on First Street but, overall there were a lot of gas stations in Cedar Falls. Back to 2016, there aren't any car dealerships on First Street. All of them have disappeared and there aren't any answers as to why they're gone. However, there are mechanic and repair places on First Street now.

Now that First Street and Main have been talked about, it's time to go back to College St. also known as the Hill back in 1949. Even though the Hill is a lively place now, it was different back in 1949. As Bud would walk down the streets, there weren't any bars whatsoever. Alcohol was not allowed to be sold within a certain radius of the university, probably a few miles.

This changed things up since students were allowed to have alcohol on university property. The Hill also had a lot of odd shops, just like Main Street, such as a camera shop and a laundromat. There were also grocery stores, restaurants, and barbers, just like Main Street.

Now that it's 2016, things have changed drastically. Now, for a good chunk of the hill, a lot of it consists of bars. Another thing that has changed is that alcohol is allowed in dorms and there is no restriction that prohibits alcohol being near the university. Talking to Bud, he said that the Hill has changed the most out of anything in Cedar Falls, besides the further construction of University Avenue. There aren't as much as restaurants and most of them are just quick food stops now. This has definitely changed and shaped Cedar Falls today.

Back in 1949, Bud didn't think much of University Avenue since there wasn't much there. There was a drive-in movie theater with some apartments on the east side of University Avenue. Now, I can see that University Avenue has drastically changed. They added in the Avenue of the Saints in 1991, which made traveling easier. There is also a mall in Cedar Falls now, even though it isn't used much. Another thing is that Cedar Falls has plenty of restaurants, more than the eye can see and there doesn't seem to be a single place on University Avenue that isn't being used. It's also easier to get into Waterloo now with the University Avenue road.

Now that we've covered certain roads of Cedar Falls, we can talk about Cedar Falls as a whole. Cedar Falls used to be a smaller town of 15,000 people. It gave you a small town feel, although it was a little larger and had a lot of things you could do. Now, Cedar Falls is growing and has over 40,000 people, with even more things one can do. Cedar Falls used to be a hard place to find a house or apartment. One reason being that it was expensive to rent one. If you weren't making a lot of money at your job, it would have been hard to pay rent.

The second reason is that there weren't that many houses that were available to rent at that time. I think that has changed greatly today since there are a lot of houses and apartments to rent today. Some of the apartments around the college don't even get rented out until a few months before school starts. Also, rent is fairly cheap if you have the amount of people as there are bedrooms. Rent is usually under four hundred dollars and can usually be obtained with a part time job. However, most of the people that are renting houses or apartments near the University are college students, and some people might have a hard time coming up with the money depending on their class load and how much they are working. Another thing that was different in Cedar Falls is that there couldn't be alcohol within a certain mile radius of the University. Today, this has changed a lot since there are a few bars and stores that sell alcohol that are less than a mile away from the university.

As you can see, Cedar Falls has changed drastically over the last 60 years. Hopefully Cedar Falls will continue to grow and become a great city to live in.

*You have been a "here and now" in my life.
You arrive as moments of grace.*

87

A Thousand Miles

*Bernice King, Western Home Communities Senior
Madeline Degen, UNI Human Relations Senior 9B6*

Not long after her husband retired, Bernice took up a pastime many would not think of now. Bernice and her husband started to drive cars for Avis Rental in

Waterloo. Together with a few other couples they traveled all over the Midwest either picking up or dropping off cars.

Thoughts of retirement usually circle around traveling too far off places and grand adventures. However, exotic far off places are not needed to enjoy the adventure. Instead, having supporting friends and a destination in mind is all that is needed.

Bernice had the chance to travel to places like Moline, Dubuque, and Chicago on multiple occasions. Sitting at home the phone would ring and getting the detail it was up to Bernice to contact the rest of her group depending on the number of people needed. Fifteen minutes later, the Kings would pick up their faithful crew and head out for the next destination.

As one of the group's ringleaders, Bernice was in charge of directions. She was the lead car in their small convoy across the Midwest. One day, Bernice was leading the line of cars through the busy streets. She took a turn and after driving for a few minutes the road ended at a cemetery. Having realized this was not the correct destination, the line of cars slowly made its way back the way they came which put them back on course. They made it to the Avis outpost eventually. However, the group never let Bernice live down that she had gotten them lost so close to their end destination.

These trips were eventful and many times not because of human error. Snow was falling, when Bernice and her husband started their journey back home to Cedar Falls. Visibility was low and roads were slick. However, they were trying to make it back for Christmas Services. The closer they got to Cedar Falls the thicker the snow became as they drove into the storm. The whole trip Bernice was hoping that night's services would be canceled and people would stay safe. Later that evening the Kings made it back home. Once inside they found a message from church wishing them a Merry Christmas and letting them know that services

were cancelled. After a trip filled with worry, they could celebrate Christmas knowing their loved ones were not trying to drive in the horrible storm.

Every trip they took had its own adventure. Even if it was stopping at their favorite restaurants. The different happenings made some more memorable than others. Bernice continued to drive for Avis for many years. When her eyesight became worse she rode along as a passenger; she's not one to miss out on an adventure. Needless to say it was a surprisingly eventful way to start her retirement.

88

View from the Window

Marty Halupnik, Western Home Communities Senior
Michaela Garringer, UNI Human Relations Senior 9B7

When we are young, fairytales are as real to us as the feeling of sunshine on our faces and raindrops on a cloudy day. When we grow older, we realize that fairytales don't happen to most people. In fact, fairytales don't seem to happen at all as we grow up. Depending on who you are, life can make us realize it sooner than we might choose. Little girls might dream of a prince in shining armor and being whisked away to be married after only knowing each other for a day (but of course knowing that they are meant to be together forever). When those little girls grow older and meet the man they will marry, they might think to themselves that perhaps they *have* found their prince, just in a different way than they imagined. Are their stories no less a fairytale? Regardless, today you will be hearing a story of true love. This is the fairytale of Marty and Dale and how their fairytale came true.

It was a cool autumn night as Marty and her friends were walking back from the VEISHA festivities they had attended. The group of girls had been enjoying the Iowa State University celebration, laughing and chatting on the way back to her friend Audrey's place. The cool night soon turned into a wet one when droplets of rain began to fall on the group of friends. They hastened their movements to get to shelter faster. It was to no avail though, as they reached her friend's home they were already soaked through. The girls went inside, passing the group of young men who were relaxing on the porch.

At this point in the story, you must be feeling rather sorry for those girls. That certainly makes sense, as no one wishes to be caught in the pouring rain. However, for Marty this was rather fortunate. As she took in the relief of being inside, a young man noticed her through the window that looked inside from the porch. Okay, you must certainly be thinking now that young man is her future husband, Dale. No sense keeping that a secret! However, Dale probably didn't know that he would marry her, and Marty wouldn't even remember him!

That view of Marty from the window must have been an interesting sight. Almost seems like it's from a fairytale, right? A handsome young man gazes through a window to see a beautiful maiden who had been caught in the rain. The next part of the story must involve her swooning and falling for him instantly- or so you would think. Well, here is what truly happened. Dale managed to get Marty's phone number. When he bucked up the courage to give her a call and ask her out, Marty didn't really remember him that well! I mentioned that earlier, but it's such a shocker that I had to include it again. The good news is that Marty agreed to go on a date with him. Perfect! Now the true fairytale part can begin. They must have certainly been on the most amazing date of their lives and fell in love immediately, right? Didn't they?

Well, the night came for their first date. It was a Saturday night and Marty was upstairs getting ready when Dale arrived so her family let him in to sit and wait. It must have been rather intimidating to wait there, however Marty's step brother managed to break the ice by becoming friendly with their visitor. Dale was kind enough to play with him while waiting, and was unsuspecting to the tragedy that was going to occur. I'm not referring to their date, because that hadn't even happened yet. You know, I bet Dale had a really nice pair of pants and shirt on that night. Probably some of his best clothes were worn to impress Marty. Who would have suspected that Marty's step brother would accidentally go to the bathroom on Dale?

Now that Dale was thoroughly drenched in Marty's step brother's accident, he hastened home to change. When Marty was finally ready a few minutes later, she came down the stairs and unsuspectingly sat in the same chair in which the accident happened! How un-fairytale like! But as it turns out it wasn't so bad after all. When the two were both cleaned up they went out and had a wonderful evening. In fact, the couple had many more wonderful dates together. Through the next few months, twists, turns, and other obstacles they managed to fall in love.

I'm not an expert in the matter, but I might call 57 years of marriage, three children, nine grandchildren, and two great grandchildren a fairytale. A fairytale can be defined by both the actual story itself and also in the way it is remembered and told. This is a story that Marty and Dale have told throughout the years to their family. What makes it so magical and fairytale-like is that they met in a unique way. So many chances were taken, and many things could have gone wrong. Things would have been different if one of them hadn't been there that night, or if perhaps the window was situated in a different spot. Their story is a fairytale because they overcame many odds and lived a happy and full life together.

*I admire the radiant smile
with which you greet me.*

89

Going to School, Going Home

Jim Peterson, Western Home Communities Senior

Mitch Hewitt, UNI Human Relations Senior 9B8

Picture yourself standing between Sabin Hall and McCollum Science Hall. Now picture what it would look like 80 years ago. Does it look any different and what is different about it? Jim Peterson would say that it looks very different from what we are used to today.

Jim started kindergarten 80 years ago in what we now know as Sabin Hall and attended the school there until he was in 7th grade. At that time it was known as the lab school. Jim's teacher Miss Koering had a classroom that sat in the northeast corner of the building, where he spent most of his day learning as well as taking short naps on rag rugs. There was also a wooden rack on one wall that students could climb on. He is not sure whether or not he attended a full day or a partial day during his time in kindergarten, but as he got older it became full days on the upper floors of Sabin Hall.

Because Jim's school was a lab school, he remembers college students helping Miss Koering. There was a row of wooden chairs in the back of each room for the college students to sit and observe. Jim recalls, "Going to the lab school had its perks. There was a lot of help because of all the student teachers that observed the class." Jim recalls getting to take clarinet lessons from Dr. Myron Russell for whom Russell Hall is named after. "He probably gave up in frustration because I never got beyond a really squeaky reed, but he tried" says Jim on his lessons.

When his class went to recess they went to the playground that was located where McCollum Science Hall now sits. The playground was mostly sand with some grass with a huge apparatus (which we now call a swing set). There, students could climb and play. Jim recalls “the apparatus seeming to be 25 feet high and really scary if you climbed on the top of the rather large pole that ran across the top.” As the students got older they would engage in soccer during recess as well as play fox and geese in the snow. During the winter they would ice skate on Prexy’s Pond which sat where part of the Curriss Business Building sits. Jim’s father worked at the power plant which was southeast of where Curriss sits, and Jim said “We changed our skates in the power plant where it was nice and warm.”

When WWII started Jim remembers that the campus became a training center for women who had joined the Navy called the W.A.V.E.S. The women were being trained for clerical and administrative positions to allow more sailors to go to sea. The WAVES lived in Bartlett Hall and Jim says “I would cut through the connection between Bartlett Hall and the Common, and quite often I would be blocked by columns of WAVES marching to class.

When Jim got part way through 7th grade his family moved to a farm in the northern part of Blackhawk County where he started attending a one room country school where he says, “I went to school with 5 other students.” He would not go to school on the campus of Northern Iowa until he became a college student.

After serving our country during the Korean War, he returned to Iowa State Teachers College in 1955. Tuition at that time was just \$33.00 a quarter. He graduated in 1958 with a degree in Business Education. That same summer Jim took a graduate business class which was held in the same room that he attended kindergarten in 1936. Jim states, “The wooden climbing rack was still in place along the wall, so I guess you can go home after all.”

90

Barbara! Where Did She Go?

Barbara Davis, Western Home Communities Senior

Shantel Kahrs, UNI Human Relations Senior 9B9

There comes a time in all of our lives when we just want to get away. We may have this desire because we have wanderlust and just want to get out in the world and explore. Or, we want to get away because we are upset with someone or something in our current environment. Regardless of the reasoning, when the desire to get away meets opportunity sometimes we just might take it.

Barbara Davis grew-up in the state of New York, next to Owasco Lake in Auburn. Living near the lake molded Barb into quite the water bug; she and the other kids who lived near the lake could be found on the beaches or in the water more often than not. The kids would play games at the lake, and the parents would enjoy lake life, too. However, for Barb, the lake also brought her fame in her hometown.

When Barb was 13 years old, she swam across the lake. Her parents followed beside her as she made the 1-mile trek across the glistening, cool water. She was elated. Her parents were elated. In fact, this accomplishment was written about in the town's newspaper for all to read. What a proud moment for such a young girl. Five years earlier, Barb embarked on a different journey. This journey, however, made her parents the complete opposite of proud; they were disappointed.

Now, close your eyes. Think back to a time when you *really* wanted to go do something. Maybe you wanted to go out to eat with some friends. Or, maybe you

wanted to go to the movies with a significant other. Next, try to remember what was holding you back from doing so. In life, there are more often than not, obstacles placed in our path. These obstacles can be painstakingly monotonous, and while we are on our way of overcoming them, the time seems to pass much slower. Tick. Tock. Tick Tock.

Barb was 8 years old when an obstacle was set in her path. You see, her friends were all going down to the lake to play “kick-the-can”. Oh the fun that was to be shared amongst the lake friends. While the kids made their way down to the sandy beaches, a barrier was placed between Barb and the fun that awaited her. She asked, “Mom, can I go down to the beach and play kick-the-can with some friends?” While waiting to hear the response she ever so wanted, her mother instead said no. “You haven’t done much yet today,” her mom said, “So, how about you stay here and dry dishes. Then, you may go.”

By the time Barb made her way to the beach, the sun began to set and night started to overcome day. When she reached her friends, they were almost done; Barb was displeased. Showing her frustration stemming from having to dry the dishes, Barb’s friend said, “Why don’t you just run away?” Huh. There was an idea...an idea that to any youngster held more temptation than not. Barb decided then and there that she would run away from home.

When Barb returned home, she quietly crept through the house. Her mother and father had gone down to the beach to spend some time together and catch scrumptious bass (something they typically did every night possible). Barb hurriedly grabbed her Girl Scouts sleeping bag and a flashlight, and then made her way into the endless trees that surrounded the lake. She walked further and further away from her home, until she reached about one-mile out. Once she found her place for the night, she laid in her sleeping bag, nestled under a tree. She *actually* pulled this whole running-away thing off. She did it.

It got darker outside and the noises got louder and louder. Animals could be heard in the night, and Barb most descriptively remembers the sounds of foxes playing. She so badly wanted to turn her flashlight on, to run home and be back in her warm, cozy and safe home. But, she could not bring herself to turn the flashlight on. “An animal would see me, and I would rather they not know I am here,” Barb thought to herself. With that, she nestled deeper down into her Girl Scouts sleeping bag until morning came.

The next morning, Barb made the nearly mile trek back to her house, not knowing what her parents would say or do. When she got home, her parents were relieved and happy, but also extremely upset with the shenanigans she had just pulled. Barb found out that her father had not slept all night. He was in the woods, whistling for her, trying to find his little girl; Barb never heard him. If only she would have, she would not have had to spend a frightening night in the woods alone.

Many children would have probably gotten punished for pulling the stunt that Barb did. However, for Barb, her parents’ disappointment was punishment enough; there was nothing else her parents could have done to make her feel worse than she already did. Barb had learned her lesson. Never again would she venture off into the night to escape an undesirable situation.

91

The White Shirt Philosophy

Neysa Klepfer, Western Home Communities Senior
Hannah Kimm, UNI Human Relations Senior 9B10

Everyone has made a seemingly small mistake, or had an embarrassing moment that in some way impacted the rest of their life. For me, it was learning to write the letter “l” in cursive in third grade. My teacher began the lesson by telling

us that this letter was easy to write compared to the letters we had learned previously. Well, for some reason it was not easy for me. I became upset and cried. I learned all the other letters with ease, but the “easiest” one was difficult for me! This was the first time I learned that everybody learns differently, and that’s okay. Neysa Klepfer turned one of those moments of embarrassment into a new way of thinking.

A new marriage faces many seemingly small obstacles, along with a few bigger ones. Two newly married people are learning to coexist and become a family. Different traditions and ways of accomplishing tasks are all thrown together and figured out as they come up.

Early on in her marriage, Neysa and her husband attended a wedding. Her husband wore a white button-up dress shirt to the event. While there, someone made a comment about his shirt not being ironed correctly. This embarrassed and ashamed Neysa. However, she turned that into something positive.

That night Neysa went home and ironed her husband’s shirt. She continued on to iron all of his white button-up shirts that night until she had figured out how to do it correctly. Neysa would continue to iron the white button-up shirts first every time she did laundry. They were still the most difficult to iron, but that is why she did them first.

“You’ve done the hard stuff. Everything else doesn’t seem like a chore.” Neysa says. She continues to use this philosophy throughout her life. Whether it be preparing the most difficult item on the menu for a meal first, or tackling the biggest mess first when cleaning the house, Neysa insists that when you do the hard thing first everything else is easy.

While I have bigger problems than writing cursive ls these days, Neysa’s philosophy has given me new insight into school work. I tend to procrastinate and become overwhelmed with big tasks for school. Now I think back to Neysa’s

advice and try to do the most difficult things first so everything else seems easy. If only I had known Neysa earlier!

*I draw a deep breath of gratitude
when I think of you.*

92

People

*Don Walton, Western Home Communities Senior
Kevin Klobassa, UNI Human Relations Senior 9c11*

Most are not born as people persons, they typically become that way due to life experiences. Don Walton became a people person because of his family upbringing.

Don was very fortunate to grow up in a home where his family had strong values. His parents taught him to respect and get to know others. Often times, we misunderstand other people because they are different from us. But Don believes that the key to truly being able to understand people who are different from you, is to first understand yourself, your values, and what you believe in. Every person in this world is born with a natural innocence and has good in them.

Don strives to see the good in each individual and this is evident throughout his experiences in life. He had many different jobs over the course of his life, but each and every one of them has included building relationships with others. Don has worked as a salesman, an educator, a senior human resources administrator that bargained for labor agreements, and much more.

Through my discussions with Don, it is evident that he has a true passion for getting to know people. But just because one believes everyone has good in them

doesn't mean they've always had pleasant experiences with every single person they met.

In one particular job experience, Don struggled to agree with other people he was working with. At the time, his fellow co-workers' values differed and Don believed it wasn't in the best interest of the job. I asked Don if that negative experience changed the way he thought about all people being good and he replied, "No, they weren't necessarily bad people, their life experiences and values just differed from mine." Although it was a difficult experience, Don does not blame anyone for anything. Through all of his experiences, good and bad, he still believes that every person has good in them.

Don's ability to see the good in every individual that he encounters can be directly applied to my career. As a future educator I will have a wonderful opportunity to positively impact students' lives. With that being said, it is important that I always carry Don's message with me.

Each of my students will have good in them and have the ability to learn at a high level. Some will be much different than others as they will come from different households, live for different values, and share a variety of opinions. School will be an environment where they can express those differences. Although I may have alternative beliefs and values, it is important to remember that being different doesn't make an individual wrong or bad.

As a teacher, I want to create a place where students won't be afraid of being different. It is vital that I never give up on any of my students because I know that a student struggling with personal problems still has the good in them to do great things. Being a people person takes continual effort and a lot of personal reflection, and like Don, I'd like to be able to embrace every person I meet in the future.

*You are a beautiful and joy-filled
experience of life.*

93

Life on the Farm

*Cheryl Timion, Western Home Communities Senior
Ashley May, UNI Human Relations Senior 9C13*

As a girl who has grown up in a big city, I was interested in what farm life has always been like. I have spent my whole life living in either Des Moines, Iowa or a suburb. I have never had a chance to go to a farm or visit one before. I was able to hear about Cheryl's experience on the farm.

She did not live on a farm her whole life. She and her family lived on a farm for about three years. She was at the farm for her junior high years. She disliked being so far away from everything during this time as she was in some extracurricular activities, like basketball. This is when Cheryl had more work to do than when she lived other places as a farm demands a lot of work every day. There were some cool experiences from the farm like seeing pigs and cows being born as well as some not fun experiences like the hens and the family's pig Agatha.

She had to help with the animals. Her least favorite chore is was getting the eggs from the hens. A lot of them were not very nice and would peck at you while you try to get the eggs. At first she threw corn cobs at them. Her dad was not happy about that. Sometimes her brother would come with her to get the eggs from the hens. She told him that he was doing such a great job and being really encouraging. This was to get him to think he was doing a really good job so that she would not have to do the job in the future.

Another one of the animals she had was the pig. The pig the family had was named was Agatha. She had baby piglets and sat on them. This squished some of the baby pigs. The family decided to sell the pig. They put powder on the pig to make it look more sellable, although it did look like a nice pig. Her father put the pig into the back of the truck. This was hard to do as it was such a big animal. There were side slats so the pig could not get out of the truck bed so that they could drive the pig to sell her. Her father was worried about the hog jumping out of the truck. He had Cheryl ride in the back with the pig to make sure the pig was okay.

Of course this was dangerous as it was a huge animal. Her father gave her a wrench and told her to hit the truck window if anything would happen and he needed to pull over the truck. Her mother rode in another car right behind her. Her mother was worried. Through the ride the pig moved around so that Cheryl was in corner of the truck. This made it where Cheryl could not get to the window and tap on if there was a problem. She thought that if necessary she could throw the wrench at the window to get the attention of her dad. Luckily there was no problem but this was a really scary moment. When she could finally get out of the car her legs were quite shaky.

Farm life is something I myself have never experienced. It was quite interesting to learn about what it is like to live on a farm and the work involved with it. I learned about some of the neat experiences a person can see while living on the farm. I can now use my imagination to put myself in those situations Cheryl described to me. I now have a better idea of what farm life is like and the work associated with it.

94

A Defining Moment

Maribelle Betterton, Western Home Communities Senior
Sarah McCoy, UNI Human Relations Senior 9C14

Mrs. B and I have been meeting the past ten weeks. As we worked our way through the various chapter topics, a common thread was stitching each week's topic with what we previously discussed. This thread was the thread of relationships and memories.

We both like to talk, so our conversations were animated, insightful, and full of meaningful discussion. I discovered Mrs. B loves words, and her passion is reading and writing. She shared with me her report cards, her grandchild's scrapbooks, and some pieces of her writing. We were building a relationship with each other using words and memories.

Her seven odd decades of living coupled with my two decades served for the basis for our conversations. We were able to share stories with one another and how we relate to friends, our significant others, our families, our students, and our peers. There is one narrative that connects us more than the others, and that is where Mrs. B's story ends and mine begins.

Mrs. B has a daughter who moved away to Florida for college. In the words of Mrs. B, "she pretty much cut the umbilical cord and handed it to me," as she flew the nest to begin her new adventure. There were many ups and downs that came with trying to figure out how this new distance relationship would work. The thought of being hundreds of miles away from her daughter was daunting; but with Mrs. B's strong faith in God, she was able to work through this challenging time and make the times apart just as enjoyable as when they were together. They would send packages, journals, and letters back and forth. Now with technology the things we can do to stay connected are incredible. This was a time in Mrs. B's life when she was able to grow and learn. It is also a part of her story that I hope to take with me as I prepare for a journey of my own.

I am about to leave my beloved Iowa, the place I was born and raised, and head to Ohio to student teach and hopefully begin my life there. This will be a new adventure for me and my family, and I am quite excited. I know that there will be ups and downs as I leave some of my family who have helped me become the person I am today. I also plan to use some of Mrs. B's advice and send letters and packages to my friends and family to bridge the gap between Iowa and Ohio. I've learned from Mrs. B that not everything is easy, but with a strong faith and good effort, it all works out.

This step has been a defining moment in each of our respective lives. It's where one story ends and another begins. Defining moments are all around us, we just need to know how to make the best of them and be willing to go where life takes us. Life is fragile and building relationships is a crucial part to leading a successful life. With that, I am glad I was able to build a relationship with Mrs. B. She has helped to prepare me and has made me even more excited about what lies ahead as I begin a story of my own.

95

A Soul Afraid of Dying Never Lives

Richard Betterton, Western Home Communities Senior
Danielle Montgomery, UNI Human Relations Senior 9C15

A man of many talents, Richard Betterton, is exactly how I would introduce him to anyone that has never met him before. Over the numerous visits we have had together, this was a very interesting man I was fortunate enough to get to know. He has helped open my eyes to many new things and made me look farther

beyond the picture right in front of me. I can only thank him for sharing his personal stories that made him who he is today.

Richard grew up in the small town of Knoxville, Iowa. He came from a family of brothers that helped out on their grandparent's farm outside of town until the end of junior high. He played a variety of sports in high school and graduated with a class of 132 students. Richard had considered himself the "black sheep" of the family because he began his own journey in life and never looked back.

After he graduated high school, he attended what is now called The University of Northern Iowa. Here, he met the love of his life, Maribelle, and obtained his business degree. Around the time of his junior year, Richard wasn't quite sure what he planned on doing after college. The Vietnam War was happening and he knew he had a high possibility of being drafted so he looked into flying.

After he got his degree, Richard joined the Air Force and attended Officer Training School (OTS) and was commissioned a 2nd Lt. This journey led him to living in Texas with Maribelle. Richard went through pilot training and eventually became an instructor pilot. He completed many missions and taught students during his time as an Instructor Pilot. Richard and his wife got married in Texas and made the base their home. After five years passed, it was time to see where he and his wife planned on going to next. It was Maribelle's turn to decide and she wanted to go back to Cedar Falls to teach.

Maribelle had obtained a teaching degree from UNI prior to their move and got a teaching job at the Price Lab School when they returned to Iowa. Richard started to work at John Deere and was a part time student graduating in 1979 with a political science degree. Richard and Maribelle started a family in Cedar Falls and raised one daughter together.

While working at John Deere, Richard was offered the chance to go back to UNI and get his accounting degree. He turned it down and made a big decision. He decided to go to Drake University to get his law degree. Richard spent many nights away from his family and took on the challenge. He was able to get his law degree and became an attorney. While he was an attorney, he also became an adjunct political science professor at Upper Iowa University. He worked as an attorney. Richard spends his free time doing the activities that he enjoys, especially golf.

Richard never found anything that he was truly passionate about throughout the years. He said he didn't want to stick with just one thing. When he was just getting settled down, he would want to try something new. This is what I found very interesting about Richard. He has so much knowledge about various things since he never had one passion that he wanted to stick with. I think this was the major difference between us.

He has taught me that there are many adventures outside of your comfort zone. I am one to shy away from new possibilities and getting to learn about Richard's experiences has shown me that there is a world waiting out there for me to explore after my time at The University of Northern Iowa. This is just one chapter in my life and it's time to start the next chapter in my book.

*You are a whisper of love in my life,
soft and quiet rustling in my soul.*

96

Come Fly with Me

*Brock Knoll, Western Home Communities Senior
Andrew Eige, UNI Human Relation Senior 9D15*

If you asked Joy and Brock how their second date went, they probably would have told you their heads were in the clouds . . . literally . . . well, almost. Brock was working as a teacher's assistant at Slinker Elementary in Des Moines when the love of his life walked through the door. Joy was a UNI student there completing her student teaching assignment. They were both from the Cedar Falls area, so they exchanged numbers in case they were ever coming back this way at the same time. Brock's landlord convinced him to use the number to ask the gorgeous girl he had been talking about out on a date.

Their first date was to a Drake basketball game. Brock didn't really care for sports, but he sure liked the girl that worked down the hall, so it didn't really matter. As a second job, he was working at the airport taxiing planes, and since he had his pilot's license this allowed him to make their second date much more memorable. Brock took his future wife on a nighttime flight around the Des Moines area. The rest, as they say, is history.

Their marriage, like most, had its ups and downs, but they were partners and supported each other through it all. When Brock felt antsy and wanted to take night classes at UNI, she told him to do it. He ended up getting his masters. When Joy was done with substitute teaching, Brock suggested she do something she loved and told her, "go garden!" . . . and so she did. . . along with being a board member at the Black Hawk Humane Society and co-chair for the Black Hawk-Bremer League of Women Voters.

Over their 42 years together Brock says he was constantly finding new ways in which he found Joy beautiful. Even as her life drew to a close, the beauty of her spirit and mind shone through. He did his best to share the beautiful things their home near Hartman Reserve allowed them to enjoy, like a newborn fawn waiting for its mother to return to feed it.

Their time together on this earth was cut short in March of 2015, but a day does not pass that Joy isn't in his thoughts. When making arrangements for her to be laid to rest Brock chose a casket made by monks of the New Melleray Abbey in Dubuque. It was simple yet elegant.

As if by fate, Brock's friend cancelled his plans to go to the abbey last November, and Brock was able to take make the trip in his place. While there, Brock wandered across the road to where the caskets are made and learned just how special they are. They are referred to as "cradles" by their makers because "we are all children of God". Each is blessed and recorded in a memorial book before they are delivered. . . and a tree is planted in the abbey's sustainable forest to honor the life of the person for which the cradle is crafted . . . a fitting tribute for a couple of lovebirds that shared such a fondness for nature that they honeymooned in a cabin at Backbone State Park.

Whether you believe in soulmates or not, I bet you would after hearing and seeing Brock talk about his Joy. . . a person that no matter where you are with them, you are always home. . . someone you cannot imagine living without. May we all be lucky enough to find our own Joy, and share with them what Brock describes as "the richest friendship you could ever imagine."

97

Giving Back

Richard Congdon, Western Home Communities Senior
Britni Neuendorf, UNI Human Relations Senior 9D16

I knew from the first day that I met Rich and Rita, I would enjoy getting to spend time with them weekly. I never realized how much I would learn from these

two wonderful people in the short time that we have spent together. From the first day that I met them, I noticed the obvious chemistry that they shared when they were together.

Rich and Rita's story all started their sophomore year in high school and still continues today. I admired their love for each other and the way that they seemed to finish each other's sentences. They explained to me that even though they have been together a long time, they let each other explore their own interests and support each other through it all. These two have showed me that it is possible to get through hard times and lean on each other when necessary. Coming from a child of divorce, Rich and Rita have acted as role models to me and painted a picture of what true love looks like.

While getting to know Rich and Rita, they shared many stories about their life together. One story that they shared with me was a story that took place during the recent floods in Cedar Falls. Rich and Rita were volunteering with the Lion's Club that they belong to. They were giving out care packages to flood victims in town. They volunteered their time multiple days and hours during the week, and helped out many different families in need. Giving back and volunteering their time is something that is very important to this couple and I really admire that about them.

During one of our meetings Rich stated, "You don't have to give money, you can just give your time." This made me realize that everyone can help to give back in some way and how important it is to do so. Rich and Rita have so much fun giving back to their community together and being able to meet new people while doing so. Since they have both retired, they have not slowed down, maybe even gotten busier!

I would just like to thank Rich and Rita for the privilege of getting to know them. I feel very fortunate for the time we got to spend together and I hope to stay in contact with the both of them.

*Thank you for
entrusting me with your legacy.*

98

Teaching is My Passion

*Rita Congdon, Western Home Communities Senior
Kelsey Pettijohn, UNI Human Relations Senior 9D17*

My friend, Rita, has always loved and has had a passion for teaching. She has loved nothing more than to see students exceed in what she knows they can do and what they then learn they can accomplish on their own. Rita works hard to make sure that teaching is always a part of her life.

Rita started teaching right away. Eventually, she found a job that she thought she would want to be considered for. She tried to contact the principal of that school for months and was disappointed when she didn't hear anything back. She soon contacted the administration of the school and asked to be considered for the teaching position in that school.

She was hired immediately. The first day she taught, the principal made it very clear that she did not want Rita there. Every little thing that Rita did, the principal would second guess and would give Rita a hard time about it. Whether it was having a student go to another classroom for something or something that Rita had decided to do in the classroom that she knew would benefit her students, the

principal always gave her a hard time about it and asked her a lot of questions as to why she thought that decision was right.

After a while, Rita had had enough with that principal. “That principal had made my life miserable,” said Rita. At the end of the first part of the school year, Rita went to a different school.

When Rita got hired at a different school, she was finally happy. She got the position at the school she wanted. The principal trusted her with all of Rita's decisions. The other teachers encouraged her and the students loved her. This school and the community at the school allowed Rita her freedom that she should have had when she was at the other school. This school and the principal made her want to keep teaching.

Rita continues to teach at the Little Red School House all the time. She's called “The Schoolhouse Lady,” by many in the community. She loves to teach history and says, “If you haven't had a good teacher, then that's probably the reason you don't like the subject.” She even creates lessons for the Historical Society and has a lot of fun doing it.

She also goes into a third grade classroom on Mondays, reads to the students, and teaches a lesson to them. She doesn't complain about the hard work she puts into all of the lessons that she creates. She doesn't complain about going to everything that she has committed to. She tells me all the time that she's having a ball. She loves it and her passion continues to grow with each and everything that she does.

To this day, Rita tells me, “I love teaching and I think I will continue to do it for as long as I can. Every year I tell myself that I'm not going to teach another summer or anything at a school, but look at me. I'm still teaching because I think I will miss it too much if I don't do it. Something keeps drawing me to say ‘Yes’, I will teach another lesson to more kids.”

I am envious of her devotion to teaching. I have no idea how she has taught students for as long as she has, but it is amazing to me. When I listen to her stories about teaching, it makes me think that someday in the future I will have a lot of stories like she has. Her passion for teaching has really come out to me and has made me even more excited to become a teacher that can someday tell stories like her.

You have helped me push out the stubborn boundaries of doubts and dreads.

99

The Majestic Macaw

Pat Taylor, Western Home Communities Senior
Joshua Rouse, UNI Human Relations Senior 9D18

Pat Taylor had been afraid of birds for as long as she could remember. Ever since she was a child, she had an inexplicable fear of the winged aviates. Birds certainly seemed to have it out for her as well. From growing up in the Chicago suburb Morton Grove, where a certain malicious chicken would chase her whenever she passed its yard on her way to school, to recent times where she notices large black birds looming atop the rows of garages at Windmere apartments when she goes to her car. But Pat's fears would be eased after a close encounter with a feathered friend.

One fateful Wednesday, Windcove apartments had a special guest visit them. It was a Macaw from South America named Barrett who was owned by a daughter of one of the residents of Windcove. The bird was kept on a cord tied to

the woman's wrist, to keep it from flying too far away, but even from her seat, Pat could see the majestic colors of the bird. It was a brilliant mix of gold and blue on its chest and back respectively. But what was the most impressive was that the colors didn't overlap. The blue met the gold and both collided evenly; one color began immediately where the other began.

Barrett spoke clearly with a sharp high voice, saying hello and other greetings. He would speak with surprising directness and accuracy, looking at a chair and saying "chair", or seeing children running by the house and saying "children" the owner explained. In one instance the owner dropped something on her toe and he said, "Ouch." Barrett's home life was very comfortable, with a big cage to soar in during the day, and a smaller cage at night to encourage sleeping. He was kept in these cages mainly due to the fact that a macaw's beak was designed to crack the hardest nuts and if he was free to roam the house, Berret would eventually peck through the walls of the home.

Berret was only around a year old, but macaws can live for 80 plus years, often living out their owners and ending up in an animal shelter. Barrett's current owner has him listed in her will to go to her own daughter to avoid sending him to one of these shelters.

While the owner was continuing to tell of the macaw, Pat noticed that the colorful bird was looking at her. She met his gaze and Pat moved her head slightly, and Barrett followed the movement turning his head to match her own. Pat continued this game for a little while longer, amazed at the macaw's tracking ability.

Afterwards, with her wonder overcoming her fear she went up for a chance to pet the macaw. She gently put her finger under Barrett's 'armpit', which is a Macaw's favorite spot, and felt the soft, warm feathers there. While Pat is still

admittedly afraid of birds, the visit with Barrett was a wonderful experience that she won't forget anytime soon.

*Make gratitude
a breakthrough virtue in your life.*

100

Around The World She Went

*Connie Hansen, Western Home Communities Senior
Emily Trautmann, UNI Human Relations Senior 9D19*

Some people spend their whole life searching for their passion and life calling, but for Connie it was evident from the time she was young. Connie knew exactly what she wanted to do with her life before she even lived it. She wanted to be a nurse, and not only that, but she wanted to be a medical missionary. She had a heart for the sick and needy and carried that out throughout her whole life.

By the time Connie was a sophomore in high school she was already working at Sartori Hospital. During these first few years she worked in the kitchen. Connie was determined to make enough money to send herself to college to receive a nursing degree. She knew that it would take a lot of hard work but she was up for the task. After graduating from high school she continued her education at UNI and then Allen to get her nursing degree.

Connie had her heart set on medical missions until something, or in better terms, someone came into her life. Connie started dating a young man and soon fell in love with him. Before she knew it, they were engaged and planning on getting married as soon as she graduated. Although Connie felt immensely blessed

to find such a caring and loving man, she knew that she would have to put her dreams of being a medical missionary on the back burner.

Instead of heading overseas after graduating college, Connie started working as a nurse in the Cedar Falls area. She married and raised three children with her husband on their family farm. It wasn't until all of her children were grown and through college that she revisited her dream of medical missions. She had been a dedicated member of Nazareth Lutheran Church for many years and when an opportunity arose for her to go on a medical mission's trip to Jamaica through the church, she jumped at the opportunity.

Connie's first mission trip was in 1991 and she continued to go every year for the next twenty years. These twenty years of her life were dedicated to providing medical care to those who were left without any. She traveled to Jamaica a total of ten times and later went on to serve in Peru and Ecuador. While on these missions trips, she distributed medicine, provided medical check-up's, and assisted doctors with various tasks. These trips were each two weeks, yet Connie felt like they were never long enough.

For twenty years Connie was motivated to provide care for those in Jamaica, Peru, and Ecuador and used her knowledge and strength to do so. Although she wasn't able to give them her money, she was able to give them her time and talents and she again and again so willingly did so. Connie is selfless, kind, and adventurous. She wanted to see parts of the world that are unseen by many. She wanted to go beyond being a tourist and fully immerse herself into the culture. She wanted to be with the people, relate with them, and love them.

These twenty years of Connie's life prove just how wonderful, caring, and hardworking she is. The number of lives Connie has touched is innumerable. Her selflessness and generosity have been such a light and encouragement to those around her. This woman, who has lived in the small town of Cedar Falls her whole

life, yet still managed to travel the globe in service of others, has provided us with an incredible example of a selfless and beautiful life.

101

The World of Tomorrow

Joan Diamond, Western Home Communities Senior
Josie Wagner, UNI Human Relations Senior 9D20

It was 1939, a brand new girl scout, and her family was off on a two week vacation on The Burlington Route! Joan's mother, father, and twin sister traveled on this two week adventure with her. Joan's father worked for the railroad and was able to secure "passes" for her family to use. The train passes were white and shaped like a catalog card. When her family would go on trips they would always take the train out of Galesburg, Illinois.

As a ten year old child on this trip, Joan would get to see the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, and would travel as far as Quebec City and see the ocean for the very first time! The first stop of this trip was in New York, at the New York World's Fair. Joan's father made it a point to take her to the Girl Scout exhibit that was located in one of the buildings at the fair. It was thanks to her father that she was able to have opportunities like this.

After going to the exhibit, Joan and her family of course enjoyed the rides in the Midway. However, another exciting part of the fair included going to the Ford Motor Company car show. The New York World's Fair motto in 1939 was "The World of Tomorrow." This was such a neat experience to see the vehicles in the show because all of the girls showing the cars matched their outfits with the

vehicles! They all had pale blue and chocolate brown colored outfits. If the car was a sports car the outfit was sporty, or if the car was a luxury vehicle the girls were dressed to the nines. It was also at this show that Joan listened to people predict the future of transportation.

At the Ford Motor Company car show they had a ride that Joan and her family rode on. They sat in a cart and rode around to all of the different miniature displays. They saw a television, its screen all black and snowy. They also saw Ford's prediction on transportation. It was predicted that interstates would be invented in the future. Throughout Joan's life she watched this prediction become a reality.

After spending a few days in New York, Joan and her family set off to go on the rest of their vacation. It was at a young age that Joan gained her love for traveling and she would continue this love for travel throughout the rest of her life. The world of tomorrow is now the world of yesterday.

*Thank you for being
the stillness and deep quiet
I needed to tell my way back into life.*

102

The Patchwork of Success

Joyce Hufferd, Western Home Communities Senior

Megan Kelly, UNI Human Relations Senior 9D21

When we think of success, we think of million dollar industries and people who make an abundant amount of money. However, success is measured by far more than just money and fame; success is measured by making a life for yourself filled with joy and fulfillment. Joyce began creating a life of success for herself when she began her career as a seamstress.

It all started when she was a little girl. Her parents lived on a farm and her mother taught her how to sew. It was a skill that seemed so practical at the time, but little did she know it would have an impact on her life.

Fast forward years down the road, she continued to have passion for sewing and creating masterpieces out of scrap fabrics and laces. While her beloved husband was away, she decided it would be spectacular if she had a business of her own to show off her talent. During the first few years, she started creating wedding dresses and bridesmaids dresses. Hours and hours, stitch after stitch, she would work to create flawless masterpieces for those who were in dire need of her assistance. It brought her great pleasure and delight to see all of her long, strenuous hours be admired in a final piece.

She changed the business up a few years later to create christening gowns for families. The inspiration behind this was built upon a christening gown found in her great uncle's attic. The gown was stuffed in a box yet remained barely touched. She admired all of the lace and stitch work that went into the gown and

decided that she too, would like to create gowns that would be cherished even more. Joyce believed that the best way to get lace for a christening gown was by using the lace from the mother's or grandmother's wedding dress. Using the lace from dresses made the christening gowns more sacred to the family.

She also liked receiving a picture of the child getting christened with the mother or grandmother to not only show the final product, but also the family tie between the owner of the dress and the person wearing the dress. She has touched the lives of many families through her work, and continues to do so today.

When I first walked into Joyce's house, she showed me the room where she sews. She has a wide variety of fabrics and different threads to bring pieces together to create new masterpieces. Listening to Joyce speak about her business, you can hear the excitement in her voice. Joyce made a name for herself through the many clients she helped over the years, whether it was a simple stitch to mend, a piece of cloth, or a masterpiece that was going to be remembered for a lifetime. Success was found by Joyce, not by the amount of money she had, but by the amount of people she could help and continue being creative by using her passion.

Joyce, I would like to thank you very much for all of the wisdom you have provided me with through our visits. I have enjoyed getting to know you and look forward to staying in touch. You truly have a heart of gold and are the living definition of a hard-worker. Please continue to follow your passion of traveling where your heart desires and above all, continue doing all of the things you love. Thank you again for everything.

*Think of gratitude as a pantry of blessings
that never goes bare.*

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Learning to Drive

Patty Hucka, Western Home Communities Senior
Meredith Carnahan, UNI Human Relations Senior 9D22

I sat in Patty's room on a chilly October day. The window was cracked to let in some fresh air, and we discussed how we couldn't believe it was already the middle of October! The presidential debates had been on TV the previous night, so we chatted about that for a while. I'm not sure what sparked her memory, but she smiled a little and decided to tell me the story of when her mother learned to drive.

Her father was an engineer, like my father. Our fathers were similar, conservative and quiet most of the time, but intelligent. Our fathers had difficulty helping us with our math homework because it was so simple to them. They didn't understand how we couldn't get the right answer on an algebra problem. She reported her father was a wonderful teacher to everyone who was outside of her family.

Her mother relied on her father to drive her different places, such as church. They went to different churches; her mother went to a Catholic church and her father went to the Methodist church across town. She remembers the beginning of World War II. Men were being drafted to fight, they feared her father would be one of them. He decided to prepare them for that possibility.

Patty's mother couldn't drive at the time. Her father could be drafted at any moment, so he decided it was time for her to learn! In case he would have to leave, she would need to drive to church or run errands. Patty and her brother piled into the back of their car. Her father took the passenger seat, and her mother slid into the driver's seat. Patty and her younger brother braced themselves for a bumpy

ride. It took nine or ten times before her mom finally got the hang of it. Her father swore a lot in the beginning, Patty had never heard him say such a string of words! The swearing subsided when her mother could drive smoothly.

Patty's father was never drafted, but her mother could now drive! Her story made us both reminisce about when we learned to drive, and when she taught her children to drive. Her father was more patient with her than he had been with her mother. I thought about my father teaching me to drive in my grandpa's old ford truck with Elmer Fudd mud flaps. He had been patient with me, just like Patty's father, even when I put the car in reverse instead of drive. We learned how to drive in different decades, but our stories are similar.

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Irritation is a Good Thing

Joann Ackman, Western Home Communities Senior
Alexandra Heise, UNI Human Relations Senior 9D23

From the country, Jo and her two sisters walk briskly to school. Jo is in the third grade. They walk through the front door and say hi to all of their friends. As Jo was sitting in class, her teacher called her name, "Joan!" Jo looked at the teacher puzzled. Uhm, ma'am, my name isn't pronounced like Joan. It sounds like Jo-Ann."

The teacher kept going with her lesson and proceeded to call her Joan. No matter how much Jo would argue about the way her name should be pronounced, her teacher insisted on calling her by the wrong name.

This really annoyed Jo. How hard is it to call someone by the correct name? With all this frustration, Jo marched all the way back home after school. She found her father and started to tell him what her annoyance was.

Jo and her father talked it out and her father decided to go to the courthouse. If the teacher was going to refuse to accept the fact that his daughter's name wasn't pronounced like Jo-Ann, he would just have to put an extra n at the end of her name to make it Joann, the way it should sound. And that is exactly what he did.

Once Jo's father got to the courthouse, he took Jo's birth certificate and changed her name. Out of curiosity, he also checked his other two daughters birth certificates to see if their name was spelled right. He tried getting his youngest daughter's birth certificate, but there wasn't one ever recorded.

Jo remembered that her younger sister was born during a really bad snow storm at her house in the country. The doctor never made it out to their house to document the birth. Because of this, Jo's father got his daughter a birth certificate. If Jo wouldn't have wanted her teacher to pronounce her name the way it was supposed to, her sister would've never received a birth certificate.

*Draw upon gratitude to affirm the stories
others are using to say their lives.*

An Epilogue

For Dorris Moore, Former Western Home Communities Senior

Madison Stahl, UNI Human Relations Senior 4E25

“Love can happen at the most unexpected of times.”

This was the first sentence of a short story I wrote for Dorris Moore, my elderly friend I was connected to through class. That quote retold the tale of how she and her husband Maurice first met and fell in love.

That quote means so much more to me now than it did when I first wrote the story that was to be featured in this collection. Dorris passed away this November, leaving behind a world of people who loved her so deeply. I felt very saddened by the loss, but I still smile back on our memories from the short time that we knew each other.

By spending time with Dorris Moore, I learned more about myself, more about my faith, and more about what it means to be a good person. At our weekly get-togethers, we talked a lot about her family and her life growing up, but we also shared a lot of deep talks about faith and religion. I will never forget the special time that we sang the song “Amazing Grace” together, and the joy and youth that filled her voice as she sang along to the song’s piano recording. Dorris had love for her family, but also had an incredible love for The Lord that made me love life more altogether.

So now when I say, “Love can happen at the most unexpected of times”, I think of Dorris, and the love that she had for all those around her. I mourn at the loss of a beautiful soul, but I still feel her loving presence every time that clock strikes 3 o’clock on Sunday. I am so thankful to have gotten to know my dear friend Dorris. I would not have traded our time together for anything.