



Memoirs: Piecing Together the Patterns of Our Lives

The Older Women's Legacy Circle

Summer 2003



Class Participants (left to right): Nancy Gilbert, Sue Wood, Marilyn Martin, Edna Keeney, Kay Arbuckle, Erma Dee Wilson, Delores Meyers, Marie Kamplain, Sara Parsons, & Mary York.

The Older Women's Legacy (OWL) Circle Memoir Workshop is a project of the Story Circle Network. This workshop was sponsored by the Avon-Washington Township Public Library & the Hendricks County Senior Services Center.

Lynn Mills, Coordinator
Avon-Washington Township
Public Library
498 North State Road 267
Avon, IN 46123
Phone: 317/272-4818
Email: Mills@avon.lib.in.us

Gradually, as we all join in storytelling, it becomes clear that each story is our story. We do not need to say much, only a few words to make the necessary connections. "I've been there, too," is a phrase we often hear, and we recognize it as a merging of one story with another. We share laughter, which sometimes helps to puncture our self-inflated selves. We share tears, which come when we are left without words. Both the laughter and the tears are graces, shared emotions, shared compassion. They remind us that ours is a common journey. More than that, they remind us that what seems to be my soul, your soul, her soul — are one soul.

One soul, one story. Our story.

— Susan Wittig Albert
Creator, Story Circle Network

Foreword

As amateur genealogists, imagine our delight when we located an old, typewritten book my great grandfather had written titled, *The Story of My Life*.

Unfortunately, this book held no facts, only exploits. It did not tell us anything factual about him or his family. Where did he live? Who were his parents? Who was his wife and how did they meet? Where did he go to school?

We know from family tradition that he left his young family and went away to medical school. He does not tell us when or where.

The memoirs were dictated to his daughter late in his life. They tell of hunting, birds stealing pies from open windows, long horse rides, childhood exploits. But nothing about him and who he was.

My memoir is being written for my family to know their grandmother, aunt, or cousin. I want it to include factual data as well as feelings.

— Kay Arbuckle

A Story about Who I Am

I am a reader. My earliest memories involve books. There was a small library in El Portal near my elementary school that I visited whenever I could. The books had a printed slip pasted on the inside cover with the “Due Date” in columns. The librarian would stamp this slip with the date the book was to be returned. I don’t remember ever going there with my mother or a friend, it was a private place. One of the few books in our home was *The Book of Knowledge* and slim annual volumes. These were on the bottom shelf in the hall bookcase. I spent many hours reading there. My older brother began a collection of Zane Grey books. To this day, I have never read Zane Grey! The book *Daddy Long Legs* was a gift I treasured and *Mrs. Piggly Wiggly* was a favorite. How delighted I was to find one of these stories for my first grandchild.

As a young mother, an outing to the library was always a pleasant walk. Reading to the children was part of every day.

Reading is still a pleasure, losing myself in another story.

-- Kay Arbuckle

I am married to James David Gilbert. We married October 18, 1952. We just celebrated our 50th anniversary.

We met when I was 10 years old and he was 11. We were best friends at school. We dated about three and a half years before we were married. We have 3 daughters and we are a close family.

They have given us many beautiful grandchildren and great grandchildren. He is retired and plays in a band on Thursday nights at the Senior Citizens Center in Danville.

I was a pianist at my church over 25 years. I am still a homemaker.

-- Nancy Gilbert

I had gone for a late walk. As I was coming home, my neighbor was in her yard. I asked, “How are you?” and she wasn’t doing so well. So I stopped to talk a minute. She was upset and angry and she needed to talk. Finally we sat in the grass for an hour. I hardly said anything but she

needed someone to listen with understanding.

We hardly knew each other though we went to the same church. She had an unusual flower garden and after that night we talked mostly about her flowers and her cats. We were friendly neighbors until we moved three years later. This story is a lesson in the importance of being a listener.

-- Marie Kamplain

As a mother, I have helped raise two children, a boy and a girl. Our son married and had four children. These grandchildren are scattered over the U.S. and I miss being close to them. I also have three great grandchildren. My son is now deceased. My daughter lives close. She has no children but we have become best friends. Being a mother has been one of the rewarding experiences of my life. I was employed for several years and now that I am retired, I wonder how I really had time to be employed!

-- Edna Keeney

I love doing genealogy and researching my family history, finding out who they married and where they lived and going there, who their children were and where they all traveled, their stories. Finding their pictures is an added pleasure and seeing their clothing and hairstyles. Where they worked and their hardships. Why did they move to different states? I love going to the cemeteries and finding their graves; this is almost like finally meeting them and walking where they walked. I am putting together a memory book, along with census, birth, death, and marriage records and pictures and it is my favorite activity – a collection of many years.

-- Marilyn Martin

I am the second oldest of my family, the daughter of an alcoholic father. I was born in the mid-twenties. We lived in the country, about 7 miles from town, after living in town a couple years. I've not been very healthy and nearly died at 16. Most of my life I've worked – first as a waitress, (I only went through 10th grade), then a clerk, then on to being a cashier at numerous supermarkets. I was also a stay-at-home mother and homemaker. After my husband's death, I went to the Plainfield High School and applied for a job as cashier, and ended up working part-time in the school cafeteria for 13 years.

I love to work outdoors in the yard, with flowers, and planting a garden. Then, I love crocheting and various other crafts and I've taken numerous classes. I love animals and have usually had a dog, and now I also have two parakeets. I used to enjoy dancing a lot and playing a couple instruments, just by ear, for my own enjoyment. My sister and I used to harmonize and enjoyed performing at local clubs. I have two brothers still living, whom I love dearly, also their wives. I have three grandchildren from my youngest son, and my oldest son has one – so four in all.

By the way, my two sons are 18 years apart, minus one day. They have different fathers, since I married three times.

-- Delores Meyers

The youngest child – such an interesting position to be in – lots of love and attention, especially from my older sisters and their friends, also experiencing many adult thoughts and ways from being exposed to them. Much more, their classmates and friends who were the oldest in their families. With three older sisters it was like having four mothers to boss me. I was always so excited when they came

for a visit and I bragged about them to my friends – everything they did and their appearance was wonderful. Their interest and caring then carried over to my adult life and my family and my children were the recipients of their love and affection during all of the “growing up” years and into adulthood.

-- *Sara Parsons*

My mother used to make our clothes. I was in 4-H and a 4-H leader. I used to enter in sewing contests.

After the war was over, I sewed for neighbors. I had my own shop in Crawfordsville, Danville, and Columbus. Now I sew in Danville in my sewing room in my house. I do it now to help the people that come to the Senior Center. It gives me something to do in the afternoons. I enjoy sewing now.

I do not enjoy reading books. I do read magazines. I do my own housework. That keeps me busy.

-- *Erma Dee Wilson*

My mother was Marian Brown Covey. She was born in the same house that I was born in. She graduated from Avon High School and went to Central Normal College in Danville and got her teacher's license. She taught the third and sixth grades at Avon. One year she had four sets of twins in her class. She later taught at Stilesville. One day a boy brought a snake to school. The snake got loose and was crawling around the radiator in the room. Mother made the boy catch the snake and take it to his mother, who was a teacher there. Mother was an active church worker. She taught Sunday School, held various offices in the church and was a big worker in women's society.

She liked to read and travel. I believe she must have passed these interests on to me.

There are many things I could write about her. She sewed and cooked and if necessary helped with the farm chores. I remember helping her prepare chicken for the freezer.

-- *Sue Wood*

In September 1927, I became a New Winchester first grade student. My teacher was Miss Mary Joseph. Her younger brother was in the first grade with me. I loved Miss Mary. Her sister, Miss Naomi Joseph, was fifth and sixth grade teacher and another sister, Miss Mabel Joseph, was seventh and eighth grade teacher. My parents were friends of their parents. This was such a good time in my life.

I had one sister. She played the piano and violin. At the beginning of my third year, my dad bought a C-melody saxophone for me. It was so big and so heavy my mother covered a wooden box for me to rest it on while I learned to play. Our school band was the beginning of my love for music. At Christmas of that first year, I sat in with the band. There was a high school boy that carried my horn and helped me so much. His name was Ralph Jones. He was like a big brother to me. We had a county musical in Danville each spring, and I always got to sit in the band. School was a big part of my life.

-- *Mary York*

A Story from My Family

The smell of baking bread awakes me in my grandmother's home. Each and every day Inga Marie (Aronson) Young began her day early with this routine. I suppose it came from growing up on a farm and being married to a dairyman.

My paternal grandparents lived in Southern California so we only saw them occasionally. My grandmother was Swedish, tall and fair. As people said I resembled her, she became my ideal. I recently found a photo of her as a young mother and saw myself there.

She taught me how to set a lovely table and arrange the food in an attractive manner. It is the little things that make our lives so special.

-- Kay Arbuckle

I chose my mother as a special guest [at my table in the story starter activity]. I remember she talked many times about the hard times she had as she was growing up. She had an abusive father who was an alcoholic. She struggled with this most of her life. Her mother, too, had a hard life!

She married my father when she was just 15 years old. They had eight children and one was stillborn. She was a very good Christian, who taught us about God and good morals. We didn't have much growing up but we knew Mom and Dad loved us very much. She was a good mother!

All of my family have passed on but I have one brother left; we are very close to each other.

My mother would have turned 95 on June 8 if she was still living; she was born on June 8, 1908.

-- Nancy Gilbert

Uncle Gresham went to service in January 1943. He was my youngest uncle and the only relative to go to war. He was gone for 2½ years fighting in the battles from North Africa to Sicily then Normandy and on to the Battle of the Bulge in Germany. He never had a furlough home, nor time when his mother died. But he was never wounded.

He came home from Germany knowing that he would have to return. I remember the quiet peaceful attitude that he had. As a teenager, I would have been frantic. I know now that he didn't want to waste one precious minute with his family on the farm where he had lived.

His leave ended and he was on the East Coast when the war ended. He came back to the farm and spent the rest of his life there. His son has inherited the land as his grandson will some day.

He is my example of sacrifice, endurance, honor – the best that can be said of our service men.

-- Mary Kamplain

I remember my aunt Pearl Harlan. She was my mother's sister. She rode the interurban from Rinstown [?] to Indianapolis for her employment. I was a favorite niece! She seemed to delight in purchasing dolls and knick knacks for me. I still have things that she gave me. She also provided her cast-off clothing for my mother to make clothing for me. This was just previous to the Great Depression! Another memory was when she married a man who was a salesman. When he was selling automobile polish, he would clean and polish only one side of the car. They moved to California and were the first people that I knew to move into a retirement center. They lived in Leisure World. We visited them there and found it really great.

-- Edna Keeney

My mother was, to me but not according to my sister, a very good mother and I remember a lot of happy times. But I have so many questions that I still would like to ask her. While I was growing up, she was “my mother” not a person who had been a child – what did she like to play? She used to tell about one time while little she was reading a book and chewing gum; she took the gum and stuck her eye shut and they had a terrible time getting it all unstuck. What other silly things did she do? She would go on the train with her father, who was a conductor on the Pennsylvania Railroad, to see his mother in Franklin County, Indiana. It was not until years later that she found out that her brother got to go on some of those trips also. Why didn’t they know that? There were so many things that we never talked about in her growing years and when she was a young wife, but she did tell about cooking a chicken and never cleaning the insides out. I wonder if she had dreams that were never fulfilled.

-- Marilyn Martin

My mother was so dear to me, and because of my father’s drinking, she suffered and endured so much and never had anything. There were eight of us kids, and she lost an infant daughter (older than I); then my younger sister died when she was about four years old of dropsy. Then my younger brother died in a horrible car accident. She seldom complained. She came from a good family. Her dad was a preacher, and there were eight children in her family. She went through nurses’ training and then met my father who was a soldier. He cooked for General Pershing. They moved from North Dakota to northern Minnesota, where I grew up. She taught us girls how to crochet and sew and garden and cook.

-- Delores Meyers

I choose my mother [to invite to my imaginary dinner] because of her love and warmth. She was such an enjoyable person to be with. She had such a difficult life in so many ways, but did not let it make her a “down” person; she was usually an “up” person. Also she could answer so many of my genealogy questions because she was so family-oriented and knew all of the relationships on each branch of the family tree. It would be such fun to see her reaction to the technology – shopping malls – all of the progress that is commonplace to us now.

-- Sara Parsons

My story has to do with sewing. Mary Myers was a favorite customer when I was in Columbus. When my customers came for fittings, some would take time to visit. Mary always said I took the place of her grandmother. She and her husband owned two funeral homes in Columbus.

I did not make new clothing, only altered the Doncaster line of clothing. Mary is a dear friend. She always remembers my birthday with a bouquet of cut flowers. She remembered me last April with beautiful flowers for my 85th birthday.

-- Erma Dee Wilson

I was born October 26, 1937, to Lloyd and Marian Covey. I have one sister, Madge. I was born in a house on old U.S. 36 near Avon. Dr. Robert Wisheart delivered me. I was told I was one of the first babies for him to deliver. Dr. Robert Wisheart was the son of Dr. Oscar Wisheart who doctored in North Salem. I can remember going to see “Old Doc” in North Salem, being sick, and going over the hilly road to get there.

Up until I was in the fifth grade, we lived down the road from Grandma and Grandpa Brown, who operated a filling station and motel. Madge and I would go see Grandma and Grandpa every day. We had a big dog named Fritz.

-- Sue Woods

Cassander Reese Higgins Hunt – My grandmother Hunt had such an interesting background. Her father was Michael Higgins who came to Marion Township, Hendricks County, in central Indiana and took out a land grant. As his children became adults and married, he gave each one a farm. My grandmother was one of those children. She had two sisters, my Aunt Sis and my Aunt May. Her brothers were my Uncle Dave and my Uncle Charlie. I saw all these people often and loved them all. When I was five years old, my grandfather Hunt died and Grandma came to live with us. She taught me so much about gardening, farm crops, farm animals, and life in general.

-- Mary York

A Story from My Life Line

I was born in a little house on New York Street on the west side [of Indianapolis] on November 27, 1934. My parents were Walter and Marguerite Smith. They named me Nancy Pauline Smith. I was the sixth child down; they had eight children and one was stillborn. There were five boys and four girls.

We didn't have many material things in life. We didn't know what Christmas presents were or birthday presents. Sometimes we would get apples and oranges from my father's work for Christmas. Sometimes we very young children would go out and pick beans and tomatoes for a farmer to earn a quarter a day.

We had to make our own entertainment; we played baseball or marbles or kick the can. Sometimes my dad would walk to work with cardboard in his shoes.

My mother would always take us to church. Many times we would walk to church as we didn't have any transportation. She was a very godly person who had a lot of faith.

Mother had three sons who went into service at the same time, two in the Army and one in the Air Force.

I was the only child out of the eight who had the opportunity to graduate from high school. My parents were very proud. I married four months later and that's another story!

-- Nancy Gilbert

My "special boy" is named Richard James John. He is our youngest grandson. He was born on December 1, 1990. He was about 7 weeks early and weighed around 3 pounds, 6 ounces. He was put in the neonatal unit because he was very frail and weak. Oxygen was needed as his breathing was shallow. When they tried to feed him, the formula would not stay down. They ran many tests and found he had an obstruction in his digestive tract. After many tubes in him, and one feeding tube in his stomach, gangrene set in and his weight dropped down to 1 pound, 8 ounces. They decided to do surgery and had to heat the operating room because his temperature was very low. They removed his large colon and then he contracted a staph germ. He finally pulled through [after being] hospitalized for 54 days. He had to have a special diet his first year. His first piece of cake was on his first birthday. He stuck his fingers in it and tasted it, then he stuck his whole face in it.

I had the privilege of watching him most of his first 12 years. I took him to preschool, sent him

to kindergarten, and went to a lot of his field trips.

He now seems to be healthy. He has played baseball and he will be playing junior football this summer. He has been a joy to be with while he was growing up. He soon will be a teenager.

-- Nancy Gilbert

I was two and a half when my brother was born. How can I remember anything from that time? It was TRAUMA. I was taken from my home and my mother. Two uncles put me in the backseat of a car. Then they went to sleep "sawing logs" (a term for snoring). It got dark and I was alone and scared.

Finally someone said we could go into the house. There were three of my aunts around a baby and one said, "Marie, what do you think of your baby brother?" I walked up to him and slapped him. Everyone gasped and I knew that I had done something terrible.

Before many months had passed, I was telling people proudly, "He's my brother!"

-- Marie Kamplain

September 6, 1926 – my birthday! First day of school! Face scrubbed, hair brushed, shoes polished and a new blue and white checked gingham dress. My mother took me to the big red brick school building in Lizton. There I met my teacher, Miss Biggs, and about 40 first and second graders. In those days, each teacher taught two grades. There were 20 in my class and seven of us stayed together for 12 years and graduated together.

On the second day, the "bus" arrived to pick up the children in the neighborhood. It was driven by one of the senior boys. This time I had my lunch in my shiny new lunch box. We carried our lunch each day and had to remember to bring the container home each evening.

My grandmother Harlan always gave me a new blue and white checked gingham dress for my birthday!

-- Edna Keeney

My dad, Cornelius Guy Baxter, was born in West Baden, Indiana, and lived his early years in and around French Lick, Indiana. His mother, Delta, died at age 19, when Cornelius was only 18 months old, and he was raised by his paternal grandfather, William, and grandmother, Sarah, and various aunts and uncles. I didn't get to know Delta or Sarah Elizabeth, his grandmother, but I did know Granddad Will Baxter and most of the aunts and uncles. They were all loved by my father and especially by my mother for their kindness to him as a child and to her, his wife. I remember very little about Granddad Will, but, as a small child, I remembered going up the big hill in French Lick to visit. You had to drive to the top and turn around and drive back down to his house, always parking with your tires angled in towards the curb so you wouldn't go down the hill. He would sit on the porch a lot and he had a long beard; when he tried to kiss my sister, Patty, and me, it scratched our faces. After we moved to Houston, Texas, about ages 3 and 4, we both remembered this long beard, which grew with our imaginations over the years, whenever Granddad Will was mentioned. Our dad told us that he didn't have a long beard, just a bushy mustache, but we were not convinced. One day a friend took a picture of Will sitting on his porch in the early 1940s and we could see – no long beard. It was just a product of two children's vivid imaginations.

Patty and I also remembered going across the street from Granddad's to Aunt Mabel's and Uncle Vol's house to play in a cave out back. Years later we found out that these same vivid imaginations had turned a rock outcropping on the side of a hill into a "mysterious secret cave." What is amazing is that Patty and I had the same erroneous memories – it must have been the power of suggestion. Believe me, these grew right along with us over the years.

-- Marilyn Martin

My twelve-year-old granddaughter was taking a semester of sewing during her seventh year in school and I was very interested in what projects she was working on and tried to encourage her with suggestions, materials, equipment, and offers of help, thinking it might promote a lifelong interest. One doesn't have to be an expert or even good, to enjoy the many aspects of sewing and creating.

I had taken my portable machine to her house so she could finish a project, when she presented me with the stuffed letters, "I [heart] U" that she had done by herself. I was so touched and pleased!! I had tried to plant a seed of something worthwhile in this very modern young girl, and I felt I succeeded when she showed her appreciation in a perfect way. The pillow letters are a keepsake and so is Kelsey.

-- Sara Parsons

My grandmother told me that her family lived in a log cabin in Illinois. Four boys, two girls and father and mother. Imagine that many people sleeping on straw pads in one room.

She said the big fireplace heated the room and all the cooking and baking was done there, also.

She told me one of her brothers did something that displeased his father. He was corrected by the father. The boy then grabbed a leather pouch of silver coins and threw them in the fireplace. Grandmother did not say what happened to the boy next. The father took the lump of silver and had spoons made. My sister and I both have a teaspoon from that silver.

My grandmother was born in 1870 and died in 1969. She married Charles Conover in 1891. I suspect my grandfather gave her this watch. They lived on a farm. My grandfather was always helping her. They took products to a farm market in Crawfordsville. They took all kinds of dairy products and she baked salt-rising bread.

In the afternoon at a certain time, my grandfather would step outside and give a whistle and the black and white family dog would run to the pasture in the back part of the farm and round up the milk cows and drive them to the barn, so he could hand milk them. This dog saved my grandfather many steps.

This pair of grandparents was very loving. He was always trying to help, so as to make life easy for her.

-- Erma Dee Wilson

I would like to go back to my mother's family. One of Mother's cousins told me that ??? Haynes came to Indiana from Kentucky. He told his wife he would send for her as soon as he had a cabin built. When he did send for her, she took their four little boys in a buggy with one horse and started for Indiana. When she got to the [Ohio] river, the water was higher than she thought it would be. She looked for someone who could help her cross the river. She found no one. She felt she could not go back; her only choice was to try to cross by herself. So, the horse swam, the buggy floated and she and her children were across and safe.

One of those little boys became part of my mother's background, her great grandfather. He married ??? and they had a daughter Mary. She married John Bousman. John and Mary Bousman had a daughter Louie who married Obed Underwood. Obed and Louie Underwood had two daughters, Maude and Jessie. Jessie was my mother. She married Olson Hunt. They had two daughters, Marvel and Mary. I am Mary Hunt York.

Another of the Haynes boys was Elwood Haynes. He married and lived in Kokomo, Indiana. He was quite an inventor. He invented the first Indiana horseless carriage. It is in a museum in Kokomo.

-- Mary York

A Story about a Memorable Event

November 1963, the John F. Kennedy assassination. This was a time of changes in our life. First, we had just bought our first new home in San Jose, California, which was a move from Pinole about 75 miles away. My husband was starting a new job and I went to work for the first time in my married life. Our youngest son had just started kindergarten.

I don't remember any news even before this tragedy that seemed to shock the whole nation so. That is to say I was not **aware** of news.

I was driving to the bank for my employer when I heard the news on the radio. I pulled into the parking lot and just sat there and cried. We were riveted to the television coverage for days afterwards.

-- Kay Arbuckle

My grandmother remarried when I was 14 years old. I thought she was too old to remarry! The man she married had a farm in Tennessee, so that is where she moved to. My mother cried as she thought she would never get to visit her mother very often, but it so happened that we visited several weekends.

I remember many times waking up at her home, smelling the bacon and eggs and homemade biscuits. She had to get up early and start the woodstove. Her biscuits were really delicious, but Grandpa made the coffee and it was very strong. We had to go down to a stream to get the water; it was a very cool drinking water. Her mail box was about a mile [away] one way. Her cows would get out in the onion patch and you could taste the onion in the milk.

We really enjoyed those trips. While we were visiting her, sometimes we got to go to the Grand Ole' Opry and see a lot of the older stars. Grandma made many quilts. I still have one of the last ones she made.

Grandma lived [in Tennessee] several years after Grandpa died until she was in her 80s. She became ill and my mother had to bring her back here to take care of her until she passed away.

-- Nancy Gilbert

I was still a child when the big storm hit our county in southern Indiana. It was threshing day on my uncle's farm. There were workers scattered everywhere, some in the barn, some eating, some in the pasture. I was carrying water to the house when I saw the big, black, rolling cloud in the north. I made it to the house where the people were crying and praying. It was the first time I had seen adults so scared. We watched the roof being taken off the barn and rolled up like tin foil.

When it was over and the people were accounted for and the damage not as bad as thought, we were so thankful. Lightning hit a barn or two and made bright spots in the sky. Still my dad hadn't shown up because he was working several miles north. It was midnight before he came to my aunt's house. He had to walk because there were many trees on the roads. Because he was safe, we could sleep. There was a fear born in me that day that stayed with me fifteen years.

-- Marie Kamplain

Sunday morning, December 7, started as usual. My husband, Meredith, was home from work at Allison's. He worked the 11 to 8 shift so he was eating breakfast. We had the radio on and were shocked at the announcement. Our reaction was one of disbelief! What would happen? All anyone could do was to carry on, pray, and hope for a "quick" finish. We all know that the resolution was

not “quick.” Even though many employees at Allison’s were exempt, Meredith went for his physical exam. He did not pass. Then there were people who could not understand why a healthy-looking man was not in the service. He continued working seven days each week ten hours each day. It was hard but we survived.

-- *Edna Keeney*

I don’t remember the year, around the mid-‘40s, I think, during the war. My dad owned a laundry and dry cleaners in Houston, Texas, and had branches in many small towns and military bases, including Texas City, which was on the ship channel south of Houston and was a vital seaport. One morning, I think I was about 10, there was an explosion on the docks that caused a chain reaction and more massive explosions and a good part of the town was on fire. The news was on all the radio stations (no TV). There was thought that it was some sort of invasion. My mom and sister and I all knew that my dad was down in Texas City and, of course, we had no cell phones at that time. What we didn’t know was that he had been done with his business and ready to come home when it all blew up. Since he was driving a panel truck for the cleaners, he was immediately pressed into service running supplies and people to the hospital; no time to even think about the danger or our worries. He was there for hours and finally managed to get word that he was safe. It was a terrible disaster and many lives were lost, the town was devastated and the original cause was said to be a cigarette dropped on board a fertilizer ship and the nitrogen blew up. When Dad came home, he had seen some terrible things, and everyone that had experienced that memory never forgot it.

Addendum: April 16, 1947, at 9:12 a.m. the French ship, S.S. Grandcamp, exploded, the first of many explosions. They thought someone had dropped an atom bomb. The ship was loaded with fertilizer, ammonium nitrate. The ship’s 1.5 ton anchor was found two miles away. The fires raged for three days and at least 581 people were killed and 3,500 were injured. No one in town was unaffected.

-- *Marilyn Martin*

I always had the radio on while doing my housework in the 1960s and that’s how I heard of the death of President Kennedy in Dallas. It was a frightening event in many ways, the unknown factor, who, why, what – what would happen next and would it reach us in the Midwest? My three children were in school – should I go after them or wait? I called a couple of friends (My husband was deer hunting in Michigan.) but we were all practically speechless. Like the mother hen, I just wanted to gather my children and protect them from the unseen and unknown dangers.

This was the start of many, many senseless acts.

-- *Sara Parsons*

How I heard the news of World War II starting. I was walking home from a movie in Crawfordsville. My sister and her date were in a car parked along the street. They told me the news. My sister’s boyfriend said that meant he would be in service very soon.

My sister and I had an apartment in Crawfordsville since we were both working there. We walked since we did not have a car. I was upset since I had just started dating my husband, John. John’s mother had a flag in her window with four stars. My brother went to war, also. John and his brother and two brothers-in-law were all in service.

-- *Erma Dee Wilson*

I was approximately 5 or 6 years old when World War II began. We had ration stamps for sugar and red tokens which I think were for gas. Perhaps there were stamps for other items, but this I remember because one of the books of stamps was in my name. I had one uncle, Uncle Edward, who was in the Army. He was in the Philippines. He came home on leave and brought mother a shell necklace. When he came to our house, it was in the middle of the night. I remember this because my sister and I got to get up. I remember when they announced that the war was over. We were at Grandma and Grandpa's filling station and Madge and I ran through mud puddles. It had rained that day. I also remember when President Roosevelt died because Mother was sad.

-- Sue Wood

I am going to write about FDR's death. My husband was in the Army Air Force. He was always unhappy when I was not with him, so I usually ended up going from home to be with him. We were living with a family at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, when FDR died. I was 23 years old. We were living with a family that consisted of a mother, two young teenagers, a younger brother and a grandmother. The husband and father had been the local barber, but, when war broke out, he went to the service. I became a member of this family.

Life was stressful due to the war, but it certainly taught me many things new. I was pregnant with our first child and this family was so good to me.

There was a radio in the living room and I was called to come listen to the news. The president had died. I remember sitting on the floor with the children and everyone was very quiet.

This was such an important time in my life.

-- Mary Yates

A Story about My Keepsake

Judy worked for me at Optics Technology in Palo Alto and became my very best friend. She also worked for me at Alexian Brothers Hospital and she moved to San Jose to take the job. Rich was [my husband] Jack's very good friend from Alpha Beta Grocery where he was a labor arbitrator.

Judy was a single mother and dated Vic Fabrio from Palo Alto. That relationship went sour. Rich and his wife split up and we took his dog, a basset hound, that he could no longer keep.

Ever playing matchmaker, we introduced Judy and Rich. They eventually were married. We helped make arrangements for Jack's cousin, Rev. Chuck Stacey, to marry them at his church in Carmel. Jack was best man and I was the bridesmaid – oops, matron of honor! – and we five were the only ones in the church.

Judy gave me a thimble as a gift. The thimble is engraved with my name and the date of their wedding, October 2, 1976.

-- Kay Arbuckle

My grandmother was a very good seamstress; she took a man's suit and had to convert it into a suit for herself. She worked at Aero Canvas, where she repaired torn tarpaulins. She sewed many things in her life and she made many quilts in her home in Tennessee. Each of my three daughters has one of her quilts. I used to try to sew on her treadle machine, but I wasn't too good at it.

The quilt I have now has many pieces of some of my own dresses when I was younger; the yellow sun dress I had that Jim, who is my husband now, spilled grape juice all over is one. We still laugh about it since it all washed out okay.

-- Nancy Gilbert

I first saw my keepsake when I was eight years old. It was on the top shelf of a floor-to-ceiling cabinet in our kitchen. All of Mother's special dishes were up there. I know that this set of cups and saucers were a wedding present from her Uncle Tom. Every spring she would take all the dishes from the cabinet, wash everything, then put clean paper on the shelf and put the dishes back for another year.

I often wished that we could have a tea party before we put them away. When I got the tea set, I called a good friend and we had a tea party. It wasn't the same as if it had been Mother and me, but it fulfilled a long-held desire.

-- Marie Kamplain

I have kept the white vase with the gold decorations for the 75 years since my great grandmother's death in 1928. It was given to me at that time. It had been one of her possessions that I had been permitted to handle when I visited – not “play with” but sit quietly and look at! She was born in 1845 and probably acquired the vase at an early age. It is not in perfect condition so I feel it is really not valuable. I was her first great grandchild and was probably spoiled. I liked going to her house as she always had strawberry preserves! While it is not unusual now for families to have 4, 5, or even 6 generations at one time, in the early 1920s it was unusual. Our people were great grandmother, grandfather, my father and me. I was seven years old when she died.

-- Edna Keeney

On January 18, 1865, after suffering many hardships in the Civil War, the Baxter family left Tompkinsville, Kentucky, in a wagon with William Baxter, his wife, Priscilla, and all their children and belongings. Among their belongings was an old wooden clock. When they arrived in Louisville, they took a train to Paoli, Indiana, and the stagecoach to Newton Stuart, which is now under Patoka Lake. This clock that they brought was an O'Gee Shelf Clock, a Seth Thomas from Thomston, Connecticut. It was in Monta Gene Baxter's home, a cousin of my Dad's, and he always hated the clock because of the loud Bong! Bong! chime. It told his mother what time he was sneaking in at night. My dad lived with his family while growing up, and he had a fondness for this clock. In 1985, on my mom and dad's 50th anniversary, Monta Gene gave them the clock, by now in total disrepair and in many pieces. My dad had it restored with a new face. When my dad passed away (My mom had died earlier.), I received the clock. I took it to a clockmaker in upstate New York, with the original face scratched and in bad shape. He used the paint on it and restored it. He said that clock was from sometime around 1850 because it had brass works, and that it originally had a reverse painting on the front door. It keeps very good time and is on a shelf in my dining room. The chime is very crude but it is probably my greatest treasure. To think it came in a wagon all those years ago, probably originally from Virginia!

-- Marilyn Martin

This keepsake I brought today [a beautiful, crocheted piece that says, “Happy Birthday, Delores”] was specially made by my younger brother. He crocheted it for my birthday one year – worked the pattern out all by himself. He took his thread and crochet hook to work when he was working the night shift and worked on it there. My brother had large hands, a very rugged looking guy, and all the other guys teased him and made fun of him – he was working in the iron ore mines in northern Minnesota at the time. But he would just laugh and tell them they were just jealous because they couldn't do it.

He also made a large ruffled doily for me. Bless his heart, he was only 19 or 20 at the time and just a year or so later, at 21, he died in a terrible car accident. So these things are very precious to me, since I can only guess how much time it took [to make them].

-- Delores Meyers

My keepsake is a cut glass water pitcher that is so beautiful, especially when the sunlight strikes it. I inherited it from my father's family and it is the only thing I have from his people since his parents were dead long before I was born and my father died six days after I was born. We didn't have much connection with his people as I was growing up so this is my one touch from them. I would much rather have known all of them.

-- Sara Parsons

One of my keepsakes is a secretariat that belonged to my great grandma Brown. When I would go to her house, I would look at all the things she had in the china part of the secretariat. She had several vases in it. She had two secretariats. When she died, the house and furniture went to her youngest son, Horace. Horace had a machine repair shop in Avon and one day I stopped by and told him I would like to buy one of the secretariats if he ever wanted to sell them. He never did sell them and, when he died, they went to his son, Don. Again, I expressed an interest in the secretariats. One day Don's wife called and said, if I was still interested in a secretariat, she would sell it for \$100. My youngest son, Darren, and I took the truck and went and got the secretariat before they could change their minds. Darren likes it a lot and it will go to him when I am gone. I was told that Grandma Brown probably bought it at an auction as she often went to them.

-- Sue Wood

Other keepsakes that I enjoy are a top hat that belonged to my father's uncle. He was a doctor in Ohio. I also have a hat that was my father's aunt's – the aunt that my parents moved to Ohio to take care of. This aunt was a school teacher.

We had a luncheon here at the [Senior] Center and a hat show and a speaker talking about hats. I set up a table of my hat collection – the old hats, my wedding hat, and some hats that I made. I tried to wear this lady's hat that had ties under the chin. I used a hat pin, also, and it did not work since my hair is short. I know Aunt Mary had long hair so the hat stayed in place [when she wore it].

-- Edna Dee Wilson

My keepsake is my father's collar and cuff box from the time he was young and so proud. It is an upright box with a lid that lifts up from the top and is lined with yellow satin; it has a circular holder for the collars and cuffs. This can be lifted up to show another smaller space for cuff links and tie tacks.

We had a folding bed and the box always was on top in front of the mirror. Mother kept any jewelry and valuables in the box. The box always fascinated me and was handed down from my parents. I was permitted to look at the box and its contents but "handle with care." It was something I treasured so much. I am so glad it was kept in the family. I have never seen another even similar to it.

It was important to my mother and dad and was important to me, too. I wanted to be sure it was kept in the family, so I recently gave it to my son. He is so proud of it, I am sure he will always keep it.

-- Mary York

A Story about a Treasure

When I was about 13, we were at an amusement park and I had found a small diamond ring. My grandmother bought it from me for \$30 so I could buy some school clothes. I had to give my older sister \$15 of it for her school clothes.

My mother trusted us to do our own shopping, but, needless to say, I was not a smart shopper at 13. I went to L.S. Ayres and found a pair of red shoes that I just had to have. I paid \$7 for them and that didn't leave me much money for clothes. Grandma later gave the ring back to Mom and she later gave it to me. I have already given it to my oldest granddaughter!

-- Nancy Gilbert

Photos are our family treasure. When I started dating my boyfriend (now husband), he brought his camera and so began fifty-seven years of pictures of all occasions. Our wedding picture is the center of this family treasure. Then pictures of our three babies.

When our children were three or four, I made an album for each. We added pictures from time to time. They could look at their "pictures books" any time. They took very good care of them.

Soon there were graduation pictures and wedding pictures. Then grandchildren pictures. I sorted through the photos that I have and shared with our children even more pictures. Our daughter-in-law has a picture room. Her pictures have no two frames alike. It is so interesting. About six years ago, one granddaughter gave me a small album for Christmas. We had all been together for Thanksgiving and she had taken pictures of everyone. She wrote captions for most of the pictures. It means a lot to me that the family treasure is multiplying.

For our 50th anniversary, we celebrated as a family. I wanted to give family members a keepsake so I had oversized prints made of the first picture that we had taken 52 years earlier and I wrote about our courtship with a copy for each. I was filling my treasure chest before I knew what I was doing!

-- Marie Kamplain

When I got married and had my very first home, I expressed a wish for some good place to keep my books. My dad took care of this wish! In my dining room was the ideal place – a space under a pair of double windows. Dad purchased some 1 x 12 inch white pine boards (not knotty pine) and carefully fitted them together to make two shelves with space on top for plants. I have kept and used my book shelves for 62 years. I now have this piece hanging on a wall filled with books! I hope to give it to my granddaughter, Angela. She shares my passion for reading. She also remembers my dad and I think it will mean something to her. The monetary value is negligible, but the sentimental value is priceless.

-- Edna Keeney

I wanted to give our daughter, Kim, something special for her fortieth birthday in October of this [past] year – something to always remember that year as being special, not for the monetary value but for the love that we have for her. I decided on a glass pitcher that had belonged to her great grandmother, Delta Sparks Baxter. Delta died in 1909 at the age of 19, leaving her husband and small baby, only 18 months old. That baby was my father, Cornelius Guy (Bud) Baxter. This pitcher had a bunch of grapes etched on the side of it and was probably a wedding gift. Dying so young, she hardly had time to acquire many treasures. This pitcher was cracked and had no monetary value, but it had

great family value because it was Delta's, whom we were never to know except through her son, my dad. I am sure we would have loved her and I love knowing that Kim has this very special pitcher sitting on her dining room table. I know this would please my dad, also.

-- Marilyn Martin

A Story of Someone Dear

My special person is my husband, Jack. He is literally my other half. We share our memories, our family, our passion for life. We like to joke about my following him around since birth. We were born in the same city, moved as young children to the same community, attended the same schools, belonged to the same organizations, i.e., Job's Daughters and De Molay, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

I call him my big teddy bear. He is a large man and has a wonderful sense of humor, a lot of common sense, and is a very loving and caring person.

-- Kay Arbuckle

I chose [to focus this story on] my husband as we have been together a long time. We dated a long time, got engaged when I was 16, married when I was 17, almost 18. We were married only six months when he was drafted into the Army. I didn't get to go with him during his basic training. I didn't see him for six months. When he did come for a visit, it was our first anniversary. I did move to Kansas with him for awhile, as he was supposed to be shipped to Korea, but, luckily, they were doing dental work on his mouth, so he was not shipped out. I moved to Missouri with him next. Then we moved back to Indiana. By that time, I was expecting our second child. My husband has been a hard worker and a good father. The children love him dearly.

-- Nancy Gilbert

My someone dear was my husband, Meredith. We were in school at the same time. He was two years older. We did not date, however, until we were out. I had liked his appearance and, when we got to know each other better, we decided that we would spend our lives together!

His favorite thing was to always have good transportation. This he maintained always. His honesty and integrity were above reproach. He worked at Allison's during World War II and his dream had been to get out and have his own business. He started with a chicken hatchery. Somehow, I got involved, too! We sold feed and supplies. Later he branched out into plumbing and heating. We worked together in this endeavor for 22 years. Then he became the Grand Secretary for the Knights of Pythias and I worked as secretary/bookkeeper. He worked in the church and the health care field.

I think he was the very best. His worst fault was forgetting where he put something. We had 61 years together!

-- Edna Keeney

Generous in thought, word, and deed, like the Scout creed, describes my [daughter], Cheri, who has been the blessing of my life. Giving of her time, even though it is sometimes very scarce, when a friend needs her companionship, advice, or help in cooking, gardening, or ceramic painting, even attending shows, concerts, museums, or whatever is happening at the time.

At holidays, birthdays, and other important occasions, the gifts are chosen especially for that

person with much imagination. Her gifts are the very best! Her caring, loving ways are always enjoyed by everyone who is fortunate enough to be a recipient. We are all so fortunate to have her in our lives, so willing, and always smiling!

-- Sara Parsons

My dad, Cornelius Guy (Bud) Baxter, was born and raised in Orange County, Indiana, very poor, and without a real home. His mother died when he was a baby. But he had a lot of love and, from that, he learned to love his wife and two daughters. On his own, he made a very good life for his family by moving to Texas and foreseeing good moves in his future. He truly loved to do kind acts and was very generous with his time or money, though he was not a wealthy man. After I was married and raising a family, when he and Mother came to visit us in Indiana, Daddy could always find something that needed fixing or that he could buy us to improve our home, maybe ceiling fans or a new hose for the yard, and they would just appear.

In later years, my husband and I moved to upstate New York for a ten-year period, far from all family and old friends, though we did make wonderful new friends. In 1990, I was particularly blue about being so far away for my 55th birthday. I guess I was having a pity party. So, for my birthday gift that year, my dad sent me my son Brian. He arrived on my birthday from Atlanta, Georgia, his ticket all paid for by my dad. I think it is one of my special memories about the kind of person my dad was. He could be very opinionated and dominant, and this is what helped him do so well in life. But he had this kindness that would show and you realized what a nice person he was. We crossed each other a lot after I was grown and sometimes had angry words. I guess I was a lot like him in some ways. But we always knew we loved each other and enjoyed being together. Very often, I realized it was a good thing that we lived 7,000 miles apart!

-- Marilyn Martin

I chose [to write about] my mother, Lora Francis Conover Huffman. She was very good with her hands. She made the clothing for me and my sister. After my father died, she had a sewing shop in her home. She was good with craft projects. She and I used to both enter items at the county fair. She was a 4-H leader for a few years. I think she is the person that got me interested in sewing. My grandmother never did sew.

Mother used to tell me if I could not say anything good about a person to keep still. My mother was born May 7, 1893, and died December 28, 1972.

-- Erma Dee Wilson

I met my husband through my brother-in-law, his brother, Marvin. Marvin is married to my sister, Madge. So, yes, brothers married sisters. Our kids are double cousins. Butch was on leave from the Navy when we met. We went together one week and decided we would marry. We told Madge and Marvin and I remember Marvin saying, "I knew you liked her, but I didn't know you liked her that well." Butch went back to San Diego, California. I think my parents thought it would blow over, but it didn't. We were married a year later. My husband liked sports and we watched them on TV and went to many ballgames.

He was an avid IU fan and got to meet Bobby Knight. He was very good with figures and could tell you the answer to math problems quicker than anyone. We both liked to travel and basically enjoyed one another's company. He not only was my husband but was my best friend and support in all that I did. We were married 40 years August 5, 2000. He passed away August 24, 2000.

-- Sue Wood

My story is about my dad. I had wonderful caring parents. Mother was a very good mother but I seemed to turn to Dad if I wanted something. I might have been a substitute son. I always had a horse to ride, he took me to ball games, encouraged me about school and learning.

At the beginning of grade three, I had a full-sized C-melody saxophone to play. By Christmas, I sat in with the band. This pleased both Mother and Dad. My sister was 10 years older than I and she played piano and violin so we had music to play together.

My dad was quiet – never talked much but was always there for any of us that needed him.

-- Mary York

A Story about My Work

My first paying jobs were summer jobs when I was 11 and 12. My parents were divorced when I was 10 and I spent summers with my father, stepmother, and a two-year-old step-sister. They lived in the hot San Joaquin Valley. My home was in the San Francisco Bay area that was always cool and where it was a treat when it was warm enough to wear shorts.

The first summer I remember a miserable time picking berries, going down these long rows of vines. Even the few cents we earned was not worth the awful heat and discomfort.

The next summer was a little bit more fun cutting apricots in half and placing them on trays to dry in the sun. We were paid by the box and had the small comfort of working in the shade with other young people. The reward of this hot work was being able to go to the river afterwards and cool off!

-- Kay Arbuckle

One of the most important things in my life has been knowing who God is and serving Him for many years in different areas of our church. How He has cared for us and protected us everyday! I played the piano for about 30 years in the church. The love of my husband for over 50 years and the caring and respect he has had for me and our children have been important, too.

My husband has been a hard worker all his life. He is very talented in music; he plays three different kinds of guitars. He has used his talent in nursing homes for years. He also has a good voice for singing. We've had our sorrows and heartaches, too, but we've worked through them.

Another love in my life has been our girls. We have three daughters. They are all very different, but each one is loving and caring. They have presented us with ten grandchildren. They were active in school choirs, church, Girl Scouts, basketball and all the typical things young girls were involved in. They didn't like piano lessons, but now they wish they had their own pianos and could play them.

I was a stay-at-home mom, mainly because Jim worked so many different shifts. The two oldest girls liked to help their dad work on old cars on the weekends; the second daughter liked to fish with her dad. Our youngest daughter was nine years younger [than the next oldest one]. I think they all three turned out just fine.

-- Nancy Gilbert

I grew up in a large family and there were many chores for each of us. I had to help with the laundry and cooking. We had to carry our water in and heat it on top of the stove, and then carry the water back out and throw it away. We had to hang our clothes outdoors even as it got colder. Then through the winter the clothes would hang inside somewhere.

When I was about 12, I had to help cook. We had to help can green beans and tomatoes.

After I graduated from high school, I went to work at L.S. Ayres in the printing department. It was general office work and I learned to make charge cards. I also worked at Morris Plan doing the same kind of work I did at L.S. Ayres. I worked at Deluxe Printing as a proof reader. I volunteered at the children's schools and my church.

Most of my life, I was a stay-at-home mother and homemaker. After my children were grown, I went back to night school to update my business administration skills. I got the diploma!

My mother moved in with me as she was a widow and she came down with Parkinson's disease. So, again, I was not able to be employed, as I could not leave her alone for too long. I did work one year for the State at a small office on the West Side [of Indianapolis]. Because of my mother's illness, I was not able to work [outside the home much].

-- Nancy Gilbert

When I started to high school, I needed a place to stay because my parents lived four miles from town. So I got a place working for an old couple. I carried water and later coal for the house and the store. I swept the sidewalks, stocked shelves, and pumped gas – whatever was needed. In pay, I received room and board.

This couple had come through the Depression, but they lived as though they were deep in it. They had four bedrooms fully furnished which I helped clean every two weeks, but they slept on a studio couch in a small room. I slept in the no-longer-in-use bathroom on a cot. It was quite an experience for a 13-year-old. I stayed less than three months.

-- Marie Kamplain

I have always been interested in math and bookkeeping. In 1939, I was employed at the State Bank of Lizton. My salary was \$5 per week. At this time, some banks were beginning to recover from closing during the Depression. The Lizton Bank had assumed the liabilities and assets of the Pittsboro Bank. I was given the responsibility of auditing and writing checks for the depositors of the Pittsboro Bank. This was interesting work as well as time-consuming. Some checks were written for as little as three cents. I was paid a bonus of \$10 for my work. It all balanced and none of the depositors lost any money!

-- Edna Keeney

In my senior year of high school at Shortridge High School in 1953, I went to work part-time at H.P. Wasson and Company in downtown Indianapolis. I started working there because that is where both of my parents had worked and had met each other in the late 20s, early 30s, so we knew people who still worked there. I went through a junior executive program and became assistant buyer in the Jewelry Department. This was a fun job. I met a lot of people and I am sure that most of my pay check stayed right there! I had some fun experiences as a result of working there, such as getting to ride on the Shrine float in the first 500 Festival Parade in 1957. The Shriners contacted Wassons and they [Wassons] provided beautiful gowns and we had a wonderful time.

My job taught me how to get along with people in many age groups and it was a responsible job. It was fun being dressed up and downtown. When going to work, we always wore hats and white gloves and there were no dress-down days.

One of my bosses for awhile was a man who had been one of my mother's sweethearts before my dad cut in on him and married my mother. But they always remained friends.

It was always exciting working during Christmas and very festive but I do remember inventory as extremely tedious in the Jewelry Department.

-- Marilyn Martin

In the mid-1930s, we moved from Indianapolis to my grandfather's farm to help with all of the outdoor farm chores and the many, many, many chores it took to run a household. My grandfather refused to have electricity brought into his farm so we took giant steps backward into semi-primitive existence. The one chore I hated but had to do everyday was carrying wood into the back porch for the cook stove in the kitchen. How I hated that job! Whining didn't relieve me of my duties, even though I did a lot of it! Also, being the most unimportant person in the household, they gave me another menial job – keeping the water buckets filled for drinking, cooking, and hand washing. Thinking back on it, I now realize how my jobs kept the kitchen operating at top efficiency and how I was a great help in having the delicious food that we all enjoyed so very much, plus the good feelings we all had when we contributed to a job well-done.

-- Sara Parsons

It seems that most of my life has been spent with sewing, first in 4-H work. I was a 4-H leader. John was sent to New Orleans and I made army shirts while we lived on Canal Street in an apartment. I had shops in Danville, Crawfordsville, and Columbus, Indiana. I still sew for the people who attend the [Senior] Center. I also did hand-tinting for a photographer when I lived in Crawfordsville. When my children were younger, I always helped with Bible school and was children's Sunday school superintendent. Working with children was interesting and fun. I help in the kitchen here at the Center when needed. I have helped make items for the hospital projects that the Center has going on.

The first part of married life we lived on a farm and raised our children in the country. After the last child graduated, we moved to town and John worked for Civil Service. I sewed, of course.

-- Erma Dee Wilson

In 1955, I went to work in Danville as a secretary for attorneys, Kendall and Stevenson. I had gone to business school and my high school commerce teacher, Bonnie Eggers, had recommended me for the job. So this began my career in the legal field and gave me experience for a job later on. In 1978, I was working at Indiana Bell and hated it. I went across the street and picked up and application for a job with the federal government. I began working in the U.S. Attorney's office in July 1978. I worked in the civil section and my responsibilities were Social Security cases, condemnation, and forfeiture. After about four years, I wanted to learn something new and transferred to the criminal section. There I worked on white-collar cases. Shortly after that, the government created a Drug Task Force Unit and I became the secretary. A few years later, the forfeitures were again given to me as part of my job. I went to Washington, D.C., for paralegal training which was held in the Department of Justice building. I became the Asset Forfeiture Paralegal, which was my job when I retired in November 1998.

When I began working, I used a manual typewriter and then electric. After the electric typewriter, I worked on a memory typewriter and then came the computer. At first, there were only two computers for the whole office. When I retired, everyone had a computer. The copy machine has also changed drastically through the years.

Working for the U.S. Attorney, I had contact with agents from DEA, FBI, Customs, ATF, and the Marshall's office. I worked for several people who later became [Indiana] judges; for instance, Sarah

Evans Barker, John Daniel Tinder, and Kennard P. Foster. John J. Thar became head of Indiana's Gaming Commission. Deborah Daniels went to Washington to head up the Weed and Seed Program.

-- Sue Wood

In 1955 – 56, Danville Ready-Mix was the only concrete business near Danville. It was owned and operated by Asa M. Goodwin. Asa had married during World War II and Mrs. Goodwin was truly a southern sweetheart. Once again, they were family. They put up a swing and built a sandbox in the yard and I could take my two-year-old daughter to work with me whenever I needed to. This sounds easier than it was. Ever try to watch out the window for a two-year-old while quoting prices or taking orders on the phone? Not easy! While I was working there, Hendricks County Hospital became a reality. I saw the huge hole in the ground for the hospital basement, then orders for the concrete began coming. I took most of the orders and did the billing for all of the first part of the hospital, which was completed in early spring 1962.

When the hospital was finished, I decided to move on. Since then, there have been two more additions [to the hospital], but I have good memories of the first floor.

-- Mary York

A Story about the Meaning of My Work

We had a player piano when I was about 4 years old. I would sit and push those big pedals and watch those keys move. I was really fascinated by that piano. My mother sold that piano and I wasn't around another one until I was about 12. She bought an old upright for \$10 at an auction.

Very soon, again, I became very curious about that piano. My mother could play some and could read music, so she sat me down and showed me the lines and spaces from an old hymnal book. After that, I taught myself. I learned to play fairly well for a beginner. I enjoyed it thoroughly. In about five and one-half years, I married, my mother moved and sold that piano.

After being married about six years, my husband bought me an old upright for \$50. I soon began to practice again. Our choir director at church asked me to start playing for our church.

I decided then that I would take a few lessons to learn the proper technique and the correct timing. I took about a year and a half of lessons. My teacher said that if I had had music lessons when I was younger, I would have been somewhere in my music. I played over 25 years in my church.

I finally got a new piano after being married 20 years. That is some of my work with my hands.

-- Nancy Gilbert

Without a doubt, the most joyful, rewarding, and challenging work that I have done would be getting married to Ron in 1961, and raising our daughter, Kim, now 40, and our son, Brian, now 39, and assorted dogs. I knew this was what I wanted to do and looked forward to the growing and changing years, but there were certainly times that I lost my sense of humor, dignity, and at times, I thought, my mind, and I am not sure that I have retained all of that. At times, I was so scared that I may not be making the right decision and, at the same time, never wanted to appear to be indecisive, because we needed to make our kids think that we had firm control over everything. Thank goodness, they never knew the truth about some of those years, when things were tough at work for Ron, or a suspected health problem, or another piece fell off of the car and we couldn't afford a new one, and the money was really tight; they knew that it happened but it didn't shatter their world. They enjoyed

school and all the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts and sports and Ron was a coach and I was the world's longest running room mother and all the extras that went with it. But make no mistake, there were scary times and arguments and many "Because I said so, and I'm your Mother!" times. And many tears, theirs and mine, and so many silly and funny things for us all to remember, that we all know we enjoyed those growing up years without too many "great tragedies."

We must have done something right because in the past few years, after being on their own and turning into really nice human beings that we like as well as love, they have asked us what we did to make them responsible adults, able to take charge of their own lives and have good jobs and have fun in life. The only thing that we could really tell them is that during their growing years everyone in our community lived that way; we all minded and looked out for each other's children, and the teachers were their leaders and respected for their decisions. And most people respected authority and everyone's rights and we all loved what we were doing. None of us had perfect lives but we all had a sense of humor and a lot of love, and we do have a lot of happy memories.

They have both told us that they appreciate their childhoods; they have good memories and enjoy talking about them and we appreciate their telling us that.

-- Marilyn Martin

I was the oldest child of our family. Since we lived on a farm, each summer the area farmers would hire a man and his threshing machine to come in and do the threshing.

I was an early teenager. I usually helped my mother with the noon meal that was prepared for the neighbor men. That was fine with me. But one year, my father told me I had to drive the buggy to deliver water to the men in the field. I was not very brave about driving the horse anyway. I think the men knew that. One of them threw a snake in the buggy. Boy, did I make a fast exit!! One of them retrieved the snake so I could get back in the buggy. Of course, they thought the prank was funny.

I still do not like snakes!

-- Erma Dee Wilson

The work I enjoyed the most was working in the legal field. My first job was as a secretary for the law firm of Stevenson, Kendall & Stevenson in Danville. There I became exposed to many different types of legal work, i.e., divorce, estates, contracts, real estate, bankruptcy and some criminal work. The estate work [was what] I like the best. The people you met when doing the estates were always nice.

After working at Stevenson & Kendall and before going to the U.S. Attorney's Office, I worked at First National Bank, Manpower, and then Indiana Bell. While I did not like any of these jobs, I found out that no matter where you worked, you always learned something that was beneficial later on. It also taught me where I didn't want to work.

I liked all the jobs that I did in the U.S. Attorney's Office. When I first started working there, I got to learn to use the Teletype. It was like a typewriter that printed out tape and the information went to Washington. (That has long since been replaced by the fax machine.) I remember the other secretaries thought I was nuts because I wanted to learn to use it. They never wanted to do any more than they had to.

I enjoyed working with the people from the other government agencies and learning how the justice system operated. The government sent me to various training conferences pertaining to the job that I was doing. I got to meet other people from around the country that did the same work as I did. I went to Washington, D.C., San Antonio, Texas, Phoenix, Arizona, Miami, Florida, Virginia Beach,

Virginia, and Newport, Rhode Island. Since I like to travel, I liked this part of the job. I soon found out that although the government puts you up in nice hotels, they also send you at the time of the year when they can get the cheapest rate. The year I went to Phoenix it was in July and the temperature was 114 degrees!

The Attorney General was out “BIG” boss. During the twenty years, I worked under the administrations of several different Attorneys General and only one came to visit our office. That was Janet Reno. She actually visited our office twice and I got to meet her. I was impressed with her. She seemed sincerely interested in our concerns and she wasn’t as ugly as she looked on TV. She was supposed to speak at the conference in Miami that I went to, but she didn’t come because that was the day the news told that she might be fired by President Clinton. I felt that she had her own mind and beliefs of what should be done and stood by them, right or wrong, and was not always swayed by politics. At one of the conferences, I met a girl from Arkansas who told me her husband was a state trooper and had been assigned to protect Clinton while he was governor of Arkansas. Her husband told her Clinton was very personable and likable and even then he was known for his womanizing.

-- Sue Wood

The Story of Our Relationship

Our son, John Kingsley Arbuckle, was a late child for our family, seven years between him and our youngest daughter. Our only son, Joel, was 10 at the time and had always wanted a little brother since he was sandwiched between an older and a younger sister.

Our fondest family memory is bringing John home from the hospital in a Christmas stocking. He was born December 20, 1967. We named him “John” for his father and he carried on the Young family tradition of using the middle name of Kingsley.

One story the older children loved to talk about was about a family pet white goose. All was fine until one day the baby goose was almost as big as two-year-old John. The goose knocked him down and stood on him. That was the end of the goose! He was taken to Almaden Park and let go in the creek.

Joe played football and the men of the family loved to watch pro ball. By the time John was four, he could name all the professional football teams and was a mascot for the Pop Warner team Jack coached and Joe played on.

Ten happy years of growing up with loving and caring sisters and brother and then he was the only one at home. The next years he was treated almost as an only child. He excelled in school and sports.

He was 21-years-old, a fourth year student at California State University when he was killed on the side of a mountain in the sudden fog off the ocean. He was with his best friend in a single engine airplane.

-- Kay Arbuckle

I chose [to write about] my dear mother, Marguerite S. Smith. She had nine children, five boys and four girls; one daughter was stillborn. Her ancestors came from Germany. She also had Irish and Indian and Dutch in her.

She was a great mother, very spiritual, and taught us many morals and values. Her life was very hard, struggling with so many things. We knew she loved us and she was very strict. She outlived four of her children. She was a hard worker. [Even with] a large family that took so much of her time, she was always helping others. One time we were together that I enjoyed was at my graduation. She was

very proud as I was the only child that got to go through high school. Also, I was glad that she was at our wedding and two of our daughters' weddings.

When she became a widow, she had gone to work as a nurse at Central State Hospital. She was always a small person, until she became bedfast; then she put on more weight. After she became ill, she didn't recognize any of us for years. She recognized one brother the week before she died. I was with her night and day the last few days of her life. I do miss her dearly.

-- Nancy Gilbert

One of my biggest losses would be my mother, probably because I did not get to say goodbye and [her death] was sudden. She was a pretty lady and had curly hair that was the color of a copper penny. She was a very loyal and loving person and absolutely believed that my dad could do no wrong. She also loved her children and grandchildren totally, even though she may not have liked what they did. I think she taught this to me, and also a great sense of humor. Even my daughter, Kim, remembers us sitting around the table telling silly growing-up stories and laughing until we cried. She was kind to people and really looked for the good in people. Probably her most annoying trait was her dependence on my dad, so that in later years she would let him think for her and make her decisions. This would not set well with my sister and me, because then Daddy would expect us to be the same. We were not, and we crossed on many things. My mother did not like it if this happened.

I don't think she had a very good childhood, maybe just not many materials things or stability, but she did with my dad. She was always very secure and this was important to her. She loved the family who raised him, and showed them this love. She had a very happy marriage and enjoyed raising her children, but all difficulties were turned over to "Bud, you have to deal with this." I wish I had had more time with her after I became an adult. We lived miles away from each other always.

-- Marilyn Martin

I met John on a blind date. He had asked my girlfriend for a date. She already had a date with John's cousin. So she arranged for me to be John's date. We met a few weeks before he left for service. We did get to see each other about four times before he got a leave and came home. We were married in his family's home church. After marriage, I got to spend a little over a year with him in New Orleans in an apartment on Canal Street. We decided that we wanted to raise our family in the country. We both were farm children. John was a good-sized man. He was in the Army Medical Corps attached to the Air Force. He was sent to China and was in charge of the medical supplies for that air unit.

It was a great day when he got home. His son was 14 months old then. We lived on a farm till our youngest child graduated [from high school]. Then John was in civil service. We lived in Danville, Crawfordsville, and Columbus. One thing we did while in Columbus was square dancing. We both loved that activity.

What annoyed me was after he retired he came home and sat in his easy chair. Of course, his health went downhill.

We moved back to Danville to be near my daughter. John's health got so bad that I could not take care of him. He spent the last 22 months of his life in the Veteran's Home in West Lafayette. I was thankful that he always knew us when we went to visit. John liked to tell stories and jokes and he enjoyed laughing.

-- Erma Dee Wilson

One of the first memories I have of my mother is of being tied in this big, wooden rocking chair in the kitchen. She was preparing breakfast on the big wood-burning cook stove. I'm sure I woke up earlier than usual, so I was rocking away in the big, old rocking chair.

A group of farm ladies in our neighborhood started the Loyal Friends Club. It was limited to 12 families as that was all the homes could accommodate. I had not started to school so I was the only child there the day they first got together. The other children were all older than I was. The club was a family affair. We had wiener roasts, card parties, Halloween and Christmas parties. It was fun for all.

My parents were both quiet people. Mother was a small, fair complexioned red-haired lady. Both my sister and I were larger and dark haired. There are grandchildren more like my mother.

I know we both knew we loved each other so very much but we never said so. My children say "I love you" even on the telephone. I believe we say it more than we did years ago.

-- Mary York

The Happiest Time of My Life

I was about eleven years old and I came home from school and opened the front door to find a piano in the living room! My grandmother had shipped my mother's old, upright piano from Lincoln, Nebraska, to me in California. It was so unexpected and so wonderful I'll always remember the happiness I felt that day.

Happy memories are vignettes spread like many snapshots throughout our lives. A new baby placed in your arms the first time. Holding your boyfriend as he swings you around the dance floor. The motherly love and possession you see in your daughter when she holds her first child. The love and pride you feel when you watch your children receive their diplomas. The delight when you share your granddaughter's second birthday alone together. The quiet evening with the man you love at your side while the fireflies twinkle...

-- Kay Arbuckle

Besides raising my three daughters, who are the joys of my life, we have always enjoyed a lot of music in our home. My husband has played three different kinds of guitars and he sings, too. He has a nice voice. He has played and sung in our church, and nursing homes and V.A. hospitals. My brother, Ken, who married my best friend, Charlene, also played the guitar. He and Charlene and Jim worked as a band together for years. Ken's two daughters also learned to play the guitar and they sang beautifully together. We had friends also that Jim played with in other groups. My brother, Ken, passed away, but Jim, Charlene, and I and another group still visit the nursing home twice a month. Jim plays here at the Senior Citizens [Center] on Thursday nights with a group.

Many years at our home at Christmas and New Years, we would have a wonderful time together with music. Also on July 4th we would have cook outs, and in September we would have our family reunion, and there would always be guitars and singing at the reunion.

Our lives have been filled with much music. And we are richly blessed to have been able to share it. Music has been good for the soul, too.

-- Nancy Gilbert

This was not the happiest probably but turned out to be much happier than we expected. In 1989, part of the company that my husband worked for, which was originally Link Belt and then FMC and then PTC, was bought by Borg Warner in Ithaca, New York. They hired ten men from the old company to move with that division. This meant giving up our home and all our friends. Our daughter had already moved to California and our son to Georgia so we decided to have an adventure and move and take the new job. My husband had worked for the same company since he was 18, so this was a big decision. But we did it.

Our first eight months we rented a furnished house near the campus of Cornell University; this eight months was a story all of its own for another time.

We finally built a house in Dryden, New York, in the Finger Lakes area, and it was simply gorgeous. There were over 200 waterfalls in the area and at first I couldn't even stand on the edge of the gorges and maneuver the steep hills. But before long, I decided that the views from the hills were so lovely that we had to build at the top of one of them. We never tired of looking out our front window; you could see for miles. It was a small neighborhood and everyone knew each other. I taught them all how to play Euchre, a Hoosier game, and they called me the social director. We had card parties, and all the ladies gardened, and we met some of the nicest people and all remained friends. We lived there for ten years, and always knew we would come home to retire. The winters were 10 months long and the annual snowfall was 75 inches, but most of the time was over 100 inches! They loved winter sports. But by living over there we saw so many places that we may have never seen – Vermont and Maine, Bar Harbor and Cape Cod, and just beautiful areas in Massachusetts. We went to mountains and lakes that we never knew existed and made friends that we would have lost out on if we had not made the move. When we left, our friends made a wonderful memory book for us that we will always treasure.

-- Marilyn Martin

In 1940, I was living on Hawthorn Street in Houston, Texas with my mom, Katie, and dad, Bud, and sister, Patty. She was six at this time and I was a year younger. This was before computers and television, but we had radio and we were avid radio listeners. We listened to "Inner Sanctum" and it had the squeaking door, and Patty and I loved Saturday morning "Let's Pretend," along with several adventure programs. In radio, you had to imagine the picture and the people and it sure developed our imaginations, sometimes beyond reality.

Next to our house was a large field, really an extension of our yard, and we played out there a lot. There were several big trees that we liked to play around and climb in, and one day while climbing in one we found a hollow area or hole in the fork of the trunk. I don't know which one of us started it, but we started talking about how this could be the home of some wee people and their belongings and then we saw a tiny round table with little chairs where they ate their meals. We would go and look in this tree everyday and elaborate on what we saw and pretty soon we saw the wee people, two tiny little men, one was orange and one was green, and we both agreed on what we saw, and what we saw grew into quite a story. They had white beards and pointed hats and looked a lot like the little man in the story of Rumpelstiltskin. We started telling our mom about these little orange and green men who lived in the tree in the field and described their furniture and got so enthused with this tale that we began begging her to go and see for herself. They were real and we really saw them. Of course, she discussed all this with my dad and, as our fantasy grew, so did their worry about our mental condition. They could not convince us that this was not real. We even took them out in the field to climb up in the tree and see for themselves. Imagine our disappointment when they couldn't see all these things that we were pointing to and talking about. Patty and I could see them so plainly, but we never talked to the orange and green men themselves.

I really don't know how long this went on, if it was a week or several months. But it went on long enough for my folks to consider talking to a psychiatrist. I am not sure if they really did or not. I am also not sure when or how we let it go; maybe we just got tired of it and went on to something new. But we have always remembered the orange and green men and not too long ago I asked Patty if she remembered them and told her kids about them. She did and, of course, so did I. We really got into "Let's Pretend."

Later on, our mom told us that she had an imaginary playmate named, "Miss Simlygoo." Now, if you could imagine a name like that, why would you question orange and green men? My Aunt

Frannie said her sister, Mildred, had an imaginary playmate when she was little and Frannie was jealous of her. She said she was too dumb to know that she could just make up her own playmate!

-- Marilyn Martin

A happy time I remember is when John and I went to England for three weeks and got to see our granddaughters. Bob, our second son, was in the Air Force. We attended his college graduation at Cambridge University. The parents of senior people were asked to stand up. John and I and another gentleman stood. After the graduation service we went outside to a typical English garden party.

Our son said it really made him happy that we got to attend the service. We did sightseeing while there. We saw the Queen three times and saw the changing of the guard. Bob did the driving so we could visit interesting places while over there.

I was a little shocked to see how some of the young people were dressed – hair spiked, black leather, and chains on their bodies. We saw this while in London. Bob lived in Feltwell, a nice area. People were friendly.

We did not get to be around our granddaughters very much when they were growing up because they were in Panama, Spain, and England. They spent 13 years overseas out of 21 years Bob was in service.

The granddaughters are grown now. I think our England trip was our favorite vacation.

-- Erma Dee Wilson

A happy time in my life was singing with Heartland Harmony, a chapter of Sweet Adelines. I enjoyed the music, the other members, and going to contests each year was wonderful.

One year a coach came when we were getting ready for contest and we had only one tenor. The coach voice-tested each of us and, when she came to me, she said, "Oooo, here's your whipped cream on top. Here's your new tenor." I had two weeks to learn a new part. One of the judges wrote about our group, "Lovely tenors." A great morale booster.

My second happy time would be now. I'm thankful for good physical and mental health, for a loving family, and for being employed at the hospital. The young nurses say, "Why are you still working?" My answer – "I eat differently, I sleep differently, and I would not know all you nice young people if I was not working." I am a telemetry tech. I watch the heart monitors for heart patients all over the hospital. We have to learn to interpret the telemetry strips and put our reports in the computers for the doctors and nurses. I enjoy my work.

-- Mary York

My Stories of Loss and Happiness

When you have a loss in your life of someone special you love, you wonder about death and why they had to leave you. The pain is very real, but it is only temporary. Time will pass and the pain will lessen. God knows how much you can bear, and He will reach down to comfort you if you are trusting in Him. But you will still have many wonderful memories of this person who was special to you in your life.

Happiness is what you make out of your life and your ability to achieve it. Living in America, and the freedom that we have to worship God, and knowing that His love provides contentment. In America you can do anything in your life you desire to. You can be well-educated and wealthy, but,

that still does not buy happiness. You should have dreams and goals in your life and they will provide some contentment.

There are different kinds of pleasures that you may feel at times. There is the beauty of the earth to behold. There is joy that comes from attending your graduation or at your own wedding, the first time you hold your newborn baby. You may feel happy about your first job or a promotion on a job well-done. But happiness is what you really feel in your heart and how contented you are with the fruits of your labor.

-- Nancy Gilbert

I don't really like to give advice, maybe I have had too much given to me over the years. I would just tell a story about how we found so much fun and happiness in making a move that was so hard to do at the time. The ten years that we lived in upstate New York were a very important ten years in my life. When we decided to make this move from Indiana, I did not want to do it at all. By leaving our home and all our friends and family, it would give us a much better income, advancement for Ron, and better retirement, but we had never been there and did not know anyone. It was a hard choice, but Kim was already living in California and Brian was in Georgia and my parents lived in Texas and this just added more miles between, but we decided to look at it as an adventure, something that we did not have to do if we changed our minds. Thank goodness, we both had a sense of humor because it really got us through a lot, especially living in the house that we rented while looking for a house to buy. Real estate was so much more expensive that we had to buy a house that was not nearly as nice as the one we had left in a little village that did not have the conveniences that we were used to, the stores or restaurants, or medical facilities. We didn't know these people or their ways. This was the middle of dairy country in the hills in Dryden, New York. But let me tell you, we got to know these people in our little neighborhood, going up our hill, and I can't imagine never having been there. They enriched our lives so much and we shared in their children and their holidays and their love.

During this ten years, I lost both of my parents and, even though losing parents is inevitable, we are never ready for it because now we are the older generation. I also lost some very dear friends unexpectedly. The friends that I made in Dryden were so wonderful in helping me through these sad events, I can't imagine doing it without them. They did not know these people that I had lost, but they listened to me tell silly stories and cried with me and laughed with me like they had known me forever, and now we will know each other forever. They added so much to our lives and we still stay in contact and have visited back and forth, and we still share in their children's graduating and marrying and their happiness.

By making this move that I did not want to do and shed so many tears over, we enriched our lives beyond words. We didn't lose what we left behind because our families and friends all came to visit in New York and shared in our adventures.

I would tell a young person that it is really true what they say, "When one door closes, another door opens."

-- Marilyn Martin

After John and I were married, I waited a few weeks till he could find us an apartment. It was great that we could live together on Canal Street [in New Orleans]. We had a chance to learn more about each other for a little over a year. We had just met shortly before he left for service. We loved each other. I knew in my heart that we would never be separated. I had a lot of faith that our lives would work out. We did not know where he would be sent. He was in the Army Medical Corps

attached to the Air Force in China. I wish I had kept our letters that we wrote while he was in service.

We were married 58 years and we had several moves in that time. He was in a strange country. I was with my parents. Even living with my family, I was lonely. After our oldest son was born, I spent some time with John's parents, as well as with mine. Our son was 14 months old when his father first saw him.

After John got home from service, one of our happy times was when we were together as a family and John was doing work he enjoyed. I think I would tell our grandchildren that you can plan what you would like to accomplish in life, but you will have to be patient and have a lot of faith. And work hard to reach your goals. I think God has a hand in our lives, too.

I was with my son and his wife and my daughter over the 4th. They were talking about things that happened when they were younger. I guess one nice thing about getting old is that we have our memories.

-- Erma Dee Wilson

A Story about How I Learned

I wished that I had been more patient with our first two daughters. I was only 20 by the time they were born; they were lacking four days of being a year apart. My husband was just getting out of the Army and we were moving back to Indianapolis. We had to stay with my family until he was settled into a new job. After he started working, he had to work nights and it was very hard to keep two children quiet, especially the second daughter who had colic forever. It was very hard on my nerves during this time. Our third daughter was born nine years later, and we were older and my husband was working days, so we learned to have more patience with her.

There was one time I went out to wash and clean our car to surprise him and the girls awakened him, which didn't go over too well with him. But through the years as we matured, I'm sure the girls have forgiven us and they still tell us they love us each time we talk with them.

-- Nancy Gilbert

When I was in school, I saw myself as a career person, but, by the time my three children were born, I knew that I wanted to be the best mother. Not that I could not have been both but I was a stay-at-home mom. Then while I was content and happy, I began to realize things would change, that I would have to let them go, really go, not just outside to play or to go to school, but out into the world for days and weeks at a time. I had a lot of work to do before that time.

They are gone, confident, well-adjusted, sure they are on the right path with the one they love. They will come home for a visit but my heart says, I didn't know it would happen so soon. Can I adjust to no children? I had been active in church for years and this is where I turned. We were building so there was much to do. I continued to work at church for ten years or more. Meantime my grandchildren were coming into my life. The first two lived in another state, so I always knew they wouldn't be around for long, just visits. The other four lived close so they came for days and nights and several days, and, for that time, it was like my children [were home again]. I thought this will change and it did. They are adults now and we see them two or three times a year.

"Go with the flow" is a flip kind of phrase but it is where I am now – holding to loved ones with a lighter hand than I have ever done, trusting that someday they will come back.

-- Marie Kamplain

At 40, I learned that raising two children gave me much satisfaction. We had had a hatchery business and the children had helped. They were always willing to do what they could. They were involved in 4-H and school affairs. We always tried to “be there for them.” We worked and played together. Very early, they punched the holes in the chicken boxes. We paid them five cents per hour. They were five and six at that time. Later on, as they could do more, their wages were increased. We taught them to save and not spend everything. They learned well. We were proud of the adults that they became.

-- *Edna Keeney*

Ron and I raised our children in Indiana while my parents lived in Texas, so they were long-distance grandparents, but there was a lot of visiting back and forth. Whether it was the four of us going there or them coming to Indiana, I always tried to make everything perfect. The house spotless, not a cross word between Kim and Brian, and never talk about a problem in school or at home. This was very hard to try to live by this and still enjoy the visits. My sister had three divorces and loads of problems so I guess I didn't want to add to it. But I finally learned that I was missing a lot by being so uptight over these visits. So what was going to happen if the kids got dirty or dinner wasn't done on time? I really don't think my parents caused me to feel this way because they were very loving and great grandparents even at long distance. I think I had to learn this on my own. My daughter used to say, “Oh, Mom, you want everything so perfect!” So I would try to lighten up, but it took a long time to realize that life isn't perfect.

What is funny is my daughter grew up to be a perfectionist also and wanted everything neat and tidy. Now she makes her living cleaning up other people's messes – she is a designer for California Closets. I probably should have worked for them years ago and my family could have relaxed more!

-- *Marilyn Martin*

To organize one's self makes life easier. Why isn't dinner ready so we can leave on time for the Little League game? Why are we late arriving at the kindergarten graduation, with no good seats left and our little graduate having to walk up to the stage by herself? Why are we always the last ones to arrive for family get-togethers?

After much humiliation, cross words, blaming everyone and everything, it began to penetrate my brain that I was not organized! What to do? Plan, plan, plan. Allow more time to prepare for each step up the ladder of organization. Plan ahead! If I do that, I can accomplish much more in a day without hysterics.

Slowly I learned, little by little, don't sit down to read anything, newspaper, magazine, or book, the first thing in the morning. I'm not perfect, but life is much more enjoyable now that I'm more organized and I'm able to do many things I wouldn't have had time for. Hope I continue to improve!

-- *Sara Parsons*

My Story as My Legacy

Family love and caring, sharing, holding onto and letting go. We always say, you can't tell someone something, that person has to do it to experience life and learn its lessons on their own. We have let our children go and watched them live and learn. Now we see how they, too, are experiencing parenthood and, in their subtle ways, have followed us and our teachings. They, too,

have had to let their children go. New babies are born, the family grows, continues to love, care for, and let go in time.

Our legacy is a large and happy, caring family.

-- Kay Arbuckle

My dearest children, Brenda, Pamela, and Sandra, when I was a child, my mother raised us with many virtues, she expected the best out of us. I never did give my mother any problems; she told me so many times. I respected her and her ways. She taught us to always be truthful and kind. I tried to raise you three the same way and I hope you will always respect me for the way I raised you. I know I made many mistakes as a young mother and I know you have tried the best with your children. We can't go back and change things, but life has been blessed having you three girls. Each of you are so different, but loving us the way you do has been worth every minute we shared together while you were young and growing up.

I remember each one of you when you were placed in my arms, the time you took your first steps. Then you started to school, married, and left home. You have given us ten beautiful grandchildren and I love them all very much, too.

When you reach our age, I hope you will look back and remember all the good times we've had as a family.

Thank you so much for the wonderful gift you gave us on our 50th anniversary! I love you all. Mom.

-- Nancy Gilbert

Teaching and learning go together. These are building blocks of our lives. So it was in my life more than a half century ago and so it has been in your lives. I was a learner and I wanted to be a teacher, but it was not to be, except in my own home or in church Bible School. Really we are all teachers, teaching what we know, what we love, to ready minds.

It thrills me that you have chosen teaching, be it in a classroom or in a corral – a child or a horse or a child with a book. Whatever you do, I know you will find adventure, joy, and fulfillment, knowing that you are doing what you want to. In a way, my hopes and dreams live on in the three of you.

-- Marie Kamplain

I have tried to be a caring daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother. While we cannot always choose the path we will take, we must make every effort to do our very best. I have lived my life with honesty and integrity. I feel that I have been a good steward of time and assets. Bookkeeping has been a joy through the years. Reading and sewing are hobbies which give me much pleasure.

-- Edna Keeney

People have always been important to me, friends and family. I really enjoyed raising my children and being a wife and it was important for my children to have a happy childhood and grow into responsible adults, but also remember the fun times of their childhoods. I wish they had known more family of earlier times. We lived in Texas and most family was in Indiana while I was growing up and I never really had grandparents, but Kim and Brian did, and they had cousins and aunts and uncles. I have taken lots of pictures over the years and made both of my children memory books,

starting from their births. Memories are very important to me, good and not so good. That is probably why genealogy is so important to me, to preserve our family memories. Every person that crosses our lives helps to shape it, and even a lot of the people who came before do the same. We share their traits and coloring and their dispositions. Everyone is important in what they contribute in life, even though they may not win a Nobel Prize.

I hope that I have added as much joy and happiness to the people that I have met along life's journey as they have added to mine; it has given me such wonderful memories. Both of my children, Kim and Brian, and my husband, Ron, have added so much good to my life that it is very easy to remember the problems as being "not so bad after all."

-- Marilyn Martin

Family love and friendships of many years is the thread I identify from what I've written – the love of my family, not just my husband and children but of my mother, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and so forth. This feeling was taught me by Mom and my sisters since my father died when I was six days old – they were all I had. We shared holidays, weddings, new babies, and funerals as life progressed. I long for those days, the fun, teasing, just being together, but now they are just memories, but good memories. Now I try to pass those on to the younger generation. I hope they will have the good time memories, too.

-- Sara Parsons

Bob, I think our visit to you and your family was our most memorable vacation time. It was our first experience on an overseas flight. It was great that you were chauffeuring us around England. Your father had attended many state fairs in Indiana and it was his first time to attend an English fair. Your father talked about our trip over to see you for a while after we got home. The time we spent with you and your family was a treasured time.

-- Erma Dee Wilson



