

The Stepping Stones of My Life

By Judy Fritschen

Stepping Stone I: My Childhood on a Farm

Growing up on a farm taught me to prepare for circumstances that might occur in the future. My father set an example by making the best possible use of the resources at hand to get the best possible outcomes.

The land that my father farmed was terraced to make the best use of the rainfall so as not to waste any water runoff. Crops were rotated from season to season rather than planting the same crops in the same soil so as not to over use soil nutrients since different crops used different nutrients. A variety of crops were planted so that if one crop failed, other crops could still provide income. Crops were fertilized to enhance production and insured in case of failure due to inclement weather such as hail.

The animals we raised on the farm were of a variety of species. This produced several sources of income. We raised cows for milking so we could sell milk as well as use some for drinking. We raised chickens for yummy fried chicken as well as for the eggs. We also sold eggs. We raised pigs for food as well as to sell. We had a large garden where we raised vegetables for our own consumption. We also had a strawberry patch, grape vines, and an orchard with fruit trees. This food was all for our own consumption.

Stepping Stone II: Education

Education was considered of utmost importance in my family. My elementary school years consisted of five years in a country school that was located just down the hill and across the railroad tracks from our farm home. Our farm and the school were on mud roads. The high school I attended was in town about 3 ½ miles from our farm. Eventually our road was graveled and I rode a school bus to and from high school.

Very few students in my neighborhood went to college at that time. However, it was always assumed we kids would go to college. The only options were where we would go and what would be our major.

Stepping Stone III: Jobs

My first job was camp counselor at Geneva Glen Camp in Colorado. Eventually I served as Office Manager for the camp office. After receiving my Bachelor of Science degree from Kansas State University in Home Economics Education, my first teaching job was at Seneca, Kansas. I taught Home Economics to junior and senior high school students.

Stepping Stone IV: Marriage and Family

I met Bill at my first teaching job in Seneca, Kansas. He was teaching vocal music at the same school. We were married the following summer. We raised a daughter and instilled in her the same importance of education that I had as I was growing up. We put aside money for her college education. After graduating from high school she attended and graduated from Kansas University at Lawrence, Kansas.

Stepping Stone V: Retirement

Eventually Bill and I both retired from our teaching positions. However, that was not the end of our productive lifestyles. Bill developed computer data base software for schools. He traveled to various school districts where he sold his product. I got a job at H & R Block. After specialized training, I prepared income tax returns for customers. We both were active in the local AARP chapter and eventually became involved in their free income tax preparation program.

Our daughter and family lived in Littleton, CO. We decided we wanted to be closer to them. We discovered Wind Crest and moved here in 2011. We love it here and we love being close to our daughter and family which includes our two grandchildren. The people at Wind Crest are great. We have become involved in various activities. The experiences here have greatly enriched our retirement years.