
September 26, 2014

REFLECTING BACK TO THE FARM

This was a challenging week for me because of the loss of my mother. Donna Pryor, age 91, formerly of Nemaha, passed away Friday, September 19, 2014 at the Papillion Manor in Papillion, NE.

One co-worker of mine said he hoped in the next few days that I had some time of reflection of fond memories. Another said the loss of a mother is a time of sadness and celebration of the special and unique life that was your mom.

Growing up on a farm south of Nemaha, NE, my mother was always active in school and community activities including 22 years as a 4-H leader in Nemaha County, 50+ years as a musician at the Nemaha Christian Church, Farm Bureau, Sunday School Teacher, Vacation Bible School Coordinator, Extension Club, Good Samaritan Board, Nemaha County Health Board and I am probably not remembering them all.

Back to farm life in the 60's and 70's, my aunt, one year, was in trouble in Moline, Illinois, terminal with cancer. For two summers, my parents hosted three first cousins so our farm family grew from 7 to 10. That's a lot to handle in a small farm house. However, cutting weeds out of the beans suddenly became more efficient.

One week, mom headed up our crew cutting weeds out of beans (before the Roundup era). She told me once she had to fire two loafers while Dad was gone, she didn't enjoy that, but the first cousins and family were never fired, the corn knives fit all our hands pretty well. Those summers created a special bond to this day and the work my mother did herding us wildcats at the time.

My mother surprised the family in November of 2011, the day after my son's wedding, she left her Nebraska roots, where she had spent her entire life, to spend some time with my sister Sharon who also worked as a spiritual caregiver at Grace Assisted Living in Meridian, Idaho (not too far from the famous blue carpet football field in Boise), high mountain desert country. What a beautiful place with the mountain backdrop.

Spiritual services that my sister was involved with and bingo during the week were mother's two favorites. Bingo was a dime a card. One afternoon we both were winning, we were on a roll and enjoying it (not especially the residents at our table), maybe my competitiveness came from my mother.

Then the big move my mother made back to Papillion Manor two blocks from my older brother this past spring. After visiting my mother at assisted living facilities in Auburn, NE, Meridian, Idaho, and the nursing home in Papillion, NE, I have a much greater respect for caregivers, as so many do an amazing job. It truly is a time to reflect back to fond memories on the farm and an appreciation for the effort and life that made my mother special.

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