



Faythe Dyrud Thureen
Class of 1959

In the fall of 1947, I raced my 3 big brothers to the panel school bus that stopped at our farm 5 miles SE of Newfolden. When the bus parked in front of the building that was school, I knew where I was going, and I knew I was going to find a teacher lady who would give me a book to read. It was an exciting day. I loved books and would learn to read them myself.

That was the day I would meet the seven kids who would be my classmates for the next twelve years and would graduate from high school with me in 1959. Those students were Dennis Bakke, Gordon Everson, Shirley Garfve, Patricia Langlie, Renee Martin, and Gwen Moe. I'll add JoAnn Doran to that group, because she would be our classmate for 11 years then move to Detroit Lakes. After graduation, JoAnn and I would be classmates for four years at Moorhead State University, where we would be next door neighbors in Dahl Hall.

A Slice of Life from 1st Grade almost 75 years ago

I did learn to read. My favorite part of the day was sitting on small wooden chairs arranged in a semi-circle in front of the classroom with my reading group. Miss Jacobson sat facing us, introducing Dick, Jane, Baby Sally, Spot, and Puff, teaching us active words that made Spot run and Sally jump. When we got into the advanced readers, we discovered there were parents. "Father said, 'Come, Dick. Come, Jane. Come and see something.'"

Instead of sitting quietly when the other group was with Teacher learning to read, I sometimes turned around and talked to one of my new friend. One day that must have bothered Teacher. She said, "Go and stand outside the door." I wanted to say I would be quiet, but hurried out of the classroom. It was interesting to watch what was going on in the hallway. I saw Keith line up with second graders for a drink from the fountain. Philip was

with the third grade class. I didn't think my brothers saw me. But when we got home, Philip told Mama, "I'm so embarrassed that Faythe is my sister."

Highlights from 4th, 5th, and 6th Grades

Miss Huglen was our 4th grade teacher. I remember well the Geography unit in which we studied the 5 F's of Norway: Farming, Fishing, Forests, Fjords, and Fjell (mountains). Since my mother's parents emigrated from a Norwegian island, Miss Huglen appointed me to play the part of a girl from Norway. I wore a white, embroidered apron, a gift from a cousin from Fitjar and brought cheese made by my mom to share with the class. I felt very special. Little did I know, I would grow up to teach Norwegian, both at the University of North Dakota and in summer school sessions in Norway.

Brother Jonathan's son Micah, accompanied me for one of those sessions in Norway, and Dwight's daughter Anna for another. Both were excellent students in their Auntie Faythe's Norwegian classroom in Moss, Norway, and traveled with me to the island their great grandparents came from to meet 2nd and 3rd cousins. Several of my nieces and nephews also studied Norwegian in my classroom at UND and became good ambassadors in the global society.

An additional 4th Grade memory; Del Lofstrom moved to Newfolden and joined our class. He gave me permission to include here in our highlights from that year this flashback. During noon hour recreation time, Del and I were quite evenly matched wrestling opponents. He doesn't recall it the way I do, however. His comment, "When you won, you cheated!"

Several students from country schools that closed down joined our class in 5th grade. There were too many in one classroom for more, so 6 of us were sent across the hall to join Mrs. Gray's 6th graders. That year I had my first teaching experience. While Mrs. Gray taught her 6th graders, she sent me, an excellent reader since 1st grade, with my 5 male classmates to the cloak hall, where a table was set up for me to read to the boys. It was an interesting, enjoyable time. I wonder if the boys remember and if I helped them become lifetime learners as enthusiastic about books and reading and writing as I've always been!

After lunch in our combined 5th-6th grade classroom, Mrs. Gray read aloud from The Black Stallion series, the first book of which was written by Walter Farley in 1941, the year most of my classmates were born. This is the story of Alec Ramsey, shipwrecked on a deserted island with an Arabian stallion. "The Black Stallion" was followed by "The Black Stallion Returns" and many more. I doubt that Mrs. Gray had a problem maintaining discipline while she read. She had selected a captivating story that kept us all on that island with the wild stallion and Alec who risked his life doing the taming.

Miss Strandquist, our 6th grade teacher who would later become Mrs. Jorgenson, also made reading aloud to the class a high priority, appreciated by the students. She read "The Harvester," "Girl of the Limberlost," and "Freckles," by Gene (Geneva) Stratton Porter, (1863-1924), "one of America's most popular novelists and the best known Indiana author." Long after Miss Strandquist read Porter's books aloud, the characters stayed alive in my mind. So in 1996, on the

way to take Son Paul to Vassar College, we left the freeway in Indiana and found the Limberlost. We walked her paths and enjoyed nature the way the author had photographed and written about it. Her home had been renovated to look the way she left it. I paged through her nature books and bought some of them to continue to enjoy and remember Miss Strandquist's voice introducing us to that Girl of the Limberlost.

In 7th we went into junior high and enjoyed several different teachers. It was the year John Ronald Johnson came to the village of Newfolden to teach English and Language Arts. He had black curly hair and wore a tweed jacket that had the fragrance of pipe tobacco. He read literature in his deep bass voice, as though the poem or story was written for him. The Sundays he came to church and marched in with the choir, he sang bass along with Alton Carlson. Mr. Johnson's wife with reddish hair and three little girls sat near the back of the church, on the edge of a pew. Everyday, I was eager to go to school and listen to him read poetry and introduce us to Early American writers. Gwenny Moen and I would discuss him instead of the literature. Then one day at the end of the first semester, when I came home from school, my dad, who was on the school board informed us that Mr. Johnson had resigned and would be leaving. He would get a sales job that would pay him more than a teacher's salary.

Mr. Johnson's last day of school was a very sad one. Gwenny and I wiped tears. She ripped a page out of her autograph book for me to have him sign. In his beautiful, distinctive handwriting, he wrote something like this.

"There dwelt in those days in the village of Newfolden an unworthy wight by the name of
(signature) John R. Johnson.

With apologies to Washington Irving."

I wonder what became of that gifted teacher, but John R. Johnson is an impossible name for Google to trace.

A Scattering of Memories

—We spent the last day of elementary school each year at the Old Mill. With picnic lunch we each got 2 bottles of pop. Since I never got pop elsewhere, this was a very special treat. I always chose a bottle of orange pop and 1 of grape. Yummy!

—Gordy Everson's mother came from Norway. During Miss Huglen's Norway unit, Gordy told the story of when his mother was skiing down a mountainside and lost one of her skis. Ouch! That picture just appeared in my nearly 80 year-old mind.

—This hyper-active Dyrud kid who was sent out to the hall for disrupting class, changed dramatically. Throughout high school I suffered from painful stage fright. Fortunately, Mrs. Carlson was my 8th grade music teacher. Instead of having her students sing solos in front of the class for grade assessment, she leaned over and listened. Gwen Moen sat next to me, and we sang together. That took away the stress. We actually had fun singing from the new songbooks. "Tell me why the stars do shine, Tell me why the ivy twine, Tell me why the sky's so blue, And I will tell you why I love you."

—One year I took piano lessons from Audrey Martin before school. The first hymn she taught me, while Mrs. Martin brushed her hair, was “Sweet Hour of Prayer.” I think it has 2 sharps. I paid Audrey 75 cents, then ran to school, so I wouldn’t be tardy.

—A Tuesday noon when Christian Fellowship was held, brother Philip tried to persuade me to accompany him on the piano while he sang a solo on “Transformed By Grace Divine.” My stage fright took over, but we made it through.

—In the fall of ’55, students from Holt and Viking joined us for high school. The first day of English, Mr. Collin, the new English teacher captivated the class by reciting “Birches,” by Robert Frost. “When I see Birches bend to left and right ... One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.”

—Home Ec was a new class with 4 little kitchens, each with a new fridge and stove. We learned to make candy for Christmas and packed take-home boxes with fudge and divinity. For the Breakfast Unit, we broke eggs into muffin tins with rings of bacon. That was also a favorite when I made baked eggs at home.

—History class from Mrs. Tunheim was a favorite. Weekly Readers were assigned for Fridays. Then Mrs. Tunheim had students assigned to play \$64,000 Question. The Friday it was my turn to play, I got to the \$32,000 Question, which was “Who was ‘The King on a Shaky Throne?’” I didn’t know the answer, which was “The King of Jordan.” So I didn’t earn \$32,000, But I’ve remembered the answer for the rest of my life!

—Mrs. Borman was my favorite H.S. teacher. She assigned us news pictures to choose for writing a story. I loved imagining that story, and it was obviously a good one. When Mrs. Borman exclaimed enthusiastically after reading it, I knew I would be an author someday. My admiration for her went a bit too far when I ordered from Penney’s an outfit very similar to the one she wore when she played piano at church. The skirt was brown & black plaid with a black, 3/4 length sleeve button-down top. One day I wore my outfit to school the same day Mrs. Borman did. I still feel embarrassed when I think about it and wonder if she noticed.

--Newfalden women apparently decided NHS female graduates should be prepared to go out into the world leaving a positive impression. So the Women’s Study Club invited senior girls to a formal Tea Party. Somehow, I got ahold of a white hat, white gloves, white heels and new nylons that didn’t have runs. I was careful to get the seams straight when dressing for the occasion. Dad dropped me off at the church where the women and senior girls were gathered, all wearing hats. I recall that I was instructed to put the gloves in my purse at teatime. My cup clattered on the saucer when someone, maybe Mrs Ulfers, poured.

I hope I learned that day to leave a good impression wherever I went in the world. Maybe that’s why the bachelor farmer I met in the Louvre in Paris, in 1973, looked at me instead of returning Mona Lisa’s smile.

—We went to Winnipeg for our senior class trip. I distinctly remember that for the banquet at a fine restaurant, our advisor Mr. Ulferts had ordered fillet mignon which many of us left on our plates. Mr. Ulferts was obviously surprised and disappointed, as I’m sure the cost took a chunk out of the trip allowance. He

made a comment that students from Newfolden didn't appreciate good food. This memory returned often on paydays when I taught French and English to H.S. students in Green River, Wyoming. The single teachers and I would head out to a fine restaurant in Little America—to feast on Filet Mignon!

—Special thanks to Marilyn Rokke Gray and her husband Dennis for regularly scheduling and arranging 1959 class reunions. In addition, Marilyn has sent out packets of biographical information from each class member.

In conclusion, I would like to present to you one of the most outstanding graduates of Newfolden High School, Connie Olson. Class of 1959 Valedictorian, Connie was selected by her classmates as the woman student in the categories of Most Cooperative, Best Personality, Best Dressed, Most Courteous, Best-All-Around, and significantly, Most Likely to Succeed.

No one from the class of '59 graduated with a PhD; however, Connie completed the classwork and did the trailblazing research that would provide the foundation for others.

Connie's friends, families, and professors knew that her greatest wish was to complete her Doctoral dissertation. Her tenacity in continuing the writing, as cancer brought increasing pain, fatigue, and impaired concentration. So three professors took on the project of organizing and publishing her research in what would be as close as possible to Connie's own words.

Here's a quote from the Forward provided by these professors. "This monograph contains the soul-searching reflections and scholarly endeavors of Constance O. Donaldson, whose life was cut short by illness in November 2013. Connie was a gifted therapist with intellectual curiosity and great spiritual depth. But it was the caring and compassion she felt for her clients that inspired her to pursue her lifelong search. It was this desire that took her to studies at Pacifica Graduate Institute in California. She completed her coursework successfully and embarked upon this project you now hold in your hands as her dissertation research. She was passionate about it. She pursued her studies while managing to balance a full life of work as a therapist and personal relationships with family and friends. But her illness was aggressive, and in spite of her determination she was unable to complete it. ...However she was devoted to this project until the end. When she was very ill she told us, 'I wake up in the morning, and if I can work on it for 5 or 10 minutes before losing my energy I do it. It gives me great joy.'"

In December 2013, I flew out to Rochester NY to attend Connie's funeral and meet her two gifted daughters and three delightful grandchildren. Judy and Andrea's tributes to their mother and those of Connie's friends and colleagues made me realize I was hearing profiles in greatness. In my mind, I've replayed that farewell service and wish I had made time to get to know better Connie, this farm girl from Viking during the 50 years beyond High School graduation.

In memory of Connie and other classmates, our family is establishing a Class of '59 scholarship fund to encourage MCC youth to further their education.

Faythe Dyrud Thureen - Education - Related Highlights

TEACHING

French Children's Camp - Alsace, France, Summer 1963 English and French - Sauk Centre, MN, 1963-65

In November of my first year, The teacher across the hall called me out of the classroom to inform me that JFK had been assassinated. He told me to let students know before they left to catch the bus. I recall that one student cried inconsolably.

—Green River, WY, 1965-68

—Madagascar - 68-70

English - Malagasy School

French - American School

—UND - 70 -75 - French

While studying in Paris, I met Gordy Thureen, my future husband, in the Louvre while looking for the Mona Lisa.

—UND - Norwegian - 1988 - 2006

—American College in Moss Norway - Summers 2000 & 2005

EDUCATION

Moorhead State University - Bachelor's Degree - 1963 U of

MN - Master's Degree -1965

Post Master's - Norwegian Studies - Summers, U in Oslo, Norway

CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLICATIONS

Jenna's Big Jump - Awards in MN & ND

Troll Meets Trickster on the Dakota Prairie, - Picture Book, with Chris Wold Dyrud, wife of Dwight Dyrud