

D. Marilyn Pederson Nursing Scholarship

Forever optimistic, Marilyn Pederson, had a special gift for brightening the day. This gift made her well suited for her life mission—helping others. As a nurse and a nurse educator, she impacted the lives of many, always sharing a bit of sunshine in her interactions.

Dorothy Marilyn (Hagen) Pederson was the oldest of four children and spent early years living with grandparents when her father was called to serve in the Army during World War II. In 1947, she graduated from Devils Lake Central High School and promptly enrolled in the Saint Luke's School of Nursing in Fargo. Shortly after completing her nurse education, in 1950, Marilyn married the love of her life, J. Harland Pederson. After Harland completed his military obligations, they settled into a home in Lakewood, North Dakota, and began raising a family—Theresa Lynn (1951), Kim Kent (1955), and twins Bruce Conrad and Brian Scott in 1956.

Marilyn's began her nursing career as a private duty nurse at General Hospital in Devils Lake, followed by nursing supervisor on the pediatric and medical/surgical floors at Mercy Hospital. In 1961, she began a thirty-year career at Lake Region State College (formerly Lake Region Junior College) serving as director of the LPN (licensed practical nurse) program until the program closed in 1985. Under her direction, more than one thousand LPNs received their credentials. Her last seven years at the college were spent as Continuing Education coordinator, during which time she coordinated the Elderhos-

tel program where senior adults from all over the country enjoyed a week of learning on campus. For several years following her official retirement, Marilyn continued to teach part-time.

Through the years, Marilyn shared her time and talents with many community groups, serving on the leadership boards for the Eleanor Wilcox Senior Center, the Lake Region Pioneer Daughters, and the Fort Totten State Historic Site Foundation. She worked to bring a renal dialysis unit to the community, on an assisted living initiative, and on many projects focused on improving citizen access to critical health promotion resources.

Marilyn enjoyed the love and support of her Saint Olaf Lutheran Church family and was involved in many church projects. In later life she explored her Scandinavian heritage and genealogy as a member of the Sons of Norway. Marilyn was recognized for her many works when she received the Lake Region Unsung Hero award in 1996. She lived her life passionately and with deepest affection for the community she loved—the Lake Region.

The Marilyn Pederson Nursing Scholarship was established by her family—children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren—and many community members whose lives she touched to encourage and support students pursuing careers as nurse professionals. ♦

