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CHS Bio

Carolyn Whaley Ms. Red Cross



To be honest, and I've heard that honesty is the best policy, my years at CHS were a blur. My copies of the Tom Tom got lost during our many moves over the years, so I can't even refer back to them to find out what I did do! I do remember special girl friends: Nancy Eaton, Peggy Taylor and Sara Weiner. And boys seemed to be important, but none stand out in my mind now. I do recall some wild parties in Craig Ferris' den and going on family outings to the lake with Chuck Higley. I was sad to read that both of those guys are no longer with us.

But, the most meaningful activities for me during those years were being involved with Girl Scouts, the American Red Cross and Methodist Youth Fellowship at Boston Avenue Church. It was those experiences that ultimately shaped my choice of life work. Boston Avenue sent me on a full scholarship to OCU to study Christian Education. Without that I might have ended up at TU and no telling what would have happened to me there! Anyway, I came into my own in Oklahoma City being involved in many campus organizations including Student Council, and was even chosen as an All College Basketball Tournament Princess! For awhile, Bettie Ewert and I were roommates and in the same sorority, Gamma Phi Beta. In spite of all of that, I did finally graduate Magna Cum Laude.

My last semester of college I was required to take a semester of a science, not my strongest suit by any means. It turned out to be a good choice, though, as I met my future husband who taught the course. Amazingly I passed and then moved to Springfield, MO, in January, 1960, to take my first job as Director of Christian Education at a large downtown Methodist church. David soon drove up from OU where he was working on his PhD in geology. He informed me that Springfield was way too far for him to drive to "court" me, so we should be married right away. Being the naive 21 year old that I was, I said "yes"! He chose our wedding date: 6/6/60. I didn't realize the significance of that until much later: "Let the battle be joined"! He still thinks that is funny and repeats it every chance he gets.

For the next 30 plus years we went from one college campus to another as he pursued his career as a geology professor. I continued my education where ever we were, at the University of Rhode Island, Phillips University in Enid (his hometown) and Arkansas State University eventually accumulating enough credits to earn a Masters in Education.

We finally settled in Jonesboro, AR, home of ASU, and lived there for 30 years. It was a great little town in which to raise children and we had two, Kathryn Ann, our oldest, and Wm. Bradley, both born in RI. Kathy lives here in Houston near us and has two girls, Francesca, 12, and Giuliana, 7. She's a corporate communicator/strategic marketer/graphic designer. Brad is an award-winning audio engineer in Nashville with his own recording studio, Fox Mountain, and has a three-year old daughter, Makena Grace. I still don't know where their creative bent comes from! Those three little girls bring me great joy.

While in Jonesboro I dabbled in any number of paid positions trying to determine what I wanted to be when I grew up! I taught 2nd grade for several years while the children were small. Then I worked for a management consulting firm, at First Methodist Church in Evangelism, and eventually became Executive Director of the American Red Cross chapter in Jonesboro, one of my most rewarding positions. Kathy designed and I wrote and edited the chapter newsletter which won the highest reward ARC gives for Communication Excellence. To capture that award, we flew to San Diego to receive it from Elizabeth Dole, ARC president. That was a true highlight for both of us.



After leaving Red Cross, my next challenge was to launch and establish a family-owned business, Vosburg de Seretti, in Houston with Kathy as the graphic designer/marketer while I handled community relations and office administration. To pull that off, I commuted from Jonesboro 600 miles one way to Houston staying here six weeks at a time and then going back to Jonesboro for a week to whip David, Brad and the house back in shape. That went on for several years before David retired and we moved to Nassau Bay on Clear Lake, halfway between Houston and Galveston. We were there eight years trying to build our business before 9/11 pulled the economic rug out from under us. I retired shortly afterwards.

We now live in NW Houston 52 miles further away from the next huge hurricane which is predicted to engulf our lake house with a tidal surge of 25 feet or more.

Kathy and family are only two miles away which is a very good thing as it often does take “a village” to raise children these days. We don’t see Brad in Tennessee as often as we’d like, but do make that road trip frequently.

Shortly after relocating to this side of town, my father had a stroke and Mother had a mini-stroke, so the last 18 months or so my life has changed drastically. I moved them to an assisted living center nearby, Dad died 7 months later, and Mother, soon to celebrate her 90th birthday, is holding her own in this lovely facility which she refers to as “the jail”! I am handling all of her financial affairs and health issues while also trying to manage the family farm in Missouri by long distance . . . no small feat! So, I guess my years of office administration and juggling funds for a non-profit are coming into practical use for the extended family. My next major project is to attempt to sell the family farm near Hannibal which has been in the Whaley family since 1888. It will be sad to let it go, but none of us are farmers, so it must be done.

In my “spare” time, I’m involved in our neighborhood Methodist Church as a Certified Spiritual Director, offering small group spiritual direction opportunities, and working closely with the Prayer Ministry coordinating the intercessory prayer efforts. It is most meaningful, though awfully challenging given the stresses and priorities of most church members in this day and age. But, it is rewarding to see a spark of recognition in someone’s eyes once the reality of God’s love and His personal interest in their daily lives dawns on them, and the process of personal transformation begins at a new depth. There’s nothing like it! For a diversion, I dabble in genealogy and love it although being a family history detective can become very addictive and keeps one up nights thinking about where to investigate next to break through those “brick walls”. I also am doing some inspirational writing and contemplating going hi-tech with Brad’s help to put some of those devotionals into a Podcast format. Don’t know whether that will actually ever come to pass, but it looks promising today as I write this. Who knows?

Sadly, we aren’t planning to come to Tulsa for the reunion as family matters keep me close to Mother and her many issues. But, I know a great time will be had by all and will look forward to hearing all about it after the rest of you recover somewhat.