

Alumni Spotlight: Dorothy Correll '71

Being a teacher doesn't stop at simply educating; the best teachers are those who also engage their students.

According to former students of the now-retired Dorothy (Hamm) Correll, she truly is one of the best, with an outstanding commitment to service and a sense of community that has impacted more than just those who passed through her classroom.

As one of five children, Correll was never without students when she wanted to play school growing up. When the time came to pursue her post-high school education, the Fond du Lac native stayed close to her family and walked to Marian College, now University, every day for four years. When it came to choosing her course of study, Correll's choice was equally natural, and she split her time between earning her education degree and volunteering with third graders at Roberts' Elementary School.

Correll was one of the first participants in Fond du Lac's Big Sisters program, and after graduating in 1971 with a double major in Elementary Education and English she spent her first five years teaching at St. Mary's and St. Joseph's schools. She cites her involvement in volunteering as something that every teaching student should do, as field experience is the best way for students to decide if teaching is what they are really passionate about.



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Volunteerism has been a hallmark of Correll's teaching career from the very beginning. While teaching in Fond du Lac, she stressed the importance of serving the community by

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bringing her students to the Fond du Lac County Mental Health Center to spend time with residents who did not receive many visitors.

After her marriage to Rick Correll, she moved to Racine and then to the Milwaukee area, where she taught for 12 years at Holy Family School in Cudahy and then for 23 years at St. Matthew's in Oak Creek. In Oak Creek, where

Correll and her husband still live, she encouraged her students to volunteer at Franciscan Villa Care Center. The out-of-classroom experience was valuable for the residents who benefitted from the visits and for the students, who learned valuable lessons about community that couldn't be taught in a classroom.

While all of Correll's volunteer projects made a difference in the lives of those involved in them, the project that garnered the most attention was her letter-writing campaign for the United States Military. At the request of her twin brother while he was serving in Vietnam, Correll became a dedicated pen pal to his fellow soldiers who didn't receive as many letters.

Years later Correll passed this mission on to her students, who sent over 3,000 letters to the U.S. Armed Forces during the Gulf War. As more people in the community heard about the letter writing and became involved themselves, the students were given donations, news coverage and put in touch with multiple branches of the military.

Over the years, Correll's former students continue to come back time and time again to thank her for her kindness and for encouraging them to help those in need. It's a legacy that Correll's daughter Jessica, her son Jason and his wife Jenni — all teachers themselves — no doubt hope to emulate in their own careers. ■