



HOLDREGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Giving Back to Education

HHS Alumni Recognition Feature!

Dear HHS Alumni and HPS Foundation Supporters,

Holdrege High School is fortunate to have many very successful graduates. We are excited to continue sharing the stories of some of those HHS Alums thanks to the journalistic talents of Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990.

We also welcome your suggestions and comments and encourage you to join the Duster Alumni Association (*see form below*).

Sincerely,

*Matt Allmand, Chairman
HPS Foundation Committee*

Linoma (Johnson) Wingate - Class of 1967

1967 grad publishes book about Swedish family adventures in Phelps County

by Kristine Jacobson

Linoma (Johnson) Wingate cherishes her time growing up on a farm in northern Phelps County.

Although her life has settled in Lincoln, where she worked as a social worker and mother, the strong draw to her Phelps County roots prompted the 1967 Holdrege grad to write a book called, "How Do I Fit In? A Swedish Family History."

It's the story of her great-grandmother Ida Johnson's daring journey from Sweden to Phelps County in 1882. It depicts the uncertain journey that Ida took on a ship from Sweden and how she made her life in the lonesome prairie of Phelps County with her two brothers.

"This book is a gift to my grandchildren,"



Linoma said. "I want to impress upon them that they are bigger than just themselves. They are a member of this huge generational family. It is also a book of forgiveness, sticking with it, hard work, and the pioneer spirit."

The book highlights Linoma's Christian convictions about how God has a purpose for each person. Linoma (whose nickname was Nomi growing up) knew that God still had a purpose for her after she survived being struck by a car when she was training for the Lincoln Half Marathon in March of 1999.

"I could hear them speaking when I was in the ambulance -- they thought I wasn't going to make it," Linoma said. After almost three weeks in the hospital and months of recovery at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, she slowly recovered to a normal lifestyle.

"I know this is one of my purposes," Linoma said about the book. "I know this book is something I was purposed to do."

A few other events in her life gave her the final push to get started on the book. Linoma said a 2006 visit to a small wooden shack on the prairie where her great grandmother's brother, One-Eyed Charlie, lived inspired her even further. Also in 2006, she traveled to Sweden and connected with the descendants of relatives who stayed in Sweden. Her father, LaVern H. Johnson, traveled to Sweden in 1998 and, with the help of Linoma's sister, Sandra, found relatives who still live on the original farm.

The book keeps the reader's interest with tales of business and farm successes and failures on the prairie, adventure, possible murder, suicide, and relationships. It took Linoma six years to write the book, which she self-published in 2013. But, writing a book was never something she dreamed she would do.

She attended the District 83 rural school until 8th grade. She was the youngest of four children born to LaVern and Pauline Johnson.

"I am so thankful for my farm background," Linoma said. She recalls the freedom she had on the farm, the creativity she learned by having to entertain herself, and the work ethic she learned by helping with the chores. She especially enjoyed bringing the cows home from the pasture on her horse. "I remember riding my horse and seeing these beautiful sunsets," she said.

When she was old enough to baby-sit, she watched the neighbor's children, earning 35 cents an hour. She saved enough money to buy her first bicycle. In high school, she was involved in band, playing the French horn, and enjoyed her band instructor Verle Straatman and her typing teacher, Jim Van Marter. After graduating with a class of about 120 students in 1967, Linoma attended Kearney State College for one year and then transferred to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She graduated in 1972 with a degree in human development and elementary education.

"What I wanted to do was social work," she said. "I was so naïve that I thought I could change the world." She began her career with the Nebraska Center for Children and Youth in Lincoln, where she was a house parent for teen-age girls who lived there. She then worked for Lancaster County in protective services, where she was a family support worker.

"I saw a lot of families just coming out of crisis," she said. It was hard to see the abuse and neglect that some children endured.

Because of what she saw, she spent some time working for the Royal Family Kids Camp, which was a Christian camp started by Ron Brown that allowed children who are wards of the state to go to camp for five days. "We gave them a week of wonderful fun," she said.

When Linoma started her own family with her husband, Wayne, she decided to put her career on hold and homeschooled her two daughters for some time.

Linoma went back into social work after her daughters were grown and now is "semi-retired," working part-time as a lunch server at Lincoln East High School. The part-time work gave her time to write her book, which she was able to complete thanks to the example of her parents.

"My background is hard-work and sticking to it," Linoma said. "My parents stayed on a farm and they worked hard and they weren't quitters."

Linoma's daughter, Heather, lives in Lincoln and her daughter, Amanda, now lives in Oregon. She has five grandchildren.

Although her grandchildren aren't old enough to read the book yet, the story of their family history will be there when they are.

"It is my hope that you will gain some understanding of how you fit into this wild and crazy world by getting to know the people you come from," she wrote to her grandchildren on the book's dedication page.

Linoma's book can be purchased from www.barnesandnoble.com or www.amazon.com.

About Us

The mission of the HPS Foundation is to support and enhance the educational efforts of students and teachers of Holdrege Public Schools by providing funding for innovative and challenging programs, learning experiences, and activities.

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