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A Homemaker's Life for Me

By: Michael Brinkley

Flipping through the dusty pages of an old yearbook can bring back good and bad memories. The other day while thumbing through the pages of my old yearbook, I paused for a moment. There it was, a picture of my home economics teacher Mrs. Martin. See, she passed away a few years ago, but the memories of the class periods and FCCLA or FHA trips past are still fresh in my mind.



We have all heard the statement that appearances can be deceiving, and such was the case with Mrs. Martin. She was a short, stocky woman with glasses and thinning, gray hair, but don't let that fool you. What Mrs. Martin lacked in vertical stature she made up for with passion, willingness and stubbornness. She was a crass little lady on the surface, but a deeper look would have revealed a heart of gold. Love for her students and fellow faculty members was something she wore just as proudly as she wore her apron. Just a few moments with her and you could get a sense of her love for her students and her job.

During the cooking section of each class, Mrs. Martin would bring out food of all kinds and give cooking demonstrations. What a lot of her students did not know is that the food they were eating, most of the time, Mrs. Martin had paid for out of pocket. She would buy expensive cuts of meat and fruit, which in turn she would share with her sometimes ungrateful students. Never would she complain about the cost of the food or for her having to pay for it herself. Rarely did she ask anything in return.

Inventing new ways of raising money for the FCCLA, or FHA, chapter was also one of her strong suits. One of her ideas would in a short time grow into a great project. Mrs. Martin's idea was to sell seven inch, decorated heart-shaped cookies for Valentine's Day. This project grew into epic proportions. Each year, about a month before Valentine's Day, we would start to bake the heart-shaped cookies. The cookies were then frozen until time for them to be decorated, a few days before the holiday. Every year hundreds of these cookies were delivered to the citizens of Erick to spread the love, so to speak. No matter how many hours it took, Mrs. Martin would not leave until the work for that day was complete. That is just the kind of person that she was. It saddened

the students the day that it was decided not to make the cookies anymore. Her health had gotten too bad to handle the stress of the massive project.

Day by day she showed love to her students through acts of kindness. As a side project to teaching, Mrs. Martin decorated cakes. On one of her orders she messed up the bottom layer of a cake, and at the time she said it was a thirty-dollar mistake. The next day, after realizing what had happened, she brought the cake to school and shared it with all the students.

One life lesson she taught me was that no matter what, you should stand up for what you believe. I had grown up in the same church that she attended. This added to the relationship between the both of us. She always encouraged me in school as well as at church.

Mrs. Martin was the best when it came to the support of an after-school Bible study group that I was leading at the time. There was one day in particular that will always stick in my mind. My fellow praise band members and I had planned an after-school concert. The plans were made with the school's approval, and we set up to have a big concert after school. To our surprise no one attended the concert. Mrs. Martin saw me walking up the hall heartbroken and was there to encourage me. Later that week, she got up in front of church and asked that the church pray for the study group. Because of what she did that day, the Bible study group is still meeting over eight years later.

To most students, Mrs. Martin was a pest, but they never took the time to get to know her. She was known to most students as the woman who gave too many gross details and was a little too cranky and crazy. Had more students taken the time to get to know her, the story might have been different. Yes, she did sometimes assign hard homework, but most of the time it was to help us learn a valuable life lesson.

So watch out, you may never know. The instructor of your least favorite class may turn out to be your favorite teacher.