

### The Marilyn Burch Memorial Fund

Marilyn Burch was born on August 19, 1926 in Hamlet, Indiana to Dwight and A. Marguerite (Vieting) Burch. She was a lifelong educator who had discovered her passion for teaching while working as a teacher at the Ober School in order to pay for her college tuition. She later worked at the Hamlet Elementary School and the Elkhart Community Schools, where she taught mainly sixth grade. She retired after teaching for nearly thirty years.

Marilyn was very involved in her community as a member of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, the Starke County Extension Club *Cheaper by the Dozen*, and the Starke County Historical Society. She was also a Charter Member of the Starke County Genealogy Society and a lifelong member of the National Education Association.

Marilyn loved learning and was the first person in her family to pursue a college education. She graduated from Hamlet High School in 1944 and began studying chemistry until she found her love of teaching. She graduated from Valparaiso University in 1950 and received her master's degree from Colorado University in 1960. She loved to explore the wonders of the world through books, and she even started a new book the day she passed away.

Marilyn shared the joy of learning with her fourteen nieces and nephews, and she often took them on trips to sights, museums, and various destinations across the country. She supported them throughout college, and they celebrated her devotion to them on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with a trip to the Mecca of genealogists: Salt Lake City, Utah.

Genealogy was certainly one of Marilyn's passions. She also enjoyed photography, music, and computer technology. She even organized and led a computer club while staying in Florida throughout the winter in order to help interested seniors become computer literate. Her family remembers her as a person who took on many challenges. Warren and Sherry recalled one time when she decided to install an underground sprinkler system by herself, and did so successfully! She also over-hauled a lawn mower for a neighbor once. She was very adventurous, and her loved ones fondly remembered her spontaneity and fearlessness.

Marilyn enjoyed the outdoors and remained active and energetic. As a child, she was a tomboy who loved climbing trees and playing softball. She was even a proficient golfer into her eighties! She loved hiking and taking camping trips in the mountains. One of her favorite excursions was a canoe and hiking trip down the Missouri River after her retirement. She found joy in life, inspiring her students and family.

Marilyn touched the lives of both adults and children, and she loved seeing others achieve their goals and find success. She passed away on July 19, 2012 after a short illness, and the following year, her brother, Warren Burch, and his wife, Sherry, wished to commemorate his sister by establishing a fund through the Community Foundation in Marilyn's name which would support local charities. They desired to honor their memory of her as a joyful, caring person and a lifelong educator.

The fund will support local charitable organizations in honor of Marilyn, including The Fletcher Cemetery, the Starke County Historical Society, and St. Matthew Lutheran Church of Hamlet.

