

# May All Who Are Honored be Cherished as Fondly

*Norma Jespers Remembered in Seventy-Seven*

Richard Jespers '70 wrote to *The Southwesterner* in the spring:

*I was delighted to read the "Focus on Friends" feature in the spring edition about Harold Deets. He and his late wife were attendants at the marriage of my parents, Louis and Norma Jespers, in April 1945, and the article stimulated my thinking about my mother and how much she loved SC.*

*Last year I made the decision to make sure my mother's name was on one of the new Seventy-Seven Steps. To many who trod those steps each day, it is a name only, and so I wanted to share with other readers of *The Southwesterner* how much her life meant to those who loved her.*

While at SC, Mother majored in elementary education and sang in the A Cappella Choir. When I began to teach in the '70s, she handed over portfolio boxes full of photographs that she had categorized carefully; other boxes were rife with poems and stories she'd clipped from various sources. Sadly, she never used these files except during practice teaching, but I was able to laminate some of them and employ them from time to time in my classroom.

But even if she never taught in a school, she became the first teacher that my brother and sister and I encountered in life. When we lived on an air base, she taught me to categorize by learning

Mother herself continued to be an avid reader, until the day she died.

Mother once filled out a questionnaire concerning how she had spent her life. In the category of profession there existed no spot to check "homemaker and mother." She seemed a bit puzzled. She considered it an honor to have served her husband, three children, and her own parents. Indeed, she continued to lay down her life for my disabled sister, who remained a child in her mind for 40 years. The toll that must have taken on Mother's mind, her body, her spirit! Yet she persevered, seldom complaining.

Through the years she always supported SC financially. She strongly believed in the liberal arts tradition combined with the opportunity to strengthen one's faith through knowledge. Her commitment to the United Methodist Church remained constant her entire life.

When SC offered alumni the opportunity to purchase one of the steps of the new Seventy-Seven, I thought, *What a wonderful way to pay tribute to someone who loved SC as much as my mother.* If the first Seventy-Seven Steps lasted nearly a hundred years, I reasoned, then perhaps the second set would endure at least that long, keeping her name in view of others for well into the next century, perhaps lasting until her two-hundredth birthday, in 2122.

Well, one can wax a bit quixotic about these matters, but let me say once



**NORMA JESPERS'** photo albums contain black-and-white memories of May Fete and snow on the 77 Steps.

My mother, Norma Richards Jespers, loved Southwestern College. I think she loved it even more because she nearly failed to matriculate. The year after she graduated from Norwich High School, in 1940, she volunteered to stay home with her mother, who had fallen ill. Much to my grandfather's credit, he saw to it that Mother began her career at Southwestern a year later.

Her albums are plump with black-and-white photos of her and her chums, with whom she lived in the home of a woman they called Mom Miller at 404 College—photos of the May Fete, photos of life in their rooming house, and photos of a snowy Seventy-Seven. I looked at these photos many times as a child, and I believe they in no small way convinced me that I might like to attend SC one day myself.



all the car names and



models; she taught us to love music by playing and singing herself; she taught us to love literature by reading to us. She once ran lines with me every evening for weeks, while I prepared for the part of a prince in my third grade play. To this day, a work of literature can still excite me, seeming richer than life itself.

again: Norma Jespers loved Southwestern with all her heart. I remember once in particular, both of us standing on the Seventy-Seven following my senior organ recital in 1970, discussing the future and what directions it might take.

May the new Seventy-Seven provide a place for countless other students and their parents to gaze out and view the future that beckons them to live, love, and serve others, perhaps the greatest of all traditions at Southwestern College. And may all the persons whose names are honored on each step be remembered and cherished as fondly as Norma Jespers.

—Richard Jespers '70

## Syllabus: Spanish Students Study in Cyberspace

### Boot up, begin class

When Lindsay Morgan and Andrea Maxwell arrived at the classroom for their Spanish final in May they discovered something unusual: a Spanish professor.

With shrieks of delight, the students introduced themselves to Armando

Armandariz, their professor, and for the first time ever, shook his hand.

The five students enrolled in Spanish Conversation and Composition had attended class in the second story of Christy Administration Building throughout the spring, but Armandariz taught from the Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso, Texas. He made the trip to Kansas to surprise his students for their final and to meet academic

dean Andy Sheppard, who had initiated and encouraged the technologically-enhanced class.

Armandariz, a graduate and former instructor of the Lydia Patterson Institute, lives in Juarez, Mexico, where he owns a language consulting business. The soft-spoken translator is a native speaker of Spanish, but speaks accent-free English.

With the assistance of SC's telecommunications consultant, Tad Humphrey (who audited the class), equipment was put in place in Winfield and El Paso that allowed the class to be held over the internet. Students and instructors interacted freely, with voice-activated cameras and microphones picking up instructions and responses. Instead of watching their professor in the flesh, students saw him on a large-screen television. High-quality resolution allowed Armandariz to check pronunciation and exactness of his students' accents.

"This was the first time I have taught a video class, and it was very satisfying," he says. "The only thing I had to get used to was volume regulation."

At this his students erupt into laughter.

**Distance is no longer a constraint on the quality of faculty we can attract, and that can only enhance the SC student experience.**

— Andy Sheppard

"When I met him, I couldn't believe how quiet he is," said junior Lindsay Morgan. "He always seemed so loud during class."

This is the second time SC has ventured into the world of the interglobal classroom. A philosophy class from the University of Glasgow's Chrichton Campus in Scotland was attended simultaneously by Scots and Moundbuilders during the spring of 2004. There the biggest challenge turned out not to be technological but chronological—with a six-hour difference in time zones, SC students attended this evening class before their classmates ate lunch.

The success of the internet classes will undoubtedly lead to expansion of offerings in the future, Sheppard says.

"With this technology, the world literally becomes our classroom," he explains. "Distance is no longer a constraint on the quality of faculty we can attract, and that can only enhance the SC student experience."



Andrea Maxwell discusses her final paper with Spanish professor Armando Armandariz as Dean Andy Sheppard looks on.