

MEMORIES & LESSONS: Still striving for the best

While cleaning in an effort to avoid writing this article, I came upon a letter I hadn't seen in decades. It was from my Aunt Letty, better known to some of you as Sister Mary Paul Buser, president of Marymount College. She sent me the letter to congratulate me on my high school graduation and to welcome me to Marymount, saying that she looked forward to being known on campus as "Loretta's aunt." While I don't think that ever really came to pass and we saw each other far less than we could have — a regret on my part — it was a delight to have my favorite aunt on campus my first two years.

So many memories come to mind:

- Visiting my sister Mary and staying in Antoinette Hall when I was 12. Bathrooms are so hard to find in a round building.
- Visiting again my senior year and being left in the capable hands of Patty Reed and Becky Reedy Wilmott. I doubt they remember my visit but I still remember that Saturday night! What I didn't know for years is that Aunt Letty picked me up from the dorm on Sunday morning so that she could hear about my night before my parents did.
- The incredibly always cold, always windy walk up the steps to get to class from Antoinette Hall.
- The Village Gate...
- Michael Sonshine with his look-alike Einstein mug.
- Dr. Urion suggesting to me in that first advising session that I go ahead and major in mathematics as well as Business Computer Science. I was so happy I could do both.
- Michael Sheehy just smiling and shaking his head at what I had said most recently.
- A very short career as a boxing ring-girl, which I explained to my parents was far better than mud-wrestling in a bar which is what the girls from Kansas Wesleyan were doing.
- Riding my bicycle from my uncle's house to my apartment my senior year with a backpack of Tony's pizza rejects because groceries were expensive.
- Learning from a presentation in freshman English that "A weed is just a flower in the wrong place." I suspect that I would look back fondly on my col-

lege years no matter where I spent them but Marymount offered special opportunities to do and experience things that would have been harder to do in a larger environment.

When it was time to leave Marymount, I decided on Colorado where I had three sisters. Despite my dad's desire that I broaden my job search, I applied to one company to be a computer programmer and have now been here for 32 years. Happily for me, in a large corporation it is possible to stay in one place while completely changing what you do.

I have developed software, managed computer operations and technology introductions, led 24/7 call centers and represented the company as an expert witness in state hearings and with the Federal Communications Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice.

I now lead a small team responsible for ensuring compliance with state and federal telecommunications and cable laws and regulations. Hard to imagine but it is more fun than it sounds.

My thirst for learning that was nurtured at Marymount has never abated. I went back to school with each child because working full time and having an infant is perfectly conducive to studying.

This resulted in a master's degree in Telecommunications with my daughter, a graduate certificate in Professional Project Management with my middle son and an Executive MBA with my youngest son. My incredibly supportive husband has promised I can go back to school when I retire. Until then, I love coursera.org and edx.org.

I left Marymount with the confidence that I could take on challenges — that succeed or fail, I would learn from the experiences. I continue to cram experiences into every waking moment.

In 2015, I took on my biggest physical challenge.

Nine years ago my daughter asked me to run a 5K with her. The last time I remembered running three consecutive miles was at Marymount in 1982 but

Alumni UPDATE

LORETTA
BUSER HUFF
CLASS OF '83



Loretta Buser Huff (MMC '83) and her husband Bob pose in front of his time at the Ironman Boulder finish on Aug. 2, 2015. The Huffs live in Golden, Colo.

when a teenager asks you to do something with her, you say yes.

From that very slow 5K, I built up to last summer doing my first Ironman triathlon — a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride, followed by a 26.2 mile run. Some people do it in under 9 hours; I did it in 15:48:26 and loved it. I am already planning for a faster effort in 2017.

Some of my compulsion to not waste a moment is because my family has been touched too many times with Alzheimer's disease.

My great-grandfather, my grandmother, my dad and his generation and one of my brothers have all been stricken with the disease. I volunteer at the Alzheimer's Association doing data entry, serving on the speaker bureau and the annual Walk committee and doing whatever else is needed. And I work to build fun memories with my family in case there is a time when the memories created will be more bitersweet due to illness.

When it was time for my oldest to head to college, I encouraged her to look at small Catholic colleges. I gave her several reasons but the number one reason was that at a school like Marymount, the goal was not just to educate me academically but to help me learn to be a good person. I keep striving to meet that standard.