**Memories of Lucille Rochs**

Lucille Rochs really was a woman with no equal.   How fortunate we were that Lucille chose to “retire” in Fredericksburg!  But of course she didn’t retire.  She started a whole new life and accomplished a lifetime of good works after age 70.

           Lucille’s first life was that of an educator extraordinaire.  Did you know she was instrumental in developing the Early Child Program at San Antonio College?  That’s after years of service in several San Antonio Independent School Districts as a teacher, principal and assistant to the superintendent.

She didn’t start early as an educator—she was over 40 when she received her bachelor degree and later her master degree in education.  However, her life as an educator lasted well past the usual retirement age. She continued to support education in her community service and legislative endeavors culminating with the role she played in bringing higher education to Fredericksburg.

            Lucille was initiated into the DKG chapter of Beta Tau in San Antonio over 50 years ago and transferred to Beta Zeta chapter in Fredericksburg when she moved.    Lucille loved Delta Kappa Gamma and cherished her membership.  I honestly could picture Lucille sitting with our founders hashing out the details of a new organization.  She would have been the most outspoken one!   Many in DKG across the state knew and respected her.  She served in many chapter offices and state committees.

She was a regular at the state conventions, with her last one in 2010 in Waco.  She was 95 years old.   Lucille was always in great shape due to daily walks and taking such good care of herself.  Our group wanted to eat lunch a little ways down the street from the hotel.  We told Lucille one of us would drive her, but he others wanted to walk.  She said, “I can walk.”  Off she went and we were left huffing and puffing trying to keep up with her.

She also went with us to the Corpus Christi convention just before that.   She wanted to drive herself, but we insisted she ride with one of us.  She had just passed her 45th year in DKG.  Given her age, we didn’t know if she would still be able to travel to be recognized for achieving 50 years in DKG, so we asked the convention chairman if there was any way she could be mentioned at the convention.

In the meantime, Lucille had received an invitation to a niece’s wedding in Port Aransas the Friday of convention.  She rented a car and told us she would see us Saturday as she was going to the wedding and spending the night there.  We were pretty worried when we didn’t see her the next morning at the early business meeting.  However, when the state membership chairman gave her report at about 9:00 a.m., she said she wanted to recognize a special lady, Lucille Rochs, for her years in DKG and faithful attendance at conventions even at age 94.  However, she had been told that Lucille wasn’t there because she drove herself to a wedding.

All of a sudden from high in the balcony of the auditorium, we heard a clear voice,  “ I’m here.  Here I am!”.  There was Lucille waving her arms to get everyone’s attention.  There was thunderous applause and a standing ovation.   I remember sitting among the chapter presidents at the front of the auditorium and proudly telling them, “She’s ours.  She’s a member of our chapter.  She’s amazing and we love her so much.”

Another favorite remembrance of Lucille was her performance in a skit at our Founders’ Day banquet one year. The skit was about how Beta Zeta helped start three other chapters through the years in the Hill Country.  Not content to just read the history, Lucille starred in the skit to tell the story.  At age 85 or so, she played a very pregnant woman in advanced labor complete with much wailing and writhing.  Her "offspring", of course, were the 3 rural chapters that were started by Beta Zeta.  That was, without a doubt, the liveliest Founders’ Day we ever had.  (We had visitors at that meeting who must have thought we had all lost our minds.)

            In Fredericksburg, she became well-known as a no-nonsense leader who always gave her honest opinion.  My husband was honored to have served with Lucille on the city council for two terms. Honesty was her middle name.   I remember one Fall, he asked her if she was going to run for a 3rd term on the council the next Spring.  She said, “I think I’m going to wait and see if I’m still alive.”  Well that was over 15 years ago, and Lucille just kept going and going.  She also served on the hospital board for 18 years, serving as the first woman president, the Child Services Board, and the Golden Hub Senior Center board, among many of her positions.

She became very well-known at the state capitol.  Our representatives not only listened to her, but also sought out her opinion.  She helped further the causes of rural hospitals and early childhood education.  When Fredericksburg leaders went to the capitol to lobby for funding for higher education in Fredericksburg, Lucille was front and center.

The story is told that when a large contingent of Fredericksburg leaders marched into the capitol to request the funding, a legislative aide asked, “Who are those people?” Someone replied, “I don’t know who they are, but that’s Lucille Rochs.”

           Many years later, Lucille took our DKG chapter for a field trip to the capitol.  Even then, we saw people greet her by her first name.  The respect she commanded was amazing.  Lucille was Beta Zeta’s Legislative chairman for many years.  She always had a report!  When she became frailer and talked less at meetings, we asked her once if she had anything she wanted to say.  She said simply, “GO VOTE!”

Fredericksburg had a great celebration for Lucille’s 95th birthday. Here is the complete article that was published in the *San Antonio Express* about Lucille on this birthday:  <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/article/At-95-she-s-Hill-Countrycivic-leader-923028.php>.  She was presented with a resolution of recognition from our state representative in the Texas legislature.

She was recently honored once again on April, 2015 at the state capital with 2 other long-time civic leaders from Fredericksburg.  At almost 100 years old, she was able to travel to Austin, and receive yet another commendation.

Lucille is my hero and my mentor.  She is my “most unforgettable character”.  I am so glad God let us keep her for 100 years. In our chapter, we have celebrated her every chance we got.   Lucille loved to be recognized, but I never thought it was just for herself.  I think that it was more to inspire and encourage people to simply do good in the world.  Don’t rest on your laurels.  Go make a difference in the world.  Lucille was my mentor, my friend, my hero.  To me, she is everything a DKG woman should be.  When I grow up, I want to be just like Lucille.

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