

MY GRANDMOTHER

My grandmother possesses a vigor and verve that has spanned classrooms, living rooms, tennis courts, and meeting halls. She taught my dad how to throw a football and won city tennis tournaments with my grandfather. In middle age, she returned to school to earn an advanced degree in counseling. As a little kid, I tended to worry, and her presence has always been calming. She showed me how to meditate.

Her commitment to the ideals of Moravian community and interest in the church's history guided my growth into adulthood. When I had to impersonate an important historical figure in high school, she pointed me to books on Moravians and helped me craft my Count Zinzendorf. She has embodied aspects of the Moravian tradition that I appreciate most: free thinking, inner peace, active social engagement, and the fusion of the spiritual and intellectual.

Her energy could land her in trouble. Concerned about blood clots, a doctor ordered a stretching stop during her drives between Winston-Salem and Bethlehem for board meetings. It wasn't that she hadn't been forced to stop before – state troopers frequently slowed her down.

She was an original recycler. Anything glass or plastic outlived its original function. Plants sprouted from sour cream containers. In the refrigerator, old jars with cryptic masking-tape markings held a rainbow of liquids. A plastic pretzel bin doubled as a trophy case.

The way she carries herself today amazes me. She's been forced to trade the gas pedal and the tennis court for a wheelchair and the confines of a retirement community, but she remains buoyant. Her body has slowed her down, but her eyes still gleam.

When she's able to make it to church these days, she's mobbed after services like a rock star. "I'm so glad to see you," she begins each conversation with every person she encounters. Wife, mother, and grandmother, friend and counselor, quarterback and rock star: my grandmother is an inspiring Moravian woman.

Submitted by:

Jonathan Hancock

Carrboro, North Carolina