

ROSE NEHRING

I love the idea of honoring women in the Moravian Church. Women are such an important and significant part of the Moravian Church. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to honor the woman who has been more of an influence on my life than any other woman I know. I love that this exhibit gives me an opportunity to honor and pay tribute to the number one woman who influenced me and my faith and continues to influence me even today. I doubt that she even knows what an influence she has been to me.

How does a woman influence a young child? What makes her more influential than other women? Rose Nehring is that woman for me.

Mrs. Nehring is the first person to come to mind for me as the woman who influenced me as a child, as a teen, as an adult and even now as a senior citizen, even though her husband Art and she moved on to other assignments with the Moravian Church, and I wouldn't see them for many years, although I would occasionally bump into Art Nehring on my walks around Bethlehem and chat for a moment, or see her at Women's meetings. I would not see her again for a long time following my move to Texas, yet she continued to influence me because of her character, her consistency, her love for me while I was a child. It isn't so much what she did as who she is, as a Moravian Woman.

She and her husband were the pastor and wife at the church when I was growing up. Art Nehring confirmed me. There she was, participating, among other areas, in Moravian Women's Fellowship with my mother, singing in the choir -- alto like me. There she was, listening carefully when people spoke to her or with her husband, sometimes just standing nearby, quietly watching and waiting. A quick laugh. Always a quiet acknowledgement of my being a person of value to God -- something I didn't commonly feel otherwise. I could sense that she wanted me to succeed in whatever I chose to do with my life, to be a good Moravian, a Christian woman, to influence my world as she was influencing hers, but most of all to love God and love others. But she had such an influence on me at that time that she continues her influence on me even today.

My earliest memory of a church setting as a very small child is sitting on a little red wooden red chair in the corner of a basement of a small house near where I grew up, having a Sunday School lesson, later learning that that house would become the parsonage for a future Mountainview Moravian Church in Hellertown, PA, and that the Nehrings would move there.

Rose Nehring, along with her husband Art, influenced my beliefs and conduct, my trust in the Scriptures even as a very young child, my love of God and my belief that He loves me, my love for the Moravian Church and what it means to be Moravian, my love of music and singing in the choir, the love for and understanding of the traditions of the Moravian Church, my love for the history of the Moravian Church, my morals and ethics, and yes, even the selection of a good husband.

A picture stands out in my mind of their dog Mugsy, as he ran out of their house to play in the adjoining field, ignoring pleas from Mrs. Nehring to return. After calling several times, she disappeared into her house, calling, "Art!?" and then reappeared within seconds with his dog whistle. That awesome dog cruised around in a circle and raced back to her. This lesson

influenced me when I was later to become a dog trainer. So even in the every-day life she influenced me by her attitude and demeanor. As a young child, I learned how a Moravian responds to crisis.

Whenever I needed encouragement, or the influence of a good woman, or needed to face an emotional challenge, Mrs. Rose Nehring's face always came to mind, and still does, even today. Because of her consistency, she reminds me of what a Moravian woman should be.

When I moved to Texas, far away from the influence of the Moravian Church, there they were, ready to acknowledge my questions of how to fit in, in a "far-off land."

Now that I'm a pastor's wife, I find myself reflecting on "what would Rose Nehring do? How would she respond to this? What would a Moravian Woman do?" She is still encouraging me, even now, even though I'm far away from the church where she worships, participates, and the Moravian area where she contributes. There she is -- whether it's serving with Moravian Women, leading a study, participating in Synod, worshipping in the choir, quietly leading.

When I think of Count Zinzendorf's wife, who is said to have "never been out of countenance", I see the face of Rose Nehring. This is not idol worship, but a response to a dynamic influence she has on me. It is an influence that I believe we are to share with our younger generations. Mrs. Nehring does this for me. I see her as a Moravian woman, and I want to be like her.

Thank you, Rose Nehring. I just want you to know what an influence you are to me and to the woman I became. Although I have not succeeded in "never being out of countenance," I hope I am influencing a child the way you influenced me. Thank you!

Sincerely and respectfully submitted,

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