

## Teacher, Mentor, Friend

Teacher, mentor, friend are the three words that come to mind when I think of my relationship with Mrs. Geraldine Walker, known by all as Jerry. Our first meeting was in the early 1970's. That is when I started second grade and was excited to learn that Mrs. Walker would be my teacher. During that year in Mrs. Walker's class, she helped me improve my reading skills, she awarded me the prize for winning a spelling bee. (I still have my prize of an initial pin), she taught me self control as I had a habit of talking during class, and she helped me process grief as our second grade class lost a classmate that year.

Fast forward to 1985, Mrs. Walker and I became colleagues as I began my teaching career at Milan Elementary School. She was still teaching second grade. I was teaching first grade. Even though we weren't working with the same grade level, she was 2 rooms down from me. If I had questions about what my first graders needed to be working on, I could walk to her room for some advice. We spent several years working together until she retired in the early 90's.

Then, in 1995, I was invited to join Mu Chapter. Mrs. Walker was already a member and this began our 25 years of Mu Chapter fun. By now, I felt that we had achieved first name basis. We attended most meetings together as I was the driver. Jerry was always ready for a trip or adventure. At times, she would look at me and say, "We're going, aren't we?" We attended chapter meetings and outings, a state convention, and the International convention in Indianapolis. She was looking forward to the 2019 convention but unfortunately was unable to attend.

During our many car trips, we talked about numerous things. She told me about her American Indian heritage and trips to Oklahoma to visit her siblings. We discussed her teaching career. I learned how she met the love of her life, Henry. She always told me about her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. She has 4 children, 9 grandchildren, and 11 great grandchildren. She loved sports, football, basketball, and baseball and attended most MHS home games up until 2 years ago. Lastly, she loved to travel.

While Jerry is unable to attend meetings any longer, I will always cherish our time together. We made so many special memories. She loved being an active member of Delta Kappa Gamma. And so now, I try my best to carry on for the both of us by attending meetings, inviting new members, and feeling the pride of being a DKG member. What started out as a teacher/student relationship has evolved over many years. I am so lucky to have Jerry as my friend.