



Loretta F. Miller

Education

Loretta F. Miller, a favorite teacher of many students at the South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDAD), was born July 29, 1933 at a midwife's home in Humboldt, South Dakota, Population 500, affectionately know statewide as "a small town with a big heart." At that time, here family was living in nearly Huntimer, SD. She was the eighth of ten children in the Tom and Deed Varns family.

Coincidentally, the town Humboldt is also the birthplace of another SDSD teacher extraordinaire, Larry Puthoff, who, like Miller, was much loved and revered by the student population that was entrusted to his care.

The first four years of Miller's education were spent at Huntimer County School; grades four through seven at Chester School; and grades eight through 12 at Colton High School where she graduated in 1951.

Miller received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from Sioux Falls College (USF) on May 29, 1955. In the summer of 1955, she attended Northwestern University at Evanston, Illinois where she undertook intensive training in the institution's reputable Deaf Education program.

In the fall of 1955, Miller was hire by Superintendent Arthur Myklebust to teach high school English and Language Arts, an immaculate professional career that lasted until her retirement in 1995 – 40 years of outstanding academic work with and for deaf children in her self-made environment of warmth, cooperative spirit, and positive expectations. "Deaf children can do anything except hear" was her rule.

In recognition of her distinguished career, she was the first and only teacher in SDSD history to have ever been bestowed the coveted Sioux Falls Area Teacher of the Month Award for exceptional personal and professional contributions.

Dr. Frank R. Turk, SDSD superintendent, 1989 – 1991, has nothing but raves about Miller both as a teacher and as a motivator. To quote him: "Loretta Miller was among those outstanding teachers of the deaf with whom I have worked during my 57-year career in Deaf Education. To be considered as an outstanding teacher of the deaf, that Person has to possess the unusual talent for seeing behind the difficulties of the students" effort to master the language to find the asses they have and has the remarkable ability to motivate them to use those latent abilities on their own. Loretta was such a teacher and She had the unique ability to convince the children that they have potential for literacy greater than they have been led to believe. All SDSD teachers during my administration were irrevocably dedicated to students. They worked with them in the classroom and beyond, the 24/7 teachers of deaf children to be emulated nationwide. " Loretta was one of them.

Presently in her retirement, Miller enjoys playing bridge, Mah Jongg, associating with many of her friends-for-teachers. She serve as president of the South Dakota Achieve Auxiliary, 2008 – 2010.

She and her husband, Duane, spend quality time with the families of their children, Jane and Richard. Jane and her husband, Edward Wahl, have 5 children. Richard and his wife, Tammy, have four. The collective family also includes three great grandchildren.