

## Education

# Charlotte VanBockern



Charlotte VanBockern was born and raised on a farm near Inwood, Iowa. She attended a one room schoolhouse for the first eight years of her educational experience and graduated from Inwood High School. The one room school experience provided her the first opportunity to work with young children.

Charlotte was planning on entering the Nursing Program to become a pediatric nurse when she arrived at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD. Since this was before the computer age, registration consisted of waiting in lines and talking to instructors to complete the paperwork. The instructor she met with was the head of the Deaf Education

Department. Following a discussion about plans for her future, he convinced her that a career in education would enable her to achieve her goal of working with children. She completed a BA degree from Augustana majoring in Elementary and Deaf Education.

Following graduation, Charlotte taught a kindergarten class for one year at the Arizona School for the Deaf in Tucson, AZ. Then in 1964 Mr. Myklebust hired her to teach fifth grade at the South Dakota School for the Deaf. She remained in this position for ten years.

Following this, Charlotte served in the position of Supervising Teacher for the elementary department at SDSD. This position allowed her to work with the teaching staff but did not provide many opportunities to interact with children, so after three years Charlotte returned to the classroom as a second

grade teacher.

The plan for the new school building at the South Dakota School for the Deaf included adding a preschool classroom. Charlotte determined that the focus of her continuing education at the University of South Dakota would be a Master's Degree in Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education. In 1979, SDSD moved into their new school building. Mrs. VanBockern was hired as the preschool teacher and remained in this position for the next twenty-four years, retiring in 2003. Charlotte found the work with these young children and their families to be very rewarding. She loved to share stories from so many wonderful children's books, to provide opportunities to explore the magic in their environment, and to aid in the development of individual skills and needs. Planning activities and recording each child's progress was a challenge, but these little children continuously stole her heart with their hugs, their smiles, and their eagerness to learn. This and the appreciation she received from parents provided the necessary motivation.

While at SDSD, Charlotte and Jane King co-directed summer camps. These camps provided unique opportunities for Deaf students throughout the state to come to SDSD to meet other students and to participate in fun camping activities. She also participated in the Early Childhood Family Learning Week-End events organized by Fran Noteboom and the Outreach staff.

Charlotte wanted to share a few words (below) with you.



Charlotte VanBrockern  
SDSD Yearbook 1978  
second Grade Class



ABOVE: Char VanBockern and her students wait for the signal to release their balloons.



*VanBockern is working with her students to get ready for a Christmas Play.*

"Thank you to SDAD for this recognition. It is an honor to be remembered for doing work that I loved. SDSD staff and students were and still are considered to be a part of my extended family. It was always a pleasure to be invited many years later to the graduations and weddings of my (little kids) and to allow myself to hope that maybe I was a positive influence for them and their families. My 39 years at SDSD confirmed that a Major in Education was a good career choice."