

Foundation

for

Friendship

By Deborah Anderson

Six graduates keep friendship that started 30 years ago

The year was 1977: Jimmy Carter was President, the Apple II personal computer went on sale, Elvis Presley died, and five young women just out of high school enrolled in the Secretarial Science Program (now called Administrative Assistant) at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College in Rice Lake. It never occurred to them that 30 years later, they would still be friends.

Jeanne Klukas, Carol Nygren, Becky Brust, Sue Hammond and Kelly Brown enjoyed their time at WITC. They studied together, joined clubs and went to campus dances. It was during their second year that Barb Malom joined the WITC staff. Just out of college, Malom was not much older and a friendship was formed outside of the classroom.

After graduation, Hammond, Klukas, Nygren and Brust found jobs in Minnesota. Malom and Brown remained in Rice Lake. Malom continued teaching, and Brown got a job at WITC right after graduation.

The following years were filled with careers, weddings, children, divorces and all that life brings. Yet the six friends were determined to stay in touch, even though they were spread from northern Wisconsin to southern Minnesota. They now manage to e-mail each other about once a month and arrange to meet for dinner twice a year.

"We're all small-town Wisconsin girls at heart," Hammond says. When they get together "it seems we just pick it right back up where we left off."

Brown is now an Academic Affairs assistant at WITC. Malom continues teaching there as an administrative assistant instructor. Although she has seen many students come and go, she still has a special fondness for her first group of students.

Brust, Klukas, Hammond, Nygren and Brown "were and always will be my friends," Malom says. "How does an instructor get that lucky?"



Jeanne Klukas, back, Becky Brust, Barb Malom, Kelly Brown, Carol Nygren-Zehrer, and Sue Hammond have kept a friendship that started 30 years ago at WITC.

The group of women met for their 30th reunion this past October in Rice Lake. The weekend was filled with memories, old pictures, touring their old haunts and many laughs around a bonfire at night before returning to their respective lives.

"It has been great having friends who have 'grown up' with you during your adult life," Hammond says.

WITC gave them their foundation for careers in the business world, as well as the start of their lifelong friendships.

To read more about what these women have been up to since graduating from WITC, check out www.witc.edu/news/publications

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