

This is My Story

by Cherie Dreves

There are moments, defining moments, in our lives that can be a point on our compass that seems to draw us along in that direction as the years accumulate. I can look back to one of these moments over 30 years ago and can truly say it connects deeply to who I am and what I do. To this day I am very grateful for the astuteness and care that one very special teacher applied to my young life.

In May of 1980 a unique thing happened to me one afternoon. I arrived to my Junior High Journalism class to be greeted by our teacher Mrs. J.

“Cherie, in a few minutes you and I need to go up to the High School.”

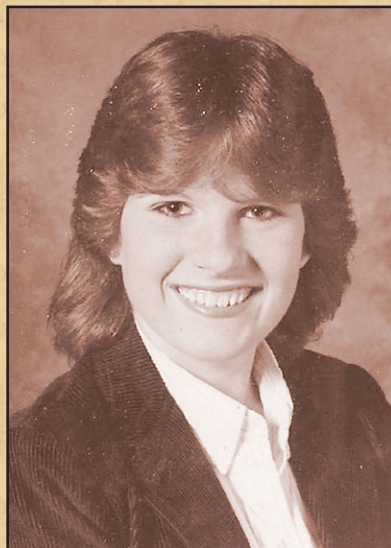
“Ok,” I replied.

At that point a thousand things started filling my head. We had only moved to Texas months before from a small town in Michigan. Maybe they aren’t going to let me into high school....

The transition from one school to another, and from one community to another, had been difficult, but things were beginning to smooth out and become more normal. Weeks earlier our Journalism class attended the statewide Journalism conference at the University of Texas, where I saw Barbara Jordan speak. Her impassioned speech on truth, integrity, and freedom resonated in me. It anchored my energy as an aspiring journalist. I admired Barbara Jordan’s courage.

Looking back now, what came at the end of the day was true fate. We were all to meet in the auditorium for an awards show called The Clio Awards. Most of our group were not excited at the prospect of one more assembly. The Clio Awards are an international award program that recognizes innovation and creative excellence in advertising, design and communication, as judged by international advertising professionals. As the presentation unfolded, I was hooked.

Years previous while living in Michigan, “the paper” was a big part of my life. At 10, I became the very first papergirl in town, delivering with the assistance of the green 5-speed Schwinn that my grandpa had purchased for me. Later, through my other activities such as majorette, ball player and skier, I appeared



My senior picture.



I’m the majorette on the right.

fairly regularly in the paper. I thought it was just part of normal life.

Waiting for our teacher Mrs. J., I wondered what else lie in store for me. Everyone had arrived for class, the student teacher had taken over, and Mrs. J came up to me with a smile, “Are you ready?”

“Sure.” I scrambled to my feet. I was more than ready to find out why we were going over there.

We exited the building into the sun-drenched courtyard/access drive that divided the two campuses. Mrs. J was her normal pleasant, laid back, completion-oriented self.

I followed her to a classroom. There sat a woman with beautiful auburn hair, similar to my own. We walked in, and she looked up with a big smile.

“Hello, I’m Mrs. Anderson.”

Rising, she extending her hand. My first adult handshake. Not like meeting your parents’ friends, but a real handshake.

Mrs. J went on to explain that since I had really enjoyed the Clio awards and seemed to pay closer attention than most

to radio and TV advertising, maybe advertising would be interesting to me. I was the one always asking, “Did you see the ___ commercial?”

By the end of our conversation, I was made the advertising editor for the Red Wing newspaper. I kept that position for three years, and my senior year I became the managing editor.

After school and a stay overseas, I wanted to see what else there was, thinking, Maybe I don’t want to do advertising; that’s what I did in school. Instead, I became a marketing director for a national home improvement company, where I taught the sales and direct marketing staff. Another of my duties was to purchase advertising.

I always laughed about trying to leave advertising; it just kept finding me.

One day, a friend asked if I could “do a show”? She was a representative of KISS radio in San Antonio and I wondered what she meant. It turned out to be an invitation to come work for the station during the meet-and-greet functions before major concerts. It was a wonderful opportunity for someone who loved rock radio – not only to meet the bands, but also the fans that listened to the station.

Later, I moved to Arizona and began my media career in the Prescott area in 1997 with KZGL radio. Things came full circle for me in 1999, when I returned to my first love from my school days: print, working with weeklies, small and large dailies, and specialty products. I reentered the radio world in 2013 representing Yavapai Broadcasting. Today I head two beloved local magazines – Prescott Dog Magazine and Kidz Zone Magazine.

I’ve traveled many miles since that day in 1980, but have never forgotten the two teachers who got me started on this adventure: Mrs. J. and Mrs. A. I cherish those memories.

My experience made me see one thing very clearly – the critical importance of skillful teachers. My heart and energy have championed teachers, education, and the love of learning throughout my career because I can list the skills that each teacher equipped me with in order for me to succeed in advertising and in life.