



" Graduating from high school was an accomplishment. My father, an intelligent man, recommended that my brother study engineering, and that I major in computer science. My heart was heavy as I had rekindled a love for dance, and had no interest in computer science. He was ahead of his time; those careers were lucrative and provided stability.

Instinctively, I knew that I was not cut out to be a computer programmer, but out of respect for my dad and his advice, I declared my major in Computer Science and spent endless nights in the computer lab staring blankly at programming print outs. Changing my major was simple, but my worse fear was telling my father and going against his wishes. (He later discovered it for himself, as I neglected to mention that " minor" detail.)

My days were full, working part-time at a local insurance company from 6-10 am, academic classes at Northeastern and dance classes and rehearsals under the tutelage of Ms. Marge Hobley and Ms Libby Komaiko, practically living in the dance studio.

I was at a cross roads in my life and finally decided against Computer Programming and Dance, and instead, chose Communications as my major. I was one student of many that registered for Dr. BJ Brommel's class that semester. He was an intimidating figure, austere and direct. Little did I know

Grace Laird represents the finest qualities that I, as a student, had ever experienced. I had her as a teacher, first in the 7th grade, and then in high school, when she moved into high school teaching as all of the men teachers volunteered for WWI. I have had several brilliant college professors, but none with the range and depth of Grace. Her example taught me to hope that I could do for my students what she did for me. She is the first person to tell me that I could become a teacher or a doctor if I only studied harder and paid more attention! When I ran away to college, Grace gave me her used dictionary because she said I needed it. When I went for my MA at the University of Iowa, she gave me her dictionary of synonyms. In death, she left me her library, and asked that I speak at her funeral. She lived to be 101, and mentored me in phone calls, letters and visits. That woman never gave up on me. I have always tried to be like Grace. Interestingly, I took my first speech and psychology courses from her. Talk about influence! My career in teaching, Communication and clinical psychology I owe to her.

I see in the professors in the Dance Department and Communication Department reaching