

8. Jo's Education and Teaching Career

In 1948 Jo decided to go to college, a dream she had long held. Bobbie Jo had married and Marty was close to graduation from high school. Earl's career with the telephone company seemed secure, and so Jo entered Mesa College in Grand Junction which was within walking distance of their home. Mesa College was a two-year institution (now a four-year school), and Jo earned her associate degree in 1950.

At that time few, if any, women of mature years attended college. She was an anomaly in those days and it caused quite a stir on campus. She looked young enough to be a college student and Marty remembered many people's remarks about his mother's "going to college!" She said:

Now I'm realizing a dream come true. I'm doing the thing I've wanted to do since I was a little girl—I'm going to college. Imagine starting college at forty-two! It has opened worlds! From the overall perspective of forty years one can see quite clearly the road with its bends and detours that eventually led to the door of Mesa College. Life has been good! I'm thankful – thankful!

A friend, Anne Davenport, wrote:

I am so proud of you for going back to school. I always thought if one could go to college and just browse thru the things we like best, that would be a real joy, instead of having to take this and that just to get a major. You are taking such wonderful subjects and I know you are loving it.

In a paper for an early education class Jo wrote:

"My little five-year-old next door neighbor called to me the other day, 'Hey, Jo, are you really going to be an old maid school teacher when you grow up?' 'Yes, Karen I guess I am.' 'Well, why are you?'"

When she thought about her desire to teach she described two reasons: one was a thought put into her mind very early in her life and the other had to do with her son's unfortunate experience in school:

The remarks that had to do with my deciding to teach were first a very kind one that has inspired me many, many times. When I graduated from high school an English teacher called to me in the hall, 'Jo!' 'Yes.' 'There is one thing I want to say to you and I want you to promise me you will never forget it: Get the best out of life that life has to give you.' That remark made by an interested, kind teacher is one reason I am here in this little college today.

The second remark? When our young six-year-old son, Marty, was in the first grade... he came home from school very sullen and very naughty. Soon the truth seeped out. 'I'm dumb, Mom. I'm dumb 'cause Miss ___ says I am. She said I wasn't smart like Bobbie Jo.' Marty has never forgotten that remark and has labored under it all his school life."

From the video tape recording of 1988 the following conversation between E.C. and Jo concerned her education:

JO: I'd always planned this, all through the years, that when Marty was old enough, eighteen, that I would go to college. Of course, I didn't have a single hour of college credit, so I thought I'd gradually prepare everyone that this is what was going to happen. So I would occasionally mention the fact that when Marty was eighteen and I felt he no longer needed me at home, then I would start to college. I remember so well awakening one night and thinking that the time is here, and that there was no use of delaying any longer. So I went down to the Junior College. And it was unheard of in those days, but I was the first adult student they'd ever had. This was Mesa Junior College right there in Grand Junction. We only had the one car and I could walk back and forth. We lived about two miles from the college and I could walk.

EC: What kind of a reaction did you get from all the kids?

JO: Really they were just wonderful to me. I was sort of embarrassed at first, because of all the kids, because they began to call me "The Brain." They did. They were so cute. And any social event they had, they would always ask me, and always invited me. They really treated me wonderfully. And so did the teachers. I think they were very pleased to have an adult going to school because it was such a novel thing at that time. They could probably see that it was one of those things that would increase and increase as time went on, and so I think they thought, "There was a good starter." They couldn't have been kinder or nicer to me in any way. That was about 1949 or 1950. Now Marty, I think was a little embarrassed about it, because some of his friends were at the school, and it really embarrassed him that I was sitting in the class with some of his friends. Now it is so different, and it must be very hard for you to imagine, but it was so novel then, and people just couldn't believe it. Oh, they just couldn't. They'd say, "You don't mean to tell me you've started to college!" And at first it was sort of embarrassing to me. I got over that after a while. The only time I remember when it was embarrassing would be if they would divide the class, you know, as they often do, into twos, to work together. I would always sort of hate that because I'd be with some young kid. They were always good sports, they never made me feel that it was a bit different or anything. But my feeling was that it was kind of hard on the kid that had to be with me. Of course, you know what would happen. I would get the major part of the work, but I knew they'd rather be with some younger kid.

Jo described the circumstances that lead to her being cast in the leading role in a college dramatic presentation:

I hadn't been there very long when they asked me to take the lead in a play, called "All My Sons." And I just didn't have time. I was trying to keep a home and do all the things I'd always done. Finally the Dean called me in and said, "We'd appreciate it so much if, while you are here, you would do it." Oh, was I ever sorry I did! Rehearsal night after night, and I'd have so much to do at home that I'd just be wild. I'd think I just couldn't do it all. And of course all those pages and pages of script to learn, too, you know, when my time was so limited. You know what would happen. I'd stay up till midnight or one o'clock then I'd fall asleep, set the alarm to get up at four thirty. I'd read the play before, and I'm sure you have too, and I didn't especially like it. I wouldn't call it a classic, but it was one of the plays that had been done year after year after YEAR. I really didn't especially like it and oh, when I think about it, it was just a pain, it wasn't any joy in any respect.

EC: I bet you were a hit.

JO: Oh, not especially. I got through it all right, but it wasn't any big success or anything.



PRIMING FOR PERFORMANCE—Pictured above rehearsing for the Arthur Miller creation "All My Sons" to be presented at the Mesa College Auditorium April 20 and 21 are left to right Elizabeth Cramer, speech instructor and director, Bill Davies, and Josephine Shaeffer.

"All My Sons" Acclaimed

The spring quarter play, All My Sons, was presented at Mesa College April 20-21 by the drama department and under the direction of Mrs. Elizabeth Cramer.

It deals with one man, Joe Keller, played by Bill Davies who has sent damaged material to the government and caused the death of 21 men. Instead of taking the blame he has let his partner shoulder it. As his wife Kate, Jo Shaeffer turned in an excellent performance and made the audience feel she knew her son, reported killed, was still alive.

Ricki Fox as Ann Deever added sparkle to the play with her light manner in which she took everything. A difficult role she put her whole heart in it. Dale Mackley alais Chris Keller, the son who would take over the Keller industrial factory, was at his very best and made his role live for the audience.

Stealing the second act was Bill Lundeen in the part of George Deever, son of the business partner who was serving the prison term for Keller.

Minor roles were handled by Jake Schissler as Dr. Jim Baylis; his wife Sue, Barbara Fowler, Patsy Eaton and Keith Benedict as Lydia and Frank Lubey.

A strong drama, it depicted American life following the war and the problems similar to those encountered during the readjustment period. Written by Arthur Miller, the production has been acclaimed by critics as one of the best plays ever to be placed upon the American stage.

SELECTION OF CAST FOR PLAY FINISHED

GRAND JUNCTION — Selection of the cast has been made, and rehearsals are well under way for the presentation of the play "All My Sons" by the Drama Department of Mesa College.

The play under the direction of Mrs. Elizabeth Cramer, will be presented in the college

auditorium April 20 and 21. The play, build around the period immediately following the war is a strong drama, says Mrs. Cramer.

The cast includes Mrs. Jo Shaeffer, William Davies, Dale Mackley, Jake Sheffler, Barbara Fowler, Patsy Eaton, Rický Fox, and Keith Benedict

JO: And I was often asked to do other extra things. Very often they would ask me to chaperon a group of kids going some place. We went out to the state home [for mental patients], and they would ask me to take a class out there. And because they were college students they would take them out to see those terrible and hopeless cases. That was awfully hard. Then the kids themselves would ask me to chaperon a party or a dance or something. I would have enjoyed it if I'd had a lot of time, but because I didn't have, I would hate to turn the kids down. I did some of it. But as far as the studies were concerned I enjoyed them very much. I found the instructors better at that little college than at some of the big name colleges that I went to later. Not all of them, you understand, but so many of them were so good, and would be so helpful to the kids, and so kind. I really found it a wonderful little college. I enjoyed it so much. I went two years there, and I got straight A's. I wouldn't be that foolish and study that hard again, because I wouldn't want to have it take that much time.

EC: It was important for you to feel success.

JO: I couldn't stand not getting an A. I wouldn't be that foolish now, Ellen Claire, but I was then. It was all really a wonderful experience. And those kids were so sweet and so cute. I really did enjoy them. And they soon began to come to me with confidences and I finally began to feel like a counselor. I had to spend so much time with them. I would get into all their little problems and so forth, but they were just darling. I enjoyed them so much. I enjoyed those two years, though it was awfully hard work, taking as many hours as I could, then keeping up my home. On Saturday and Sunday then I would do all the cooking for the week, and I made bread as I always had, and cakes and pies. I thought I could do everything I'd always done and felt that if I couldn't keep up my home and do everything as I always had done, besides going to school, then it wouldn't be fair to Earl.

EC: So you did the Superwoman routine.

JO: I did indeed. I got into that Superwoman routine, and how! And Marty always had somebody there, just like he has now. I can't remember, oh, I can if I am really serious about it I can remember a few times, but very few meals, very few, where we didn't have somebody extra. And we always had somebody staying all night. The kids had twin beds, and I'd look in there the last thing at night there'd always be another little one--or big one, in those days.

For one of her courses in education she was asked to describe some of the students during her student-teaching. These descriptions show her deep interest in children as well as her excellent writing style:

Heaven

I'll never be closer to Heaven than I have been these weeks of student-teaching: basking in the love and appreciativeness of these little folk. It takes so little to make them happy—just a smile, or a pat on the back, or the noticing of some small thing.

Leapin' Linda the Puddle-Wader

Linda Schisler is the answer to a teacher's prayer – except she's a puddle-wader. She's a brilliant child, beautifully behaved, perfectly adjusted, but she loves mud and water! Evening after evening she goes home muddy and soaked; she oozes mud from any exposed bit of Linda. Mrs. M. has admonished, she's bribed, she's coaxed, all to no avail. A heavenly quiet descends on the room. Everybody has been buttoned and over-shoed and on his way home. The janitor suddenly exclaims as he stands at the window, "Look at that kid above her boots in that mud hole!" Mrs. M. looks at me with raised eyebrows that screech, "It's Linda!" One glance verifies our suspicions. I suddenly had an inspiration and could hardly wait till morning to try it. Come morning, I tell a story about a repulsive creature that loved mud. The oozier, filthier, grubbier it was the more he loved to wallow in it. On and on I went at great length. Before I had reached the line where this nasty, icky creature said, "Oink, Oink," Linda exclaimed "Oh, it's a pig!" Now she immediately got the moral: that big old sloppy hogs wallow in mud but not pretty, clean, smart little girls. Her face was most sober the rest of the morning. I worried fearing I had gone a bit too far, but I was very smug in my knowledge that at any rate I had cured Linda. All morning I was mentally patting myself on the back.

Afternoon recess: I am turning the rope for jump rope. A teacher touches my arm, "Mrs. Shaeffer, one of your youngsters is out wading in that mud puddle." 'Twas Linda!

Linda

Linda Sandoval, a little Spanish-American elf is such a twerp. She is spoiled; she is bratty; and she is adorable! Linda is a repeater because she is the world's worst attention bidder and talk-out-louder. She is a tiny creature with jet black braids that stick straight out and tiny bird legs. She's not pretty, but has that thing rarer than radium—charm. She's vivacious; her every

movement is quick and decisive and fleeting. Linda is perky and pertinent and saucy, but most lovable. She is a bundle of contradictions that somehow all go together to make the most enticing whole you ever did see. She is very well aware of how cute she is and capitalizes on it constantly and with every opportunity. Linda fears neither man nor God. Her voice goes perfectly with her personality. It is lilting and singing but never brash. Do you think repeating the grade has bothered Linda? Oh, no!! She brags because she knows what book they will have next, etc. – she would!! She was ill several days – it was awful! All the spice went out of our little dish of white and Mexican beans! Gee! I'm glad I'm not Linda's mother – Por Dios!!

Henry

Henry worries me as he is an unhappy little guy and as a consequence is doing nothing in school. He is a child of a broken home and every few days remarks, "My mother is coming for me tomorrow." His grandmother is rearing him and must be interested as he always comes to school clean and "combed." He is a fine looking Spanish-American child. He seems husky and well, which I cannot say about many of these little folk in this room, especially the Spanish-Americans. He seems in a dream most of the time. I feel convinced in my own mind that the child is needing love and affection, as he is missing his mother and sister cruelly. I have been paying especial little attentions to him (unnoticeable to the other youngsters). Those big black eyes bespeak such gratitude. And wonder of wonders, he is doing a little work in school! I took them around the block at recess yesterday. I was bringing up the rear and I felt a little hand crawl into my hand (had on my fur coat with my hand in my pocket) and looked down into the eyes of Henry. This, in spite of the fact that the other guys teased him a bit. Yesterday when I came out to walk home, Henry was waiting. We walked across the viaduct and I was saying, "Now Henry, you must work harder in school." "I'm gonna!" Blessed be!!!

David

David is a handsome, smart child but has a mother who is making a hypochondriac out of him. She sends pills with him for the teacher to give him and David cannot go out at recess. The hot lunch is not good enough for him, so David brings his lunch which is full of pie and cookies – no fruit – nothing but carbohydrates. If David gets a bit bored or is not the center of attention he immediately starts the wail, "I'm sick, Mrs. M., I'm terribly sick," or "May I lie down, teacher? I'm sick." If the teacher corrects him in any way he retorts, "I have a headache. That's why I did that." The teacher has wisely advised that they have a doctor check him. Why, oh why, do mothers let their hearts rule their heads sometimes? David could be a wonderful child as he has everything to start with: high mentality, fine physique, fine looking. But he has a mother who loves him much but not wisely.

A Wonderful Gift

I've felt good all afternoon: I got a wonderful gift today. Joana, the little tiny Spanish-American tot, saved me a hunk of frosting from her piece of cake she had for lunch. It was filthy and sticky from being held in her tiny brown claw. Benny brought me some bubble-gum the other day, and Benny has very few pennies to spend. Gifts of love!!!

Life is good!



The following incident was described by Jo in one of the papers she wrote for a course in Abnormal Psychology. The paper was entitled: "Ivan: A Case Study" The entire paper is quite interesting, but the ending is worth quoting:

After preparing this paper and referring to the books in my library I continue to be uncertain as to Ivan's status. Was he psychotic or a potential psychotic? All these pathetic pictures of difficult children do have amusing incidents and I can't resist ending this paper with this bit about Ivan. One day Ivan was seated at his desk and I was back of him watching. I leaned over his shoulder to show him how to write a word and he reached up and patted me on my un-buxom bust saying, "Oh, Gawd, ain't that nice!"

Being one of those flat-chested sisters all my life I've had a repressed desire to be big and buxom in those parts and never before in life have I received that sort of a compliment from any male—so—I didn't know whether to be flattered or floored!

I made the mistake of telling a teacher who told the principal who told the psychiatrist—they ribbed me unmercifully!

Ivan, Ivan, what you cost me!

As soon as Jo was awarded a teaching certificate she began teaching at Lincoln School on Orchard Mesa, part of the Mesa County School District 51, headquartered in Grand Junction. She continued her education during the summers at the Colorado State College of Education at Greeley as well as taking extension classes from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She received her B.A. degree in 1954. In Greeley, Jo became a member of Phi Lambda Theta, an honorary scholastic society.

During this time, Mr. I. K. Boltz, superintendent of Mesa County schools, asked her to find out as much as possible about ungraded or nongraded schools. At summer school she studied all the material that she could find on the subject and the more she learned about it, the more enthusiastic she became about that method of teaching, in which formal grade levels are abandoned in favor of tiered learning steps. There was no first, second or third grades, as such, just a primary block in which a child could progress at his or her own speed. She worked out a tentative curriculum for an ungraded school and presented it to Mr. Boltz. He was enthused and authorized her to begin the ungraded primary in one school, Pear Park. The school was in a very underprivileged area and with the superintendent's blessing she began experimenting with the concept of the nongraded primary, or first three grades. Her first task was to sell the idea of "no failures and no promotions" to the parents. She believed that no child should be required to take giant steps if midget steps are the limit of his capacity, but no child should be allowed to take midget steps if he can make larger ones. As the work went forward the children began to blossom. The results were spectacular, and Jo was asked to initiate the program in other schools as well. A parental note gives a sample of the appreciation of parents:

3-19-51

Mrs. Shaeffer:

Wednesday will be Linda's last day, so could you have her transfer and card ready or whatever she will need. I want to thank you for all the interest you have taken in Linda. She has really "come out of her shell" so to speak. If all teachers were as understanding as you we would have a lot more happier children in the world.

Thanking you again, Mrs. Ferrell

Again from the video conversation:

BJ: You got your first job with just two years of college, right?

JO: Yes. They asked me to do it. I did not ask for a job. The superintendent called me and asked me if I would go down and talk to them, because they would like to have me. And he said that if I did, they would have something real interesting for me to do. And so I accepted it and [I] started that first rural nongraded school. It was the first one not only in Grand Junction, but in the state of Colorado, and the first one in a lot of states. Now there was a nongraded school in New York, and one in Milwaukee. And I tried to find information, but there was none. Nothing had been written about it. So the superintendent said, "That doesn't worry me at all. You just go ahead, and you can do anything you want with that little school." So we started in. And it was in that district where there were a lot of migrant workers. And so it was just wonderful for those little children because they could come in, and they were simply placed where they were able to work, and because of the nongrading, they could produce. And we would take them forward as fast as they could go, for as long as they were there. And they felt no stigma because there were no grades.

BJ: When you say grades, you mean levels, because you had grades like A,B, C.

JO: I don't mean first grade, second grade and so on. It was a primary school of first through third. When the children were ready they were put into an intermediate block, and it was really very successful and the achievement was very high. And we had people coming from all over to send their children. And finally the superintendent said, "We've got people calling from all over wanting to come to this school." He told them that if they were willing to furnish their own transportation they could go, and we had people bringing kids from as far away as Fruit, west of Grand Junction. It was a dear little school and the kids were happy. No little person felt any stigma. The little slow ones we took as slowly as they needed to be taken. And those that could go rapidly were taken as fast as they could go. We had very high achievement because we let the advanced ones go as far as they could go, and they would go far, and that brought those achievement scores up.

BJ: Then you went to a bigger school and did the same thing, right?

JO: Well I stayed there, in Pear Park, seven years. And every year the superintendent would ask me to please take bigger schools. And I would absolutely refuse. Because I was not only the principal of that school, but I was able to teach as well, and that is what I loved. But they did send me traveling. I went all over—all over Colorado and other states as well, putting in those non-graded schools.

BJ: You went to Utah and Wyoming.

JO: Oh, yes, lots of places.

BJ: And Kansas.

JO: Oh, just all over. It was interesting and challenging and wonderful to meet people, but I worked very hard trying to keep up the school, because I had to bring in substitutes while I was traveling. And then when people would come in to visit the school the superintendent would say, "Get a substitute. Don't try to teach and try to show how you teach with all those administrators coming in." So we'd get a substitute and we'd get all these people coming. It seemed like it was just all the time that people were watching and coming in...

... There were lots of heartaches, but lots of rewards, too. The kids were so cute, so dear. In one school they called me the "Princess" because one little beginning primary group child, that we called "Littlies," said to one of his classmates, "You better behave or you'll be sent to the

Princess." And that's what started it. And everybody in the school called me the "Princess." Little ones, big ones, teachers. That was at Appleton School. That was the school where I'd go at noon. At that time I had three schools that had to be covered every day. So I would reach that school at noon just as the kids were getting ready to go back to class. It was a big school and it had a great big circle driveway around the whole acreage. It had a big gym too. And those little ones would sit all along the driveway waiting for me to come. When I would get there, I would get out of the car and I would be just deluged with all these children.

The article below describes from a professional standpoint the things Jo was accomplishing in her work with children:

Grand Junction Morning Record THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1957.

District 51's Unsung Heroes

The following is the 14th in a series of articles by F. C. Jaquette of the Columbus school concerning otherwise unpublicized employes.

By F. C. Jaquette

This is the last of this series of articles. It is the last not because there are no more Unsung Heroes in District 51 but because time is running out for me since I have to leave for summer school the first of June. It is fitting that this last column concerns a project in which I am vitally interested and the person who is responsible for its development in this area. This is the Ungraded plan of elementary school organization and Mrs. Jo Shaeffer who started it here.

Three years ago Mr. Boltz asked Mrs. Shaeffer to assume the duties of Principal and full time teacher at Pear Park. At that time it was being reduced to a primary building and seemed an ideal place to try a plan of school organization which was new in Colorado. The Ungraded plan had been used successfully in some other areas and seemed to offer some advantages. Mrs. Shaeffer was asked to find out all she could about this plan and organize her new assignment on the basis of her findings. She spent the summer that year in Greeley where in addition to her regular classes she tried to find information concerning this type of school.

There had been little written about it at that time but what there was was favorable. She found several people on the campus who were familiar with this type of school and who were most enthusiastic about it. She also wrote to the Superintendents of several large systems where the plan was being used. The most notable of these was the Milwaukee system where 103 of the 105 elementary schools were Ungraded. That fall she set up Pear Park Primary school as the first Ungraded school in the state.

She found that the community had not been prepared for the idea and her teachers were unfamiliar with the plan. The parents objected at first to their children being used in an experiment although, as Mrs. Shaeffer pointed out, her school actually wasn't experimental since many other schools in different areas had already tested it. Her first task was to create a feeling of acceptance among the parents and of enthusiasm for and knowledge of the plan among her teachers. This was not an easy job first because everyone resists change to a more or less extent and a parent is extremely resistant to the idea of anyone doing anything to his child which may stand a chance of hurting him. Since this was a new idea here there was this feeling of resistance to it simply because it was something unknown. That Mrs. Shaeffer was able to overcome these obstacles without help from any other person is a tribute to her ability and charm. By spring the Community was backing her and THEIR school almost as one body. On the basis of standardized tests and teacher-parent observation, achievement among the pupils had risen sharply. School-community relations were at a new high and mere acceptance had changed to highly enthusiastic support.

Since that first year Mrs. Shaeffer has continued to operate her school as an Ungraded Primary. In the fall of 1956 a section of the area formerly served by Fruitvale Elementary was added to Pear Park. This brought the enrollment up to 95 children, making the teacher-pupil ratio here among the highest in the District. In spite of the added load and responsibility the school under her guidance continued to serve the community in the same way that it had. Her work has been independent in the extreme and encouragement and help have mostly been lacking except from the parents of the children in her school. Mr. Boltz says that the idea has been successful here and has expressed the hope that in the future other schools will adopt the plan that Mrs. Shaeffer has so ably pioneered. At this time only Columbus Elementary has adopted it fully although several other buildings are using various portions of the plan. It is certainly through the efforts and enthusiasm of Mrs. Shaeffer, and only through her, that this District is able to boast of having started the most promising educational development of recent times in Colorado.

During the summer of 1958 Jo took courses at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Taking classes along with her was Bobbie Jo, as explained in the news article below:

Mother-Daughter Combine As Team Studying For Degree During Summer



MOTHER-DAUGHTER TEAM — Grandmother, granddaughter and mother ponder a weighty book in their Boulder home. The grandmother, Mrs. Earl Shaeffer of Palisade (left), and the mother, her daughter, Mrs. William P. Irwin II (right) of Boulder, have been taking two graduate courses during the University of Colorado Summer Session. Helping them with their studies is Becky, Mrs. Irwin's 4-year-old daughter. Another child, William Pryor Irwin III, was taking a nap when the picture was snapped.

A Grand Junction school principal and a Boulder housewife have combined efforts this summer to form a mother-daughter team studying at the University of Colorado.

The Summer Session students, both doing graduate work in the CU College of Education on master's degrees, are Mrs. Earl Shaeffer of Palisade and Mrs. William P. Irwin II of (270 S. 40th St.) Boulder.

Mrs. Shaeffer is principal and teacher at the Pear Park Ungraded School in Grand Junction. Mrs. Irwin, her daughter, is the wife of an assistant professor at Colorado State University.

During the first term of the CU Summer Session, the mother-daughter team was taking the same courses: "American Ideals in Education" with Prof. Homer Rainey and "The Poorly Adjusted Child" with Miss Dorothy Sherman.

Mrs. Shaeffer, whose husband is the telephone company manager in Palisade, began her teaching career after raising her family. She completed her undergraduate degree at Colorado State College in 1953 after attending three summers.

She says she wanted to become a teacher in order to help children who were having difficulty with their elementary school studies. She is doing just that in the experimental ungraded school in Grand Junction.

Mrs. Irwin, who has been living in Boulder for the past two years

while her husband worked for the Colorado Survival Plan Commission, is a graduate of Hiram College in Ohio.

She plans to enter the teaching profession when she completes work on her master of education degree.

Mrs. Shaeffer and Mrs. Irwin are hoping to finish their graduate work together, expecting to complete requirements next year.

Mrs. Shaeffer is continuing Summer Session at CU alone during the second term, taking courses in remedial reading and administration.

Mrs. Irwin is preparing to return to Fort Collins with her husband when he resumes teaching duties. The Irwins have two children, Becky, 4, and William Pryor Irwin III, 3.

Later that year Jo wrote the following article for the Rocky Mountain Tri-State Newsletter of the ASCD's (Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development) January 30, 1959 edition:

A Report on the Ungraded Schools in Mesa County, Colorado, by Mrs. Jo Shaeffer and Fred Jaquette

This article is a summary of the findings of four years of a five year study of the Ungraded Schools in Mesa County, Colorado. This study is being carried on independently but simultaneously by Mrs. Jo Shaeffer as partial requirement for her Master's Degree at the University of Colorado and by Fred Jaquette as part of the work toward his Doctoral Degree at Colorado State College.

At present time there are three schools in this district which are operated as ungraded units. Many of the ideas and techniques used by them have been borrowed by the other schools in the area and it is likely that their reorganization will follow in time. Since reading is the one ingredient of education without which nothing can be achieved our first emphasis has been upon this all important skill. The three traditional grades of the primary have been replaced by 11 levels of achievement in reading. The intermediate grades are changed to 10 levels. These levels are not merely a replacement of the old grades but become a device by which teachers and principals are able to determine a child's ability to progress. The children move forward through these levels as rapidly as they are able without experiencing the frustration of having failed or having to repeat a grade. Their progress is continuous even though in some cases slower than average. At the beginning of each year every child starts his school work at exactly the place he left it in the spring. There is no such thing as retention although slowing does take place at the time when need for it appears for any child. Number teaching is also ungraded although not to the extent that reading is.

A very careful record of achievement of the children has been kept in these schools and has been compared with selected schools in the district which have maintained the traditional organization. Matched groups were chosen on the basis of I.Q. between the experimental schools and those chosen as controls. Care was taken to make all other aspects of choice of score a matter of random sampling. For each grade level for each of the schools in the study scores made by the pupils on the Gates Reading Survey and the Gates Primary Reading Test were computed. The differences between the means of the groups were then used as the basis for comparison. In all cases the Ungraded schools showed a significantly higher score than did the traditional schools.

Teacher and community acceptance of the plan is very satisfactory. There have been no cases where a teacher has asked to leave one of these buildings because of dissatisfaction with the plan. There have been numerous requests for transfer into one or another of the ungraded buildings. Pupil morale is high as the achievement record would indicate. In many cases parents have moved to the area served by these schools in order for their children to be eligible to attend them. In several cases children are being transported by their parents a distance of 15 miles even though there is a school within walking distance of their homes.

In 1958 Jo published an article in the Colorado Education Association Journal entitled "Lunch Program Becomes Vehicle for Teaching." In response she received the following note:

Dear Jo,

We liked your article in the C. E. A. journal. Bill said he could just hear you talking. It was a great day for our profession when you decided to join our ranks.

Love,

LaDean Stabaugh

Jo about 1960



Jo worked extremely hard during those years of teaching, studying and keeping up with her home. She also traveled a good deal helping other schools implement the ungraded (non-graded) teaching program that she had found to be so successful. Below is a letter from the principal of the Rangely, Colorado Elementary School:

February 25, 1960

Dear Mrs. Shaeffer:

Your letter today was a real disappointment. I called Fred immediately and he told me that you have been traveling about more than you wished to. That is understandable. However, I beg, I urge, and whatever else it will take to get you to reconsider coming to Rangely.

Your presence here can mean so much for THESE CHILDREN. Perhaps your contact won't be direct, but that indirect contact is sometimes much more than you realize. I want these teachers to meet you because I truly believe that in you they will see what more of us should be. We want you because you add the feminine charm and viewpoint to such an undertaking. Now don't you think that ladies in teaching can get suspicious of what the men are doing? Need I list more reasons???

Please, I beg you to reconsider. Your letter so shattered me that I shall probably call you anyway. Now, can't we look forward to your being here on Tuesday?

*Sincerely,
Shelt Chastain, Principal*

Evidently Jo along with Fred Jacquette did go to Rangely, because a very nice thank-you letter was written to the Grand Junction superintendent thanking him for sending Jo and Fred for a training day.

Not long after that a thank-you letter was received from Jo from Victor Charles, the superintendent of the Meeker, Colorado public schools. Part of what her wrote included:

Just a line to tell you how much the Members of Board enjoyed and thrilled to the visit to your school yesterday, where they saw the only master teacher I know at work.... I do not know how to express my thanks and appreciation to you, except to say that if you ever wish to move to Meeker, you can have a position here for as long as you like, starting considerably higher than you are receiving in Grand Junction. I am not trying to steal you, but this is how we feel about you, and I am sure others who see you in action feel the same way.

Reporting to Parents in a Non-graded School

by Helen Jo Shaeffer,
principal, Pear Park
Primary School,
Mesa County Valley
Schools, District 51

PEAR PARK Nongraded Primary School, located in the fruit orchard country in the plateau land of western Colorado near where the Gunnison and Colorado rivers converge, introduced, last year, a reporting plan which was thought to be consistent with the beliefs associated with nongraded schools. This plan is predicated on four basic premises:

- 1) There are no predetermined time schedules which pupils should follow in reaching various levels of educational achievement. It is recognized that there are differences among and within children insofar as learning abilities are concerned.
- 2) There should be no designated mark of evaluation, i. e., A, B, C, and so on. Such marks are too often interpreted differently by parent, pupil, and teacher.
- 3) Pupils and their parents, along with the teacher, should be involved in the evaluating process.
- 4) Teachers should assist parents and pupils in actually doing the evaluating of pupil progress.

Pupils Have No Grade Designation

Since this school is organized as a group of nongraded classroom units, children progress through their educational program with no grade designations, from the most elementary concepts and skills through those which are as challenging as each child is able to grasp and use.

This actually demands a method of evaluation and reporting to parents which reflects the philosophy inherent in this kind of school organization. In reporting to parents it is important that the cooperative evaluation be



Checking her daughter's achievement record, above, is Mrs. Kenneth Wilson, her daughter, Joanie, and her teacher, Jo Shaeffer.

based on the growth and development of the individual child in terms of his own abilities and needs and that there take place no comparisons with other pupils.

To replace the typical report card a cumulative folder was developed for each pupil. The cover, in addition to identifying the document, the pupil, the district, and the school, has a photograph of the class group and teacher. The first page is devoted essentially to personal data about the child—his name, birthdate, entry date, attendance record, height and weight at the beginning of the reporting period.

A somewhat sentimental touch to the report is presented through the inclusion on this page of a wisp of the child's hair, and a baby tooth if one has been lost during the reporting period. In addition, this page includes the names of other pupils and the teacher in the room. Following this information are "Activities" pages. These pages are devoted to describing briefly such things as the newspaper, clubs, birthday and special day activities. Copies of the duplicated school newspaper come next in the cumulative folder. Following this are reports of group school journeys. Actually these first few pages of the report folder are of an introductory nature. They are intended to provide the basis for placing the child in his school situation.

Most of the folder is devoted to

tunity for children to have continuous evaluation of their own work. Teachers help parents to evaluate their children's strengths and weaknesses by interpreting the pupils' work in view of the digests of skills and concepts included at the beginnings of the various sections.

These reports are analyzed page by page during the regular semiannual parent-teacher conference, and are then given the parent to be taken home, further perused, signed, and returned to the school. At the end of the school year the report folders are given to the parent "to be treasured forever," as one parent suggested.

Parent Can Evaluate Development

Thus the parent is able to make an evaluation, with teacher assistance, of his child's educational development by a study of the digest sheet showing sequence of understandings and skills, growth in achievement made by the child, and samples of teacher-corrected work. Since there is no time schedule indicating when any understanding or skill should be mastered, the parent is helped to accept his child's growth in terms of his capabilities, needs, and interests.

So often, slow growth results in feelings of embarrassment and failure for both parent and pupil and is sometimes reflected in unwarranted criticism of the child.

This reporting procedure has been enthusiastically received in Pear Park. We believe this is largely due to four factors:

- 1) Parents feel a sense of satisfaction because they can see the growth made by their children.
- 2) Many parents are for the first time receiving a true and understandable picture of their children's scholastic life.
- 3) Parents are made conscious of the philosophy of the school and realize that individual spurts of growth will be recognized and capitalized upon.
- 4) Parents, because they share in actually making the evaluation, understand the report.

We recognize that the most desirable way of reporting to parents has not yet been achieved by our district. The report plan described best communicates to parents pupil growth in areas where writing is possible. Oral language, physical, and social growth and development are not yet adequately accounted for in our report plan. We are working on these areas.

the subject-matter areas of reading, handwriting, spelling, arithmetic, science, social studies, music, art, and drama. At the beginning of each of these sections is a page or two which present a digest of understandings and skills pertaining to the particular area considered. This helps parents to gain some insight into the educational program of the school.

In the reading and arithmetic sections of the folder are charts showing schematically these skills and concepts. The teacher indicates on this chart the growth in achievement shown by the pupil, indicating the child's progress and the scope of his learnings.

Pupil's Work Sampled

Samples of the pupil's work follow the digest pages for each subject-matter area. These samples are selected at different times to reflect the growth demonstrated during the reporting period. They are chosen to represent average work and work presenting new concepts in the subject. In the art section are samples of experiences in the use of various media used during the reporting period. Papers are arranged in chronological order so the parent receiving the report may be able to evaluate the progress which has taken place. The use of these folders is also helpful to pupils in observing their own growth, since it is they who actually maintain them.

This scheme really provides oppor-

In 1966 Jo was selected by Colorado State College, Greeley, to receive the Outstanding Alumni Award. Each year at homecoming the students, faculty and alumni honored graduates who have distinguished themselves in their chosen fields of endeavor. Jo was chosen to be so honored. News of the award was carried in at least five different newspapers:

3 Educators To Be Honored By CSC During Homecoming

Three outstanding Colorado educators will be the honored alumni during homecoming festivities at Colorado State College this weekend.

They are Mrs. Jo Shaeffer, elementary principal in Grand Junction; John Rosales, Spanish and journalism instructor at Pueblo Central High School; and Ervin S. French, president of Northeastern Junior College in Sterling.

The three will be cited during a special ceremony Friday evening at 8:45 p.m. in the Garden Theater on the CSC campus. The program will be held in Gunter Hall if there is inclement weather.

Principal for Many Years

Mrs. Shaeffer earned her B.A. from CSC. She has been a principal in Grand Junction for many years.

She was the first principal in Colorado to organize and operate a non-graded school. Now all elementary schools in District 51 are non-graded and this approach to education is widely accepted in Colorado.

Mrs. Shaeffer also initiated many other programs such as team-teaching, inter-age grouping and pilot programs in reading.

Rosales has taught at Keating Junior High and Pueblo Central for 16 years. The native Puebloan has served as an officer in several education associations

and the CSC Alumni Association. He has received several



Mrs. Jo Shaeffer



Ervin S. French



John Rosales

awards including the La Sertoma "Teacher of the Year" award for Pueblo in 1965.

Rosales was elected to the Pueblo City Council last November by one of the largest total votes ever amassed by a candidate in a Pueblo municipal election.

French received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from CSC. He taught in Grosse Point, Mich., prior to joining the Northeastern faculty as an administrative dean in 1948. He has been president since 1953.

The Sterling educator has served with the CEA and NEA, was president of the Empire Junior College Conference and president of the Colorado Association of Junior College Administrators, and has served as an officer with the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

He is also past president of the Sterling Country Club, Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis Club.

The ceremony at which the three will be honored will be held between the two performances of Hellzabruin, the student variety show.

The first show is at 7 p.m. in Gunter Hall. The alumni presentations and crowning of the homecoming queen will take place in Garden Theater unless bad weather forces the program into Gunter.

The second performance of Hellzabruin will begin immediately following the special ceremonies.

The public is invited to the Hellzabruin and alumni presentations.

Fruite Times Oct 27 1966 District 51 principal to be honored

Mrs. Jo Shaeffer, principal of the Broadway-Redlands elementary schools, will be one of three outstanding alumni honored Friday during homecoming at Colorado State College in Greeley.

Others to be honored are Ervin S. French, president of Northeastern Junior College in Sterling, and John Rosales, journalism and Spanish instructor in Pueblo.

A teacher-administrator here for many years, Mrs. Shaeffer was the first principal in Colorado to organize and operate a non-graded school. Now all elementary schools in Dist. 51 are non-graded and the system now is being widely used.

Mrs. Shaeffer began her career as a second grade teacher in Lincoln-Orchard Mesa School after graduating from Mesa Junior College. After completing her degree at CSU through extension courses and summer work, she became a principal in the Grand Junction system.

In addition to the non-graded approach, Mrs. Shaeffer has initiated many other new programs such as team-teaching, inter-age grouping and pilot programs in reading.

Mrs. Shaeffer and the other honorees will be cited at 8 p.m. Friday in a special ceremony in Garden Theater on the CSC campus.

HELEN JO SHAEFFER, DY, GRAND Junction, Colorado, principal of the

Broadway-Redlands elementary schools, was one of three outstanding alumni honored during homecoming at Colorado State College, Greeley.

Her citation recognized her outstanding work as a teacher and administrator in Western Colorado. It said

in part, "Introduction of innovative programs to the primary education level is the 'trademark' by which Jo Shaeffer is known. She was the first principal in Colorado to organize and operate a non-graded school. Among the programs she initiated were team-teaching, inter-age groupings and pilot programs, especially in the area of reading." Mrs. Shaeffer received her bachelor of arts degree from Colorado State College. *PEO Record*



Jo Shaeffer



MRS. JO SHAEFFER

Dist. 51 Principal To Be Honored At CSC Ceremony

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p.m. Friday in a special ceremony in Garden Theater on the CSC campus.

*The Palisade Tribune
Oct 28 1966.*

Page 5

CSC To Honor Mrs. Jo Shaeffer

Mrs. Jo Shaeffer of Palisade, elementary school principal in Grand Junction, is one of three outstanding Colorado educators who will be cited Friday evening as honored alumni at Colorado State College.

She will be awarded a citation during a special ceremony at 8:45 p.m. in the Garden Theatre on the CSC campus in Greeley.

Mrs. Shaeffer earned her B.A. from CSC and her M.A. from Colorado University. She has been a principal in Grand Junction for many years, having served as head of three schools simultaneously at one time.

The honoree was the first principal in Colorado to organize and operate a non-graded school. Now all elementary schools in District 51 are non-graded.

Mrs. Shaeffer also initiated many other programs such as team-teaching, inter-age grouping and pilot programs in new approaches to teaching reading.

Her husband, Earl, is the manager for Mt. States Telephone Co. in Palisade.



Rosales

French

3 Colo. Educators To Be Honored As CSC Alumni

Special to The Rocky Mountain News

GREELEY, Oct. 26—Three Colorado educators will be cited as honored alumni of Colorado State College during Homecoming festivities Friday.



Mrs. Shaeffer

They are Mrs. Jo Shaeffer of Grand Junction, John Rosales of Pueblo and Ervin S. French of Sterling.

Mrs. Shaeffer, an elementary principal, organized the first non-graded school in Colorado. She has also initiated such new programs as team teaching, inter-age grouping and new reading approaches.

Rosales teaches Spanish and journalism at Pueblo Central High School. He is also a member of Pueblo City Council.

French is president of Northeastern Junior College and president of the Colorado Assn. of Junior College Administrators.

As one would expect, Jo received numerous congratulatory cards and letters from friends and admirers in all walks of life:

Mesa County Valley School Dist. No. 51
Grand Junction, Colorado
November 25, 1966

Mrs. Jo Shaeffer
3601 G Road
Palisade, Colorado

Dear Mrs. Shaeffer:

The Board of Education and Administration wish to take this means to extend hearty congratulations to you as a recipient of an Outstanding Alumni Award from Colorado State College. The Board so deemed that this congratulation should be spread upon the minutes of the meeting of November 15, 1966.

The outstanding work that you have done on behalf of the youth in this school district as a teacher and principal merits you this award and helps this district to develop an educational program that serves the greatest advantage for children in this district. Your efforts in piloting new programs, your compassion for children, and the sincere professionalism you maintain as a principal in this district has benefited the children that you have served. Can there be greater satisfaction as an educator?

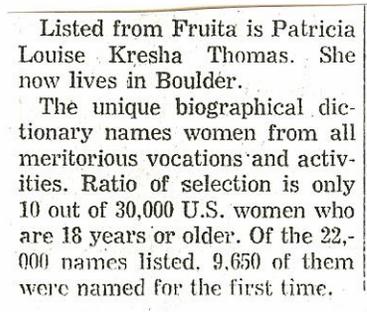
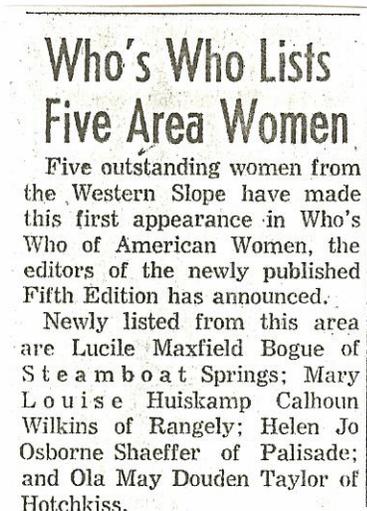
Again, thank you for your service and congratulations for this well deserved recognition.

Sincerely,
Richard G. Ayers, Superintendent of Schools

Another note of congratulation came from her old friend, Elio. Gowers:

*A very special congratulations from me, Jo, because I know that you will do so much for others in the future, as you have done in the past. "Knowledge is power" but only if it is shared and used for the furtherment of Good.
As always, Elio.*

Jo also received other awards including citations, life memberships and a listing in the Who's Who of American Women, as well as the International Who's Who.



Given Award

Mrs. Earl Shaeffer, right, principal of Broadway and Redlands Elementary Schools, received a life membership in PTA here Monday afternoon. Shown with her is Mrs. Thomas Davis of Denver, health chairman for Colorado PTA, who was here to attend the district PTA workshop Monday. Sentinel Photo.



A brief description of Jo's life was published in a book by Delta Kappa Gamma in 1968 called "The Torch Bearers."

Jo Shaeffer received the degree of Master of Education from the University of Colorado in 1960. The title of her thesis was "A Report on the Development of the Ungraded School in Mesa County," a subject on which she is an authority, since she organized the first ungraded school in Colorado.

Jo's initial experiment and the ungraded system have been chronicled in educational publications and in newspapers. The most recent account was published in the March, 1966 issue of the "Colorado School Journal," written by Fred Jacquette, and titled "Continuous Progress; the Non-Graded Elementary School." This article reports the expansion of the plan through the intermediate as well as the primary classes and its district-wide adoption in the Mesa county Valley Schools.

Jo was born in Denver, July 7, 1906. Her parents were Dr. Dallas J. Osborne, a Christian minister, and Pearl Miller Osborne. She was graduated from North High School in Denver in 1925. In 1926 she and Earl M. Shaeffer were married. They have lived in Denver, Colorado Springs, Grand Junction, and Cripple Creek. In 1946 her husband was transferred to Palisade, where he is manager for the telephone company.

For many years her chief interest was the rearing of her two children, a daughter, Bobby Jo, and a son, Earl Jr. Her children's friends were her friends, and she entered into their activities, making her home a meeting place for the young people.

Jo had the desire to teach children; she believed that the school should be geared to the child, not the child to the school and she was intensely interested in the philosophy of continuous growth and development of the child. She received her B.A. degree from Colorado State College in 1954.

She was asked by the Superintendent of Mesa Valley Schools, Mr. I. K. Boltz, to make a study of ungraded schools. She became enthusiastic about this method of teaching as she studied.

In 1954 she became principal of the Pear Park School and was given permission to try the experiment of the ungraded school there.

Jo believes that no child should be required to take giant steps if midget steps are the limit of his capacity, nor should a child be allowed to take midget steps if he can accomplish giant ones. Carefully selected enrichment material is offered to children who can use it, and a complete remedial program to those who need it. Flexibility is the key word. No work is repeated.

Following her seven year principalship at Pear Park School, Mrs. Shaeffer has administered the Appleton and Pomona Schools, and in the fall of 1965, Lincoln Park School was added to her responsibility.

She has always taken an active part in the community where she made her home. In Cripple Creek she served as president of the Federation of Women's Clubs; in Grand Junction, she was a member of the Child Welfare Board for eight years and also served on the Board of Goodwill Industries. She has charmed audiences for many years with her delightful book reviews which she gives for various groups. She is a member of P.E.O. and has served three terms on the Cerebral Palsy and Crippled Children's Boards.

Jo loves children and loves to teach. The pioneer spirit burns brightly within her, as she continues to work with inter-age grouping in the primary classes of Pomona School.

In 1964 Jo's granddaughter, Becky Irwin, age 11, wrote an English paper on her grandmother. It is so charming that it is included in its entirety:

Mrs. Helen Jo Shaeffer, my grandmother, called "Nanny" was born in 1906 in Denver, Colorado. She was one of four children. Her father was a minister but died when she was five [six]. She married my grandfather, "Pappy," when she was eighteen. With my grandfather she raised two responsible children. At the age of 42 she started college, joining her two children there.

She has Indian black hair, which now has small streaks of gray in it. She has deep chocolate brown eyes. She is also very thin. She has many outstanding characteristics, but the most striking is that she is always so good and faces hardships squarely. This probably comes from her father's training. Some of her attitudes are very strong. She believes that children are very important and she has amazing patience with them. Her abilities never seem to cease. She gives book reviews and acts out all the characters. She can sew very well. She is also good in home decorating. But her most outstanding ability is her management, patience and loving care of children. She can tell very easily when a person feels discouraged and always tries to make up for it. She never seems to hurt anyone's feelings, for she must know how they feel. She has great empathy. She can laugh at herself and her mistakes. In an unpleasant situation she often looks for its humor. For example, she bought a sweater to wear with a special skirt for a speech she had to make in Minnesota. At the last moment, before she left Colorado, she decided the sleeves were too long. So she cut off part of them. When she got to Minnesota, she found out she had only cut one sleeve. Instead of anger or dismay, she pushed up the long sleeve and began to laugh. To this day she thinks the audience thought she had more muscle in one arm than the other.

When other people see her, she is a carefree person and never seems to have a worry in the world. She is also seen as a hard worker, for she is a principal of three ungraded schools. She started the first ungraded school in Colorado. Now most of the schools in Colorado follow this plan. She is also helping to ungrade the schools in Utah. In doing so she sees many children frightened by her because she is a principal. This hurts her deeply. Nanny's main goal is making children and their education better. With such a grandmother, my goal is to be a teacher.



This photo appeared in the Sept. 1, 1969 edition of the Grand Junction Herald. The article, about her teaching was entitled, "Teacher's View of School Changes: Cautious Optimism."

As principal Jo had opportunities to have student teachers at her schools. One wrote:

Just a note to say thank you so much for all you have done for me this year. I could not have found a nicer teacher and principal to work with. This has been a wonderful experience for me. I will never forget what a perfect situation it has been. Sincerely, Billye

Another:

*Dear Jo,
All my life I will treasure my association with you; and I know all the children will who come in contact with you. You inspire everyone near you to be good and kind; and your enthusiasm for learning is most contagious. The stars in your crown are numerous and bright for the many wonderful things you daily do. I can't thank you enough for the encouragement and aid you've given me this year; and for your staunch moral support.
Much love, Bea and Linda Garner*

Jo continued with her duties as principal for another year and then requested a leave of absence in order to accept a teaching position at the college level. She taught at Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado until she accepted a position at Fresno State College, California. In a letter dated June 25, 1969 from the Grand Junction schools, Superintendent Ayres wrote:

...Your many years association with School District 51 as a teacher and administrator have been very professional and caused giant strides in the Elementary Curriculum for students in this District. Your outstanding efforts on behalf of Continuous Progress is primarily the cause of success in this program. The Board and Central Administration wish you well in your new endeavor in college teaching and express their appreciation for the outstanding service you have rendered the children of this school district...

In her professional life, Jo had a need for appropriate clothing. This she did in her own unique way. One of the things that Jo enjoyed was sewing when she had the time for it. She was an excellent seamstress and made many spectacular pieces of clothing which she wore with panache.

This dress, right, had a macramé yoke which Earl had made. She made similar dresses for Bobbie Jo and Ellen Claire. She was always most generous with her talents.



Left: Jo with friend and colleague, Bea Bradley, both of whom are wearing macramé necklaces made by Earl.

Jo was also invited to join several professional organizations. Among them were Delta Kappa Gamma, an international honor society of key women educators, the National Education Association, the Colorado Education Association, the Colorado Association of Elementary School Principals, Phi Lambda Theta, an international honor society and professional association in education and the American Association of University Professors.

Jo's years teaching in California were some of the most rewarding of her entire career. She taught at Fresno State College, now the California State University Fresno, but still called Fresno State. She enjoyed college teaching immensely and was successful in her many and varied achievements. However, her satisfaction was tempered with concern for the health of her husband. After spending two semesters with Jo in California, Earl decided he preferred life in Colorado. Jo continued teaching but made many weekend trips to Colorado. When she retired in 1973 she still continued teaching summer workshops. In September of 1973 Jo and Earl moved to Clovis, New Mexico where their son, Marty and his family lived.

Upon her resignation from Fresno State she received a letter from the dean of the school of education:

... Your letter of resignation came via registered mail yesterday morning. I think I knew what it was even before I read it; nevertheless, the confirmation of my fears came as a real shock. It was a sad occasion on two scores; first, I was sorry to learn that your husband has not been well, and second, I am more sorry than I can say to have you leave our S.O.E. faculty. You will be missed—and sorely.

During the spring term of 1974 Jo taught a remedial reading course to Cannon Air Force Base personnel that was offered by Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, but it was less than satisfying for her. However, she received a nice memo from Ken Rasmussen, ENMU official:

Please accept my late note of thanks for the help you gave to us in the recent P.R.E.P. program. I have heard many marvelous comments on the way the class was conducted. I know that each student profited accordingly! Please drop in to see us at any time. Again, thank you for your help. Sincerely, Ken

A quote Jo used in her teacher training described her idea of what good teaching is all about:

A wonderful teacher has a peculiar mixture of great love, much kindness, sternness, much imagination, unlimited energy, charm, must constantly challenge children, has infinite patience and understanding, has much fun and an ability to remember when she was a child and therefore is able to think in child-terms.

Jo was such a teacher. A brief overview of her career was highlighted in the Pioneer Days publication of 1997 published by the Sesquicentennial Committee of the Clovis and Prairie View Wards, Clovis, New Mexico:

Jo Shaeffer, age 90, and a resident of Clovis was responsible for pioneering a unique ungraded primary curriculum for boards of education throughout the state of Colorado and in other states.

She was a stay-at-home mother and homemaker until her youngest child started college. Then she attended college herself for the first time. After graduating from Colorado State University in Greeley, Colorado, she taught school in the Grand Junction, Colorado elementary schools, becoming principal of three schools simultaneously from 1954 to 1968 where she developed the unique curriculum for grades one through three. She earned her Masters Degree of Education at the University of Colorado, Boulder in 1960, having attended summer sessions while she continued her teaching. In 1966 she was the recipient of the Outstanding Alumni Award at Colorado State University at Greeley. She conducted workshops on reading methods in Oregon, California, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Massachusetts.

In 1968 she became an associate professor of education at Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado. This was followed by several years teaching at the California State University, Fresno. She retired in 1975.

The legacy of her love for learning has inspired [many, including] her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Jo, age 90

A teacher's influence has no boundaries. One never knows how widely the ripple effect will spread. Jo once received a call from a neurosurgeon in Seattle. He had been in her second year class in Pear Park. She had taught him to read after his first year teacher and his mother had given up on him, and he wanted to thank her for getting him started on the road to success.

One day in 1995 Jo got a phone call from a former student that had attended her classes at the university level. The caller said that she, herself, was now teaching college students and that not a single day passed that she didn't use the knowledge, skills and approaches taught her by Jo Shaeffer. What a great tribute to a talented and dedicated teacher of teachers!

HELEN JO SHAEFFER – VITA

EDUCATION

Graduate work toward Ph.D. degree – 1960-1963
University of Colorado, Boulder – M. Ed. 1960
Colorado State University, Greeley – B.A. 1954
Mesa College, Grand Junction — Associates Degree 1950

EXPERIENCE

Associate Professor of Education – California State University, Fresno 1969-1975
Courses taught:

Teaching of Reading (Basic Course)
Teaching of Language Arts
Classroom Organization & Management
Children's Literature

Associate Professor of Education – Western State College, Gunnison, Colorado 1968-1969
Courses taught:

Basic Reading Instruction
Remedial Reading
Language Arts Method
Curriculum Planning and Organization
Social Studies Method

Principal – Grand Junction, Colorado, elementary schools - 1954-1968

Teacher – Grand Junction, Colorado, elementary schools - 1950-1954

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Conducted workshops on Reading Methods, Diagnosis, Remediation, etc.

1975 – Hanford, California
Tulare, California
Visalia, California

1974 – Roseburg, Oregon

1973 – Concord, California

1972 – Fresno, California

Guest speaker and discussion leader in many conferences on reading instruction in various cities: Boston, MA, Milwaukee, WI, Lincoln, NE, etc. 1954-1968

Conducted workshops for administrators, teachers, parents on non-graded organization in Lincoln, NE, Boulder, CO, Provo, UT, Jefferson County, CO, etc. 1954-1968

PUBLICATIONS

Colorado Education Association Journal

Reporting to Parents in a Non-graded School, December 1960

Lunch Program Becomes Vehicle for Teaching, February 1958

Author of many brochures, pamphlets and handbooks to be used for non-grading, reading, grouping for instruction, individualizing and personalizing teaching new trends in education 1954-1973

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

1969-1970 International Who's Who

1968-1969 Who's Who of American Women

1968 Personalities of the West and Midwest

1966 Recipient of Outstanding Alumni Award – Colorado State University, Greeley, Colorado

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Delta Kappa Gamma

National Education Association

Colorado Education Association

Colorado Department Elementary School Principals

Phi Lambda Theta

American Association of University Professors

COMMUNITY SERVICE

1954-1968:

Crippled Children – Board of Directors

Federated Women's Club – Past President

Cerebral Palsy – Board of Directors

Goodwill Industries Board Member

Child Welfare Board member

* * *

