

Senior Beat: A tribute to a resilient, hard-working mother



Senior Beat
Carol Higgins Taylor

Mother's Day is a short three weeks away. Whenever someone speaks of my mother, "She is something else" is typically the phrase that accompanies the name, Margie Higgins.

Something else, indeed. She is strong, funny, stubborn, thoughtful, and would do anything for someone she perceives as needing help. She deeply loves animals, absorbs news stories like a sponge, and drinks tea by the gallon. And she inspires (and occasionally

exasperates) me.

Margie has been a career woman all her life. At 88, she is still working, currently at the Penquis program, Foster Grandparent. She is stationed at Job Corp and is having the time of her life. She loves the students she is working with and is very proud of their accomplishments, beaming and bragging like a true grandmother. While considered a volunteer, Foster Grandparents receive a small hourly stipend and mileage.

Margie enjoys sharing her life lessons with her charges, including growing up in Trenton, the eldest of seven children, during the depression and war.

Her start in life was not easy. She was diagnosed with polio two days after her first birthday. But

thanks to the Shriner's Hospital for Crippled Children in Springfield, MA, three surgeries by age twelve, and her perseverance, Margie learned to walk and has led a normal life.

Margie was 10 years into her marriage before finally having a baby. She was widowed three years later. A second marriage ended in divorce.

Her admirable work ethic started early with her first job at the Rainbow Roller Rink in Trenton. She was 11 years old and paid 50 cents for a five-hour shift as the coat-check girl.

She has a "can do" attitude that has served her, and others, well. The devastating forest fire in 1947, which engulfed Bar Harbor and much of eastern Mount Desert Island in flames, was not about to burn without

her. Margie recalls that time with sad nostalgia.

"I refused to evacuate but rather stayed at the fire house and served coffee and food to the weary firefighters," she said. "I'll never forget the heavy smoke, high temperatures and high winds. From upstairs at the firehouse, you could see buildings burning. I still have the pass issued to me by the Chief of Police to go back and forth to the island."

Margie's love of the legal profession tightened its grip when a friend introduced her to the world of court stenography. Her interest in that business grew and in 1968 she formed her own court reporting company, working in both state and federal courts.

A touch of wanderlust took her to the west coast,

where she continued her career in the legal field. As is true for most people who leave Maine, she returned about a decade later.

She worked for several attorneys in the area before retiring. And yet, she didn't really stop working but instead changed her focus. One might say, given the joy she gets from being a Foster Grandparent, she might have had a successful career as a teacher.

When Margie is asked about stopping work, the reply is always, "Why would I want to do that? What would I do all day and the kids need me."

We all do. My mother and I live near each other, which initiates comments from people such as, "how nice that you can look after her." Truth be told, we're about equal in the "looking

after" department. She's always at the ready if I need something.

Margie has a unique love of garage sales and grocery shopping (which I did not inherit) and is constantly asking if I "want anything at the store." Regardless of my answer, she's off, armed with a fist full of coupons, which always end up saving her a surprising amount of money.

She has raised coupon shopping, and getting the most out of rainchecks, to an art form - as she has done with everything else in her life.

Happy early Mother's Day, Mom. We'll take you out to lunch. I clipped a coupon.

Carol Higgins Taylor is an advocate for seniors and owns Bryant Street Public Relations in Bangor. Email her at bryantstreetpr@gmail.com.

Bangor man donates 280th pint of blood

Dale Rogers passed a big milestone when he donated his 280th pint of blood on Monday, March 28, at the Red Cross Blood Donation Center on Hammond Street.

Rogers started donating blood in 1959 while he was a freshman in college. He has been giving blood since.

The American Red Cross depends on healthy, volunteer blood donors to maintain an adequate blood supply and fulfill its mission.

When asked why he makes time to donate blood on a regular basis, Rogers told the Red Cross, "It's something I can do to help others and it makes me feel good," according to a Red Cross press release.

To donate blood, a blood

donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, from a home or work computer prior to arriving at the blood drive. To get started and learn more, visit redcrossblood.org/RapidPass and follow the instructions on the site.

Brewer church holds free First Aid training

The First Congregational Church of Brewer will host a free Red Cross First Aid Training 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, May 1, at the church, 35 State St., behind Brewer City Hall. Certified first aid trainer Beverly Wilson, R.N. will teach the class, which will cover breathing problems, choking, allergic reactions, EpiPen injections, heat related injuries, bites, diabetes, stroke, heart attack, fainting and wound care.

After attending the class, participants will receive a First Aid Certification, valid for two years. Refreshments will be served. For information or to sign up, call 989-7350 or email secretaryfccb@gmail.com. The deadline to register is Friday, April 29.

Bangor Community Chorus concert set

Bangor Community Chorus' 48th annual spring concert will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 23, at First United Methodist Church, 703 Essex St.; admission is by donation. The jazz-themed concert will feature standards like "Cheek to Cheek", "What a Wonderful World", and "How High The Moon". There also will be some less-known numbers like "Libertango" and "Jazz Cantata".

The Chorus is led by Doug-

las Beck, who earned his degrees from the Peabody Conservatory of Music at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He teaches piano, and directs the children's chorus at Ellsworth Community School of Music. He also gives private music and voice lessons.

FROZEN FRIDAY FUN

Light/Sound Skate


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