

Grandma Olson & the Eastern Star

My Grandma Olson was going to be the Worthy Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star. I really had no clue as to exactly what that meant, but to me it sounded as if my Grandma was going to be a Queen! My family was invited to the swearing-in ceremony, and I decided that I would behave in a manner as befitted a member of the royal family.

My Grandma wore a long white dress with yards and yards of lace fabric in the skirt. She wore her best necklace and earrings. I knew she would be surprised and pleased when she opened her present from all of us--a shiny gold bracelet engraved with the Order of the Eastern Star symbol. I wanted to dress like my Grandma, but there wasn't time to make a long formal dress for me, so I had to settle for my navy blue suit. I didn't have any fancy jewelry, but decided to pin my enameled blue angelfish pin to my lapel. My Aunt Honey pulled my long hair up into a bun, just like hers. I was sure I looked positively regal as I entered the Eastern Star hall in Lincoln.

Folding chairs were set up in rows with a center aisle. After the all the guests were seated, the members of the order processed up the aisle to the music of a hymn, sweeping by me in their long formal gowns. My Grandma gave me a smile as she walked by. The ceremony began with prayer, but I don't remember any of the formal wording of the actual installation ceremony. The soon-to-be-former-worthy-matron, Mrs. Lottie Knight, gave a long boring speech. Her sons, including the famous Bucky Knight, sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer," in four-part harmony, in honor of their mother. I perked up at the great idea that my sisters and I could sing for our Grandmother next year!

The ceremony ended with my Grandma using the gavel to end the meeting. There were lots of good wishes and congratulations extended by those present. We were rewarded for our good behavior with cookies and punch. Grandma loved the bracelet and promised to treasure it always. I told her about our plan to sing at next year's ceremony and I was sure she liked the idea. Sonja, Mary Kay and I practiced "Sweet Hour of Prayer" at home a million times with piano accompaniment. Sonja and Mary Kay sang soprano and I sang a very strong alto. We were ready for our singing premiere! But somehow we missed the ceremony when my grandmother stepped down as worthy matron of the Eastern Star, so thus ended our singing career.

Lynn VanderLinde
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