

Reviews

Carol Schaufel recounts her life with remarkable detail, as she demonstrates how her life, and her being, was not, and is not, defined by a wheelchair. As a lifelong friend of Carol, I laughed, I cried and I remembered many of the incidents she relates in her story. This book is an uplifting message to anyone facing adversity in their lives that what you think may define you as a person is only a portion of what makes you the person you really are.

Les Ryshkus
Retired Copy Editor



I loved the book. Your autobiography is truly an inspiration for anyone to read. I am so grateful you decided to put your story into words. Your hard work and determination is a fine example for us all.

Louie Ferraro
Pharmacist



Carol is a survivor! The only way Carol has survived, considering her debilitating health condition, is because of her strong capable character and personality, which had to make up for the incapacity of her body. She also had the strong support and love of her family and friends. Considering all of Carol's health issues, and virtually no muscle strength, with ability of moving less than a pound, nothing in this world has stopped Carol! She did everything a fully capable normal human being could have done... going to college, holding down a job, hardships, traveling the world, getting married, and more! I still believe, to this day, at her age, and confined even more so to her wheelchair, there is virtually nothing in this world that can stop this woman from doing what she wants to do! Carol's life story has a great deal to teach all of us about what is important in life! Live it; Love it; BE it!

Author Anita Meyer
Author of three books:
The Primordial Language,
In Search Of The Holy Language,
and Beyond The Bible Code.
Criminologist.
Religious procurement specialist.

Reviews

BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND YOU - A Chair Does Not a Person Make

This is a true story about someone that rose above a multitude of life obstacles, to have a successful and rewarding life.

While reading this book, I felt that I was transported to her home and was sitting, over coffee, listening to her tell her story.

Carol's story is an inspiration for all that experience setbacks in their life. The "Eveready Bunny" has nothing on Carol.

Sylvia Bahling RN
Kenosha WI



Carol is a true inspiration to able-bodied people as well as disabled. She has touched on so many things in her book that a person would never even think of. She has done so much in her life, proving that no disability was going to hold her back! A 'must-read' for all!

Susan Nielsen, published author.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND YOU
A Chair Does Not a Person Make

Carol Schaufel

Edited by
LK Kelley

DragonEye Publishing

BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND YOU
A Chair Does Not a Person Make
Copyright © 2014 Carol Schaufel

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the author and from the Publisher.

Cover portrait by artist, George Pollard

Editor: LK Kelley

First Printing September 2014
ISBN 13: 978-1-61500-057-9 Paperback

(Author Previously Published through CreaSpace 2013-
ISBN 13: 978-1492754091 - Paperback)



Other formats
ISBN 13: 978-1-61500-058-6 E-book

Visit our Website
www.DragonEyePublishers.com

Published by DragonEye Publishing

Dedicated with love to my parents, Steve, kids, grandkids, sister & family, friends, relatives
coworkers, caregivers and strangers, all those who have touched my life in so many ways
Thank you

~~ Foreword ~~

I can't quite remember when I first met Carol Schaufel. I'm sure, if I asked her, she would remember. She demonstrates here with uncanny ability the details of a life spent in, but not defined by, a wheelchair.

Carol and I were classmates at Orthopedic School, a school that served students with all kinds of disabilities. We didn't look at things we couldn't do, but rather at how we could do things that *others* thought we might not be able to do. Whether it was sports, playing at recess, or just communicating with those students who had less ability to convey what was on their minds.

Carol demonstrates here how she used her ability, rather than her disability, to become a teacher, a counselor and, more importantly, a success in life.

I found myself not only laughing, but also crying, as I read her story and remembered many of the events she so wonderfully recalls. Even if you don't know Carol, you will get to know her as you read her remarkable story - her victories far outnumber her defeats in life.

This book should be read by anyone who thinks they have insurmountable obstacles in their lives. It is a story of hope, of overcoming those obstacles and succeeding in life not matter the roadblocks set in front of you.

Les Ryshkus
Retired Copy Editor

~ About the Author ~

I originally self-published my book, since there were different packages which included assistance. I sold about 200 books, but learned that self-publishing has its hazards. I had book signings at such places as Barnes and Nobles. The book signings were fun, and I learned a lot from other authors. Some were self-published, and some were not. At my fourth signing, I met an Author, Anita Meyer, who told me that her publisher might be interested in my book. I met her, again, at a fifth book signing in a Racine church. Anita told me she would e-mail him that same night, and I followed it with my own e-mail the next day. I agreed, and Publisher Michael Kiser, provided me with a book Editor, LK Kelley, who is knowledgeable, and is also a published author.

Since the writing of this book, I am now on the Kenosha County Commission on Aging, assisting with the needs of the elderly in our community along with legislative advocacy. I am also pleased to be on the Board of Society's Assets which is an independent living center serving five counties in Southeast Wisconsin.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

- ~ 1 ~ Background
 - ~ 2 ~ Meeting Susan
 - ~ 3 ~ Growing Up
 - ~ 4 ~ Finishing Orthopedic School
 - ~ 5 ~ Starting High School
 - ~ 6 ~ Entering College
 - ~ 7 ~ Transferring to Carthage
 - ~ 8 ~ Teaching at Carthage
 - ~ 9 ~ Easter Seals Camps
 - ~ 10 ~ Job Interviews & First Year
 - ~ 11 ~ Teaching Years
 - ~ 12 ~ Community Involvement
 - ~ 13 ~ 1973 - A Busy Year
 - ~ 14 ~ Traveling with a Busy Schedule
 - ~ 15 ~ Politics and Master's Degree
 - ~ 16 ~ Winter of 1978-1979
 - ~ 17 ~ A DVR Counselor
 - ~ 18 ~ Work & Community
 - ~ 19 ~ Independent Living
 - ~ 20 ~ Changes
 - ~ 21 ~ Changes x 2
 - ~ 22 ~ Gambling & Support
 - ~ 23 ~ Technology and Traveling
 - ~ 24 ~ Dad's passing
 - ~ 25 ~ A cruise, A Move, & Bad News
 - ~ 26 ~ Mom's passing & Life After
 - ~ 27 ~ Retiring
- Photos

~ Introduction ~

I loved watching “*Ghost Whisperer*” on television. I especially enjoyed the way it started saying that the main character, Melinda, was just an average person who grew up in a small town, married, and was just like everyone else except that she saw ghosts!

My situation was very similar. I had a very normal life going to school, completing a Master’s degree, and getting married. I worked for 39 years as a teacher and vocational rehabilitation counselor. Life was average, except that I never remember a time when I could dress myself, or use the bathroom without assistance. I stopped walking at the age of four, and gradually became weaker at regular intervals, until I stopped growing. Twelve years before I retired, I also lost the ability to feed myself.

I had multiple limitations. My family, friends, caregivers, coworkers and strangers were my natural supports. I adapted to multiple technologies, which became my tools to living my life instead of just existing. I did not want people to see me differently. I only wanted people to see that I just did things differently. It made me happy when people would stop seeing my wheelchair, and asked me to do things that they knew I could not do, but they forgot that I could not do them. For much of my life, I have used a motorized wheelchair, a mouthstick, or Dragon Dictate to type with my voice, and another device, a Sicare, that helped me to turn lights on and off, dial my phone, and unlock, and open my front door.

I was fortunate to have the support of my parents for 38 years before I organized myself to try independent living. In the process, I discovered that there was no such thing as independent living. One morning, in order to go to work, eight different people touched my life:

- a caregiver who helped me to get up and ready;
- a 15 year-old boy, who lived upstairs, and kindly pushed me through the snow to the bus stop;
- the bus driver,
- a secretary,
- a couple of probation officers,
- as well as a stranger who opened a door.

Whenever I needed someone to help, or assist me in my life, it seemed like someone was always there, and often it even might have been you!

This is the story of my life, what happened, the obstacles that I needed to overcome, the support that I received, and the deaths of so many old and young individuals from whom I learned many things. I recalled the laughter and tears we shared, and how, as a child, I saw, and adjusted to my changing, physical limitations. There were also the struggles of being seen as an adult when having to be taken care of as a child. When I left home at 38, my parents were lost as I changed from being dependent on them, to their being dependent on me. Forgive me if this

is not chronologically correct, or if I have filled in details due to my failing memory. I am 67 now, you know! (Note: If I feel a person might be a bit uncomfortable from my story, I will change their name).

Enjoy reading my story, because I have faith that *anyone* can do *anything* by just making up their minds to do it.

If one is creative, not afraid to try, or fail and can adapt to things differently than the general population, then one can do it. If one does not mind being stared at occasionally, because they look different doing everything, then one can do it.

This is a thank you to everyone in my life—past, present and future. I am so grateful that you were/are/will be there!

Background

It was one of those rainy days. The room was a little dark and dreary. Nothing was on TV, so, I decided to clean some of my drawers. My attendant placed my three high school yearbooks in front of me on my bed, but I only attended two years of high school—my junior and senior years. I started with the 1963 yearbook, which would have been my sophomore year. Why did I have this book? I started turning the pages with my mouthstick, but didn't remember anyone specific. I turned another few pages and then I saw it—a half-page, fuzzy, black and white picture of Tim. He was one of the 15 friends and classmates that died before I was 20 years old.

I leaned my mouthstick next to my arm so that I could grab it later. My mind began clearing up that fuzzy picture. Why did Tim die in his senior year of school? I knew he had a limp from polio when he was in fourth grade, and I was in the first grade at the Orthopedic School. I had such a crush on him. I vaguely remember something about a tumor moving up his spine between his lungs, but I can't remember for sure. But, I do remember that he was handsome, funny, and used a wheelchair before he died.

Several of my other classmates had already died. Kathy who had died at the age of 12 of kidney failure was sweating urine the day she died, as there was no dialysis at the time. Ronnie, who died at the age of 16, had Muscular Dystrophy. Ronnie's body was distorted, so the mortician wanted to break Ronnie's bones to fit him flat into the coffin comfortably. I often thought, because my knees are contracted, and my back is curved, that the same would happen to me.

The one thing very special about Ronnie was that he was the only person I knew who could touch his nose with the tip of his tongue. He had very little other movement in his body. And, then, there was Dennis who died of a heart problem, along with many others.

From about the age of six years-old, I watched Muscular Dystrophy telethons. I knew that I was supposed to die by the age of 15, and I knew that I built up barriers between myself, and all around me. I did ~ 11 ~not want anyone to hurt as much as I did when my friends died.

When I was older, my Mother admitted to me that she was afraid to love me. The diagnosis came after four years, and she did not know how she could handle my death after she had been through so much. She never saw herself as a strong person, but she was.

I'd like to tell you a bit about my family, if I may. My Mother, Shirley, and my Father, Ken, were nine and thirteen, respectively, when they met. My Mother was only five when her parents were divorced (almost unheard of in 1930). Her Mother, Tina, was not a person that liked to go out much, and eventually, married Harvey, ten years her junior, and taking over for his Father's 40-acre farm. That was a good spot for Tina, and she was a hard worker. Together, they ended up selling tomatoes to the Campbell Soup Company as well as growing 10 acres of gladiolas for local florists. Their gladiolas had 32 flowers as big as a man's fist per spike—

beautiful along with having original colors. Their geraniums were huge, and the tomato plants, peppers, and geese kept them busy. My Mom's Mother and Stepfather had cats on their farm, and they became known as 'Grandma and Grandpa with the kitties!'

Bill, my Mother's Dad, only attended school until the fourth grade. He married Vivian, a woman 10 years his senior, and she had a daughter named Doris. Vivian set a beautiful table, and she was a great cook. My Grandfather was originally a coal miner, and at one point, was trapped for hours in a mine in southern Illinois. He lost part of his foot during the mining accident. Later, he said that he would never, again, do mining work. He taught himself to read and write as well as how to raise mink. He became one of the most sought after mink ranchers in the country. My other maternal Grandparents became known as 'Grandma and Grandpa with the mink!' They also loved to play cards, and often did this with my Father's parents, and, this is how my parents met. My Dad had totally no interest in my Mom at that time. I think she was probably more of a nuisance to him as all she did was sit, and wait while the parents finished their card games.

I actually have three sets of Grandparents. My Dad's Mom, Ida, was 6 foot tall—just like her boys. Ida married my Grandpa after her fiancé was shot to death the day after the World War I armistice was signed. (Soldiers in the field took a long time getting the word that the war was over—many died such a death). My Grandfather, John, (about 5'10") was in the Cavalry fighting Pancho Villa in Mexico. (Obviously, he never met Pancho Villa as he still had both his ears! Thank you, God). My Grandfather supported his wife, and two six-foot boys selling Watkins products—still excellent products today. Since my Dad's parents lived in town, they became known to the kids as 'Grandma and Grandpa in town'.

Mom lived with her Mother. My Mom attended Dublin School from the first through eighth grade. She was a fast learner, and had a chance to teach some of the classes helping students catch up in other grades. She walked two miles from the farm to Dublin School every day. When she was older, she lived in town with some friends so she could attend high school.

Eventually, however, my parents started going out on dates. My Dad was in high school, and received good grades without even picking up a book. My Mother had no siblings, but my Dad had one brother, Al, who was angry with my Dad, because Al would gas up the family car for his own dates. By the time he would be ready to leave, my Dad had already driven off with the car to pick up my Mom!

My Mom always teased my Dad, because even then he liked to drive fast, among other things. Mom was the "lookout" for the police so he wouldn't get a speeding ticket.

At the age of 16, my Mom became engaged to my Father, 20. He had graduated from High School, and was working at Johnson Motors, which later became known as Outboard Marine. Mom was young, yes, but both Dad and Al joined the Army Air Corp in 1941. World War II had begun.

Two years after Dad was in the service, Mom quit high school with only six weeks left to work in a curtain rod factory. All of her girlfriends had fiancés in the service, too. They all worked together. Women took over the jobs that men were doing.

It was really a surprise that I was born at all. Dad was in the Army Air Corp as a radar mechanic, and stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii (Pearl Harbor after the Japanese attack), and in the Air Corp for four years. His squadron was scheduled to go on an air attack on an island

where 85% of his squadron was wiped out. Fortunately for my Dad (and me), he had his first kidney stone attack, and was put into the hospital, so he could not go on the mission. Again, *thank you God!*

When the war ended, both Al and Ken were ready to come home. Al had been stationed on an island in the Pacific where he was on office duty. Since the war had been over for a few days, it was devastating when he saw his buddies blown up by a bomb. He saw people running, and ran outside. An explosion occurred in front of him and, in a second, debris was forced over him killing buddies behind as well as in front of him. This attack on the Chinese front was a surprise. When Al's shock wore off, he still had the pencil that he was writing with in his hand—holding it tight near his head. Uncle Al would never talk about his service experience, but it seriously affected him both mentally and physically.

As soon as Grandma and Grandpa's in town boys came back from the Army Air Corp, they were ready to marry. Al chose March 1 as his wedding day, and Dad went with him. When Dad saw Mom, he told her, "Al will be married March 1. The only other date open for us to get married was March 30. I took it." That sounded like my Dad. Straight to the point—if you have something to do, just get it done! Mom was taken by surprise, but agreed to the adventure.

There was not much information on birth control in 1946. It wasn't something that was talked about. Mom disclosed that she had the opposite understanding of the rhythm method so I was born exactly 9 months and 15 days after their wedding!

~ Something is Wrong ~

“Wednesday's Child is full of woe”—and I was. It was 1947 on a mid-January Tuesday with a blizzard howling outside. Mom's labor began, and she slowly made her way to the hospital. Her pregnancy wasn't easy, and she lost all of her teeth (guess I robbed her calcium), and had false teeth by the age of 21.

My Dad was glad when I was finally born many hours later on Wednesday, January 15, 1947 at 9:15 a.m., and was 5 lbs. 6 oz. My parents wanted a boy, and I really surprised them! They quickly decided to name me Carol, since I was born just after Christmas.

Some people told them, “Her name should have been Susan, because her eyes are as dark as the center of ‘a black-eyed Susan’.”

My Dad brought my Mom some roses, gave her a kiss and went straight to work without sleep. He was a dedicated man. While Mom was sleeping, the nurses said that I was bald, and that baldness continued for 18 months!

Things began to look “wrong” when Mom was looking at my footprints, and wondered why they seemed to be curved. For a short period of time, my parents and I stayed with my Grandma and Grandpa's at their in-town home. I was thought to have colic, because I cried constantly, all night, every night! No one slept. And, doctor discovered that I was crying because I was hungry, because my lagging strength only allowed me to eat an ounce of my formula at a time. My doctor, Dr. Peckous, Sr., saved my life more than once! My tonsils are still part of me, because he said, "God put your tonsils there for some reason, and I think you are going to need them." As a side note, Dr. Peckous was also the doctor for the Chicago Bears - the football team, not the bears in the Chicago zoo!

By the time we moved out of my Grandparents' house into a temporary housing project for returning service members, my parents were on a schedule of going to bed at 7:00 p.m. It allowed my parents a few hours asleep. With my problems, they were always minus five dollars, but my Grandparents in town helped.

We had a limited time to stay in the housing project, and Dad wanted to build his own house. He had building experience helping others. Except for plumbing and electrical, he could build just about anything at all. He borrowed \$5000 from my Grandpa with the mink, and it took two years to finish the house while working fulltime at Johnson Motors. Of course, he had to work around the winter cold, and with different people's schedules that were helping him build it. Even Mom was on the roof helping him put on the shingles. Mom was "stuck" in the bathroom between the wall and tub, and almost became a "permanent fixture" when Dad installed the tub!

It took me six months before I could sit up by myself, but I did walk early at nine months even though my legs were never strong. My Mom described to me an incident that had happened.

"One day, when you were two, we were in a park by the lake having a picnic. You were standing next to a park bench, and your legs gave out. You had your tongue sticking out (more than likely talking). We rushed you to the hospital as you were bleeding badly from your mouth."

Dr. Peckous explained, 'If this little girl would have chopped her tongue just another quarter of an inch, she would never be able to speak!'

He had to stitch my tongue, or used gauze to hold my tongue together. Then he put me in a straitjacket, because sucking my thumb, at the time, could cause infection. To this day, I still have an inch scar on my tongue. But, I'm positive that this incident stopped me from sucking my thumb! God works in mysterious ways. To make matters worse, I also had a horrible case of chickenpox, which covered my entire body. When the doctor tried to give me some penicillin, I developed a case of hives. I had an allergic reaction causing terrible itching not only on my body, but also in my nose and throat. A straitjacket would've been good at that time, but they did not give it to me!

When I turned two, we moved into our house on the south side of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Dad had built a wonderful house! Of course, none of us knew that the steps were going to cause a problem in the future with three steps in the front, and two steps in the back. My Dad, finally, added a front porch with three steps. We worked that out later, but I now had my own room!

And, then, I was sick once again! My parents had taken me to too many doctors. The wife of one of my Dad's friends from the service put a little article in the newspaper in their town of Port Washington, Wisconsin. She wrote something about a little girl who was constantly sick. I received a couple hundred cards. I remember some of those cards, because my Mom saved them, and may still have a couple today. My favorite one was a sick little boy with his feet in a tub of water. You could tip the boy back and forth to help him soak his feet. Another one was a set of cards that I received one per day to make me guess from whom they came. On the seventh day, the person was revealed. I don't remember the name of the person, but it sure was fun! Mom wrote thank you notes, and I learned to print my first name on them.

One of the things my Mom wished the doctors could fix was to stop me from sleeping

with my eyes open! So, that is why I was taken to the chiropractor. Spooky, huh? He did something to my back and neck, finally, I started sleeping with my eyes closed!

I was also taken to a healer, and that didn't work.

At four years old, I was still falling a lot and hitting my head. My Mom thought for sure I was going to have a learning disability.

Another time, I was playing with our dog in an add-on utility room while Mom was in the kitchen. There was a closed door between us while she washed the dishes. She heard an unusual noise, and stopped to check on me. The dog's chain had wrapped around my neck, and I turned blue. Mom quickly swirled the chain off my neck which spun the dog around backwards at the same rate of speed, and the poor dog was dizzy. . It was a close call for me, and I must have had an *extremely*, busy guardian angel. Perhaps even three—one for each shift!

Some of the doctors thought that I might have something called Muscular Dystrophy. My Grandfather “with the mink” drove us to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. I don't remember the doctor, but I do remember that car. Grandpa always had a Cadillac, and it was usually pink. In the back seat, it had an arm rest that came down in the middle of the seat, and I could sit on it to see out of the window. On the way, my Grandma “with the mink” told me the story of *The Three Little Pigs* for the first time. As a matter of fact, she had to tell me a lot of times to make it all the way to Minnesota! I loved that story, especially the way she told it. That old huffing and puffing wolf!

Muscular Dystrophy was the specialist's diagnosis. Every doctor after that gave the same diagnosis without challenge. There was no sign of the disease in generations past. Why now? Why me? Why not me.

~ Recognizing Change ~

What was Muscular Dystrophy? Who knew? Who cared? I was only four years old! What was all the fuss? Why was Mom treating me differently?

The people next door were very nice who had four children, and later a fifth. I knew Patty and Buddy best. Patty was a few years older than me. She would come, and play with me almost every day until her Mother thought she was bothering my Mom too much. My Mom would see Patty at our back door, chin barely to the window, and asking, "Whatcha got to eat for me today?" Patty's brother, Buddy, played with me a lot, too. I would run around the house, and he would chase me. I would fall. Then, Buddy would stand me up again, and our chase began again. I noticed some differences in my body since I had begun to walk on my knees, now. My knees looked like the bottom of people's feet—with huge calluses. I found a little chair with no back on it that I put in front of me to use as a walker inside and outside which helped me meet more and more of our neighbors. In the summer, I would have a lot of company as well as investigated gardens, picking green beans and strawberries.

My Grandparents' in town babysat me more than anyone. My Grandma would play *Tiddlywinks* with me, and my Grandpa would play *Old Maid*, and try to cheat which would make me laugh. He would hold the old maid card loosely, and the rest of his cards tight so that I could not pull anything but the old maid. I wised up pretty fast! When we finished playing the games, my Grandfather would hold out his two fingers for me to grab onto so that I could walk

on my knees to the kitchen table in a little nook which looked like a booth. My Grandma and I loved to put together about eight puzzles she kept in the same box, and I could separate six of them, and put them together easily. There were two puzzles that had no locking connections which were very hard for me. On these hard puzzles, Grandma would always sit with me, and finish them as we looked out the back window to see the lightning bugs in the garden.

When I was back home, I had a little rocking chair, and as I walked on my knees, I would back my feet underneath the chair, and sit down in it. As I got bigger, I couldn't figure out why I couldn't get my feet under that chair anymore. I recalled using some Encyclopedia books (my Mom got into great trouble with my Dad for buying those from a traveling salesman) stacking three of them, then two, and then one to make a staircase. I would go up the makeshift stairs on my knees, get to the top of my stairs, and try to go down all three books on the end. Well, it worked on the way down, but I could never get back up the three books! You'd think I could just go down the three steps I created instead of trying to jump up on the three, but, no. I didn't think of that!

Real staircases I handled differently. Going up was always hard, coming down was fun. I would wiggle my rear to the edge of the top step, and bounced my way down one step at a time. I would do this over and over again till I touched the bottom. I thought it was fine, but Mom and Dad always hollered at me when I did, because they thought it was dangerous. I began to take risks early.

I also liked to play in the closet with my clothing above my head. I had my dollhouse with a little wind up lady that would sweep like crazy. As I grew, I always wondered why my dresses kept hitting my head!

When winter came, my Mom took me for my first sled ride by putting me in a box. I fell off of course, and my face was cold in the snow. I couldn't breathe, and it seemed like a long time before she noticed that I was missing. I was really glad she finally rescued me, and please...no more sled rides with Mom?

I am not sure what happened to my first dog, but the summer that I was five, we got another dog, a very strong collie. There was a vacant lot next door on the south side of our house. Dad put his doghouse in the back of the lot. The dog was so strong, he could drag his doghouse with him to the front of the yard every night, and Dad would carry it back every morning! One day was the final straw as the dog chased a car with his doghouse attached. The dog caused the car to smash into the store across the street ... there were no more dogs for a while. We would also fly kites in that same, vacant lot next door. My Dad would put my kite on a fishing pole, and it worked great!

In contrast, pretending that the electrical plug by our couch was a gumball machine didn't work well. I tried to push a penny between the prongs of the plug - the lamp was plugged into the socket. Sparks flew! I was scared! But, I was lucky enough not to get hurt - *or killed!* I was in serious trouble, yelling happened, but I *never did it again!* I was just lucky to be alive in order to 'never to do that again'!

We would visit my Grandma and Grandpa with the kitties. My parents went into the house on this occasion. I stayed in the car. My Grandma and Grandpa had a tiny bulldog who just loved me. I had stayed in the car while my parents went into their house, and I saw him coming to greet me. But, my parents forgot to close the car door. Thinking fast, my eyes wide,

he began slobbering all over me. The only thing I remember was, "How can I make him stop kissing me so I can breathe?" My first, creative idea was to make a pocket of air with my lips. I curled the top lip slightly over the bottom one so he couldn't get his tongue in my mouth. I survived for about fifteen minutes until my parents came back. It worked ... phew!

By this time, walking on my knees was getting harder, and I lost some strength. One night, while lying down on my bed, I tried to push my arm up toward the ceiling, but only my hand to my elbow rose toward the ceiling.

I thought, "Huh?" I was sure I was becoming my Dad. He would say, "It is what it is, move on. Don't miss today."

I was a big Mickey Mouse club fan. I had my Mickey Mouse ears, and would sit right in front of the television on the floor, cross legged, singing on the top of my lungs "M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E." I knew all of the songs for every day of the week, and my parents found it was hard to get me off the floor!

It was about time for me to start school, and so, my parents checked to see if I could go to kindergarten. But, I couldn't, because I lived in the county. I had to wait another year, and I would have to go to a special school in the city. We were lucky enough to live in Kenosha which had one of the few orthopedic schools in the nation, and the school had therapy as well as education. Nap time for all grades was a must! In 1951, there were a lot of students with polio (using cots instead of desks) in the classrooms, people with heart problems, cerebral palsy and a number of other disabilities. The school had ramps for people in wheelchairs as well as steps that people on crutches often preferred. Ramps were almost unheard of at that time. There were five classrooms organized by grades and ages and three therapeutic rooms set up for hydrotherapy, physical therapy and speech therapy. Everything sounded good to me, except naps.

Although it was another year before I could start school, the principal, Otto Steffenson, still talked to my parents about any special needs which they or I might have because of my disability. He also was involved in Easter Seals on the state level, and indicated that I might need a Hoyer lift to get me off the floor, or in and out of the tub. The lift was brought into my home at that time. I was beginning to use a stroller for distances, and was beginning to be "pushed around."

Though I thought the lift was great for getting me on and off the floor, I thought it served a much better purpose as a swing while I watched the Mickey Mouse Club! The lift never really worked for getting me in and out of the bathtub, because the balance was off. It would tip all over the place.

There was one more huge surprise before I started school. Mom and Dad told me Mom was going to have a baby! I thought Mom was just getting fluffy with her bigger tummy! We picked names before the baby was born, and I can't remember what name we picked for a boy, but Mom and Dad thought they'd better name the baby Susan if it was a girl since everyone thought that should have been my name. They were so happy she was coming, her middle name would be Joy!