

Judy R. Clem

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In October 1963, I left Bangkok with Lucia Wilcox and Ann Marie Flanagan for a memorable two-month trip west through countries from India to England, before boarding a ship to New York. The most unforgettable event of the journey was a moving memorial service at Westminster Abbey in London after the tragic death of President Kennedy.

Settling in Huntsville, Alabama, I worked as a medical technologist at the local hospital and enjoyed my association with the young professionals in Huntsville, many of whom were employed in research for the eventual flights to the moon. In my free time, I joined a group of spelunkers and rope climbers and had the terrifying experience of rappelling off Stone Mountain near Atlanta.

In 1966, I left Huntsville to enroll in a master's program at the School of Public Health, University of North Carolina, majoring in Parasitology/Microbiology. I stayed in Chapel Hill for 10 years, eventually earning a doctorate and becoming an assistant professor. While there, I met John Klaas, a smart, adorable doctoral student in the same department, and we married in 1975.

Deciding 10 years was long enough in one place, we moved to St. Louis when John got a job at Jewish Hospital there. I did not work, and I've always regretted not taking that position at the St. Louis Zoo working with the veterinarian, but in 1978 John took a new job at Northeastern University in Boston, so we moved to Framingham, Massachusetts. I was hired as a Biology faculty member at Framingham State College in August, right before classes were to begin (the search committee was desperate). Students in my first class were startled when I announced that the course was not what they had signed up for (Cell Biology), but Parasitology instead. I don't recall anyone dropping the course. After all, parasites rock!

Eventually in 1985, I became chair of the department and found that I enjoyed the minutiae of management even more than teaching. When the opportunity arose in 1993, I became Dean of Undergraduate Education - my most rewarding position at the College because of the student contact outside the classroom - students on probation, honors

students, students with disabilities. Unfortunately for me, I was asked to transfer to the "big house" (administrative building) in 2000 to take over for the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs while she was on a one-year leave (she never returned). Then tragically, the V.P. for Academic Affairs died in an auto accident in 2002 and I again changed jobs to assume his duties. When I turned 65 in 2004, I decided it was time to retire after 26 years at the College. Since then, I have taken on several temporary contractor assignments - in human resources, institutional research, development and alumni affairs - the President calls me a "utility player" (not being a baseball fan, I had to ask him for a definition).

John and I have traveled extensively over the years, but not to Thailand yet. Age is catching up with us, but when we were in Costa Rica recently, we took a rafting trip and traveled a canopy zip line. Harnessing up for the zip line reminded me of rappelling off Stone Mountain years ago.