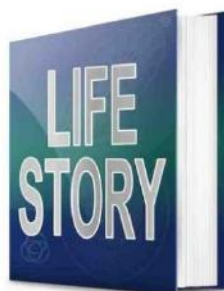
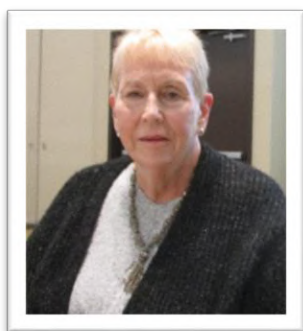




“Meet A Member” – Stories from AAUW – Saint Cloud Area Branch

We like to feature one of our accomplished members each month by asking them to tell us their stories.

Our April, 2022 Member of the Month is: Judith Nixon Hook



INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURES: EDUCATION & OCCUPATIONS

I grew up in Deerwood, Minnesota, a really small town of 500 people when I lived there and today. I don't know why more people have not moved there; I think it is a beautiful place. I went to high school at nearby Crosby-Ironton where sports were more important than anything else. After high school, I went to Carleton College. It was a culture shock, in a good way. It broadened my horizons.

My parents always encouraged me to travel. I got a degree in biology and my teaching credentials. I took a life changing trip to Mexico with my parents. I fell in love with Spanish and was determined to learn to speak it. I went to the University of Madrid for a semester but did not learn enough Spanish. I applied to the Peace Corps and went to Colombia for two years where I taught biology and biology teaching methods. I learned Spanish but did not like teaching biology.

After taking an interest test, I discovered my interests correlated with less than 2% of successful happy biology teachers but correlated instead with successful happy nurses. So, I lost no time and took an accelerated nursing course for people who already had a bachelor's

degree. The course was at Columbia University in NYC. I earned a masters in psychiatric nursing. I loved it there and stayed for 20 years until I moved to Washington D.C.

My husband worked for the World Bank so he traveled a lot and frequently I was able to go with him. Russia and Chile are just a couple of the places we went to. In 1996, we moved to Karachi, Pakistan where he had an assignment. I taught psychiatric nursing there. It was a wonderful experience. The cross-cultural aspects were more challenging than living in Colombia but very interesting and instructive.

We adopted a 12-month-old daughter in Pakistan. She continues to live with me. She is now 25 years old, a high school graduate and works in St Cloud. In 1997, we returned from Pakistan after making wonderful friends there. I went back to the mental health center job that I had before I went to Pakistan. It was a satisfying; I worked with elderly people, mostly in public housing, who needed mental health care. I worked there until 2005, when I divorced and moved back to Minnesota to be near my family.

As you might expect, this was another culture shock. It was difficult for my daughter, as well. She now likes it very much here, better than Washington. She has a few serious medical issues and gets much better care here than at the well-known hospitals and medical centers in D.C. I volunteer at the library, belong to three book clubs and try to travel as much as I can manage and afford; I am going to Greece in two weeks. Getting away to some place warm in winter is a goal of mine.

The adjustment to Minnesota surprised me. After all, I had grown up here. But, little by little, I am getting adjusted to life and the AAUW is helping move that along. I am so happy I joined the AAUW! Besides being an outgoing and friendly group, members are well- educated, well-traveled, well-read and very interesting! So, thank you all, it has been wonderful getting to know you and I look forward to seeing more of you!