

begun to offer Ph.D. degrees but at the time did not allow its students to receive three successive degrees from the same institution. Dixie raised no objections to any of my plans and was happy to be part of new adventures, so I sent off applications for admission to four universities. I also applied to the National Research Council for scholarship funding.



Dixie in 1957



B.Sc. graduation 1956

Acceptances came back from three places, Queen's University, the University of Toronto, and the University of Wisconsin. The California Institute of Technology rejected my application because I had not had any university-level physics courses. The University of Wisconsin offered graduate fellowship financial support. Art McCalla, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, had offered as his opinion that doctoral degrees from Canadian universities by this time were every bit as respected and good as degrees from US or European universities, and his advice proved to be sound. The choice was narrowed, therefore, to the two Ontario universities.

Around the same time, Donald Fraser, tree physiologist at the Petawawa Forest Experiment Station near Chalk River, Ontario, and an acquaintance of Bill Corns, visited Edmonton and offered me a summer job in his lab, where I would be able to do my Ph.D. program research. The National Research Council approved my application for a scholarship for the next three years and Dick Van Fleet in the Botany Department at the University of Toronto was willing to take me on as a student. Suddenly, therefore, the immediate future for me had begun to take shape.

My first graduate seminar at the University of Alberta, a talk on plant growth regulators, was an intimidating and scary experience. I was very nervous and my throat went dry but I survived. My research program went well and I was excited about the results of field and lab experiments. I took a course in advanced plant biochemistry from Mary Spencer that also was very intimidating, partly because

several of the other students in the course were in plant biochemistry research and seemed to know and understand so much more than I did. Mary Spencer was an excellent and sympathetic teacher, however, and I made it through the course. For 'fun', and perhaps a bit of challenge, I decided to take a calculus course in which I did very well. After the term ended, I happened to meet the instructor in the Tuck Shop across the street from St. Steve's; she told me I would be quite happy with my grade in the course—it turned out to be 100 percent and I was happy. Several years ago I found among my many old files the Math 40 course notes; I turned all 200 handwritten pages before throwing the notes away and concluded that I remembered and understood almost none of it anymore.

I finished writing my thesis on Tartary buckwheat and someone typed it for me, an 'original' and two carbon copies—no computers and no photocopiers then. A committee of three, including my supervisor Bill Corns, duly examined the thesis and me and both passed. I had crossed another hurdle and I received my degree at Convocation at the end of May 1958, a week before our wedding day.

My work at the University of Alberta had been completed already by mid-April, including writing drafts of three articles based on my thesis research, for publication in a



M.Sc. graduation 1958

scientific journal—the first time my name would appear in print. I was hosted at a small farewell party at our department's Parkland Farm, and my student period at the University of Alberta was finished. Pete Goutbeck offered me board and room and a job on his potato and grain farm south of Edmonton for the next six weeks, so that is where I went. The first couple of days were tough, carrying sacks of potatoes from the root house to a truck. Driving the tractor for field work was much easier, except for the risk of falling asleep at the wheel when I had a short night after a visit with Dixie and had to walk from the last bus stop. Pete's brother Art loaned me his car for one such trip and Dixie brought me home in her mom's car once also—with a bit of tutoring help from me she had learned to drive a car with a stick shift.

Somehow I did not have a lot to do with the details of our wedding and reception plans. Rev. Nederlof of Third CRC—where Dixie's church membership was—was going to be at Synod at the time of our wedding so we went to see Rev. Vande Riet, pastor of First CRC, with all the necessary papers for our wedding in place. Dixie had arranged for a hall for the reception, Bill Groot had agreed to serve as master of ceremonies for the occasion, and we had purchased two wedding rings. I had bought my first suit, without advice or input from anyone, made reservations at the Mayfair Hotel in Edmonton and at the Alpine Village cabins in Jasper, and arranged to rent/borrow Bill Groot's car for our four-day honeymoon trip. We were set to go.

In the afternoon of our wedding day, we trooped over to the house of Aren and Amy Geisterfer, where then photographer Aren took a bunch of pictures of us and of both



Vanden Born family 6 June 1958

our families in his living room studio. Many years later we obtained all the negatives of those photographs, strangely, from boxes of material that ended up in the skating rink shack at the West Christian School. Not that we had much use for the negatives by that time, of course.

I remember very little of the actual wedding ceremony, except that we had to stand up for what seemed a very long time. Neither Dixie nor I

remember the text for Rev. Vande Riet's meditation but that probably is not a fatal flaw. Many of our memories, therefore, are based on talking to others who were there and on looking at photographs of the occasion later on. Most of the photographs are in black and white, as was the custom of the day. I had given Bill Sinnema a roll of slide film and he volunteered to use that, so we did end up with a number of nice colour slides as well.



Before the wedding

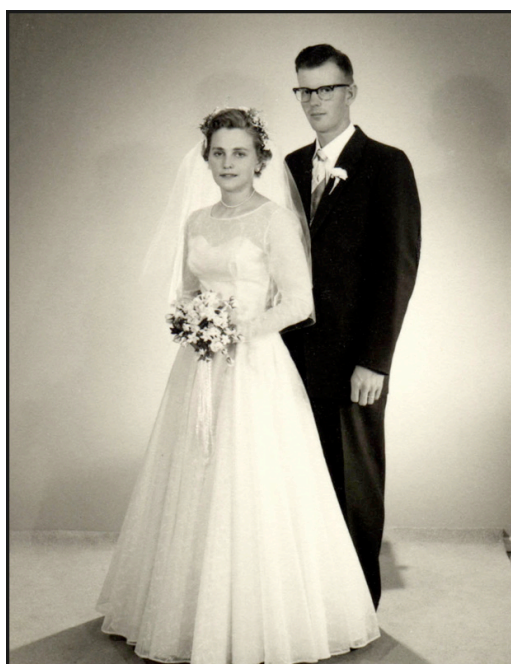


Wierenga family 6 June 1958





Dixie and Bill 1958



'Official' wedding photo 1958

Dixie had invited the students in her Grade 5 class to come to the wedding ceremony, and many of them did. Occasionally, we run into one of those students who still remembers the occasion. It must have been important to them. I am sure that they loved their teacher! Dixie's sister Gladys was her bridesmaid and my brother George was best man in the wedding party. Dixie's brother Andrew walked the bride into church and 'gave her away'. Sadly, none of those three people survived to celebrate important wedding anniversaries with us in later years.



Serious wedding photo

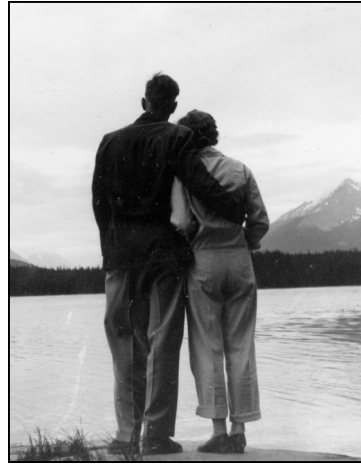
The sandwich-and-cake wedding reception took place at the Bellevue Community League, in their upstairs hall, where it was very hot the entire evening. We had invited Bill and Mary Corns and Saul Zalik from my university department; my recollection is that Mary commented to someone about her interest in attending a 'Dutch' wedding. Some of our relatives

apparently thought of the reception as more Canadian-style than what they were accustomed to. Different perspectives clearly lead to different conclusions.

After the reception we made our way to the hotel that I had booked for the night and next morning we drove to Jasper for a few days on our own before our departure for Ontario. We returned from Jasper, spent a few days getting things packed up and saying our goodbyes, and we were off to another chapter in each of our lives, this time together.



Breakfast at Alpine Village Bungalows



Honeymoon Lake

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