



Share your stories

Like father, like son. Like mother, like daughter.

This is an installment of a special Chieftain series titled, "Generations".

The Chieftain is interested in hearing from readers who are doing the same job that a parent did here. Maybe you're a second- or even third-generation police officer or school teacher. Or you operate the family business today.

If you qualify or know someone to recommend, please contact Managing Editor/City Editor Steve Henson at shenson@chieftain.com.



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/JOHN JAQUES

Three generations in this family are teachers in Pueblo. They are (left to right) Joan Haley, Bob Haley, Heather Haley-Strobel, Mike Strobel and John Strobel, standing in the Centennial High School museum.

GENERATIONS

Heads of the class

BY ANTHONY A. MESTAS
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

The apple doesn't fall too far from the desk. Pueblo Centennial High School math and science teacher Heather Haley-Strobel can vouch for that.

"We have more than a dozen people in our family who either are teachers now or who have retired as teachers," Haley-Strobel said, sitting in Centennial's museum at the school.

Her husband, Mike Strobel, teaches science in the same building. His father, John Strobel, 81, retired as a music professor at Colorado State University-Pueblo in 1993.

Haley-Strobel's mother, Joan Haley, and father, Bob Haley, also have footprints in the teaching profession.

Haley-Strobel, a math teacher, said there's a simple equation as to why they all chose the profession.

"We just love to teach," she said with a smile.

Each generation has a mentor.

Bob Haley taught and coached various sports at Centennial for many years.

The 72-year-old retired in 2004, but coached swimming until 2010.

The former physical education teacher's face is forever etched into Centennial's history as a picture of him is hung behind glass in the school's hallway with others who have also been enshrined in the school's Hall of Fame.

Bob Haley began his career in Pueblo County School District 70 in 1967.

"You see impacts on kids and not when they are here. You see the impacts when they come back 20 years later and they are successful," Bob Haley said.

"It's been a great ride."

He said his mentor was his wife's father, Raymond Miller, who is a member of South High School's Hall of Fame.

"For our family, that's where it all started for our side of the family," Bob Haley said, pointing to a picture of Miller that his wife was holding.

Joan Haley expressed pride in her father as well. "He was

one of the original staff members," she said.

The former first-grade teacher at St. John Neumann Catholic School said she knew when she was a little kid that she wanted to be an educator.

"I just always knew. I saw an opportunity to use the skills that I had. If you teach first grade, they can do anything. Just ask them. So we did everything," Joan Haley said. The 1963 South High School graduate retired in 2003.

Their daughter swore off teaching after she graduated high school.

"I said, 'No way.'"

"She said she wanted to get a job in the real world," her mother chimed in.

After moving out of state and working at various jobs, Haley-Strobel, 41, came back to Pueblo where she began working as a substitute teacher.

"I ended up getting a long-term sub job here at Centennial and fell in love with it. That was in 2002," the daugh-

ter said.

She worked four years at then-Risley Middle School and three years at Pueblo County School District 70's Connect charter school.

As a 1995 graduate of Centennial, Haley-Strobel said she was thrilled to be teaching there, especially after the legacy her father held.

"We were glad that she decided to be a teacher," Bob Haley said with pride.

Mike Strobel, 53, said his parents influenced him the most.

My grandpa said, 'Never stop learning.' So where is the best place to learn? Teaching," Mike Strobel said.

The younger Strobel and his wife met at Centennial and have been happily married for 12 years.

"We have great conversations and we definitely learn from each other all the time," Haley-Strobel said.

John Strobel, 81, began his career teaching at then-Pueblo Junior College, which morphed into Colorado State University-Pueblo and Pueblo Community College.

"I taught at four different schools, but never changed my job," the elder Strobel said

with a laugh. He was referring to the schools' name changes over the years.

There he taught instrumental music and music history. He also was the marching band and band director at the university.

"I loved interaction with the students most, I think. I wasn't dealing with children. I had young adults and that's a whole different experience," John Strobel said.

John Strobel said he also was happy that his son followed in his footsteps.

"He was working at a filling station and I asked him what he was going to do with his life. He said, 'Well, I am not going to pump gas.' He did that all through high school at Central before graduating in 1983.

"Mike finally decided on being a teacher and I was very happy about that."

The family said that for the most part, there's no homework.

"We leave all the talk about school at school," Bob Haley said with a laugh.

"We need to take a break sometimes," his daughter said. anthonym@chieftain.com