

## Marie Schmid's Retirement Acknowledgement

August 17, 2024

Speech given by Kylie Beltz

Good evening everyone! My name is Kylie, and I am Marie's youngest daughter. And we have Peter and Kevin up here, my brothers. We want to again thank every single person for coming to this special event. I would also like to give a shoutout to Marie, Alli, Joe, Ally, Mary, and Mike for working tirelessly over the last couple years, especially the last eight months, for all the planning and hard work that went into making this 100 year celebration happen. Let's give them all a huge round of applause. I mean, look at this!

I know we are here to celebrate this centennial and to reflect on the past, present and future of Foley. But, there is an incredible woman we need to take a few minutes to recognize who has been a driving force behind the success of Foley for the last 50ish years. Marie Schmid.

My mom announced her retirement at the beginning of this year and my siblings and I decided this is an appropriate time to celebrate her, as she often shies from taking credit for anything and is quick to celebrate the victories of others, big or small.

A little background. My mom's parents, Bob and Vi, were directing camp, but my mom was never able to attend Foley as a camper due to it being an all boys camp. She became a counselor in 1975 when she taught horseback riding and then again in 1976 when she taught waterskiing and sailing. She then became part of the administration staff until 1985 when she became a director.

I reached out to some of Marie's close friends who are also involved in the Foley community, and a common theme I got while talking to them is her unwavering strength. She was placed in a leadership position in her 20's while her mom was ill, and showed up emotionally and physically every single day for those kids that summer. She fought to have activities and meals be coed, which was a big deal. Not to mention handling the day to day adversity that can come with running any business.

Cara Reickenberg sums up Marie's strength by writing, "As a female, Marie did not have barriers for herself and did not let others put her into buckets of where they thought she should be. Marie is tough and feisty. There have been many moments in the 29 years I have known her that have been challenging and would bring most people to their knees. Marie modeled how to handle these challenging situations with grace, positivity and always looking forward." Peter Kronschnabel remembers after some tough days at the Marina Marie would say to him, "You know Kronschnabel, boats are made to sail upright."

In addition to her tireless work at Foley, she also dedicated her time to enhancing summer camps across the nation being part of the American Camp Association (ACA) which is an accrediting body of summer camps nationwide. She initially started volunteering in the mid 80's and is currently on the National Standards Commission. Bill Jones, a longtime friend of Marie's who directed at Camp Lincoln/Lake Hubert worked with her on numerous committees and said she was an expert on standards and the accreditation process and he "felt privileged to have her" on his board. Bill noted that Marie helped camps achieve the high standard it takes to be an ACA accredited summer camp.

When I asked Colleen Huey for memories, words of wisdom, thoughts, etc about my mom she wrote "what sticks out to me is the love and dedication your mom has always shown to camp, campers,

and staff” and those are trends that Cara and Bill touched on as well. Bill said “the depth of thoughtfulness enhances the value of camp for each camper has been amazing to see”.

Cara wrote “Marie has high expectations of herself and of camp staff. She led by example to both model and ensure staff knew the expected outcome. She would never ask a staff member to do something unless she had done it herself already - and believe me, there were some wacky asks! Be on watch for bears with only a sling shot? Okay. Catch bats in the mid-washo? Okay. Paint the eaves of the maintenance shed while hanging sideways on a ladder? Okay. Roof a building? Okay.” I imagine many of you here have your own experiences of some of these whacky asks.

But I can say that my mom showed (and still shows) that same level of commitment and love to us kids. Peter Kronschnabel mentions, “Marie always told me when I had self-doubt, be you and you’ll be fine. You are good enough, and don’t have to be anything you’re not.” This is something my mom has modeled as far back as I can remember and frequently used it as a lesson for us kids.

Ok so working at a summer camp for fifty-ish years. That is a lot of campers! A number that I was very curious to get my hands on was a rough estimate on the number of campers that have passed through Foley while Marie has been working here. I want to emphasize that this is an estimate, and I had help with the math because my math is very similar to my mom’s (inaccurate now and again, which is fondly referred to as “Marie Math”). There are campers that are counted multiple times due to staying for multiple sessions and coming for multiple years. So here we go!

There were about 364 campers the two summers she was on staff, and around 2,105 campers between 1976 and 1984 when she was “on the bridge” (aka admin). The structure of the camp sessions has changed through the years after Marie became the director in 1985 but my math helper counted 21,150. Add that all together and roughly 25,000 campers came to camp/returned to camp under her care and direction. 25,000!!!!

Again, her commitment to the mission of camp is exceptional. Kronsch brought up a book/movie quote from a Chicago Bear running back in the 70’s who said “I am third. God is first, others are second, and I am third”. And though I am not familiar with this quote, Kronsch brings up Marie’s faith and stated “I think this about Marie: I am fourth, others and my children are second, Camp Foley is third, and I’m fourth.”

As we celebrate the last 100 years of Camp Foley and the last 50ish years with Marie working, I just want to say that mom, I am incredibly proud of you. Proud that you dedicated your life to being a director and camp mom to thousands of people, as well as to your own kids. Proud to have you as a role model with your grit, selflessness, and spirit. Proud to be your daughter. I hope that the next chapter of your life brings you great adventure, countless moments with Lois (and future grandchild), snuggles with Nike, family time, travels, miles upon miles in the van to exceptional places, amazing books, and some time to slow down. You will make the best camp grandmother and I cannot wait to see what light mischief you get into. I think I speak for the entire Foley community when I say thank you, and that Foley would not have the success it does without your time, energy, devotion, and love. So Mom, from all of us, congratulations on your upcoming retirement.