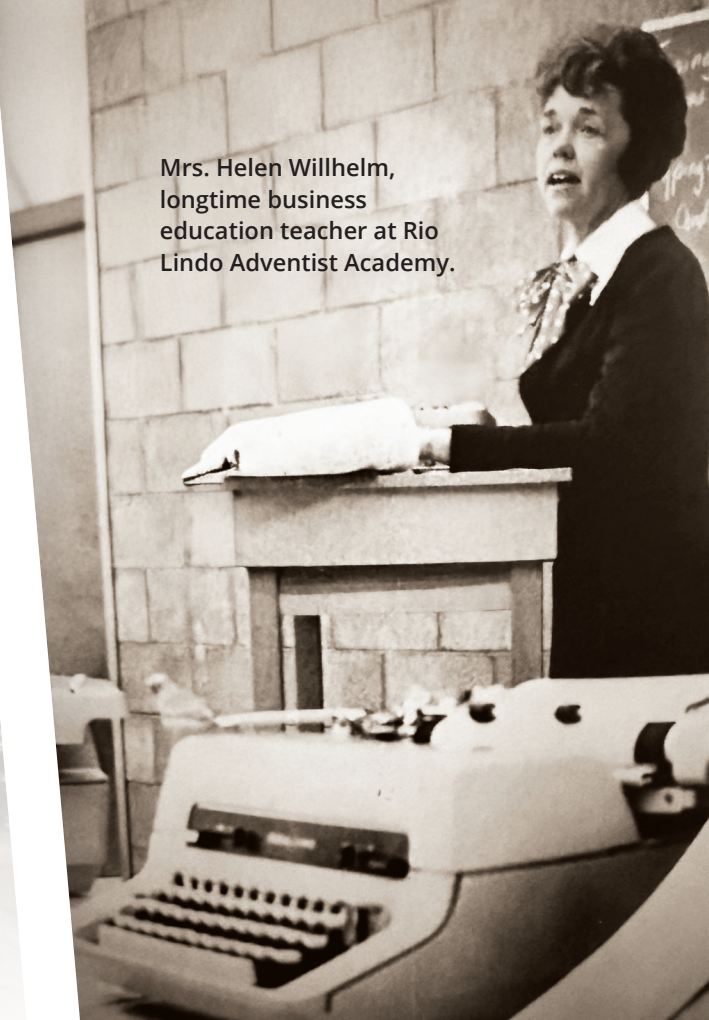
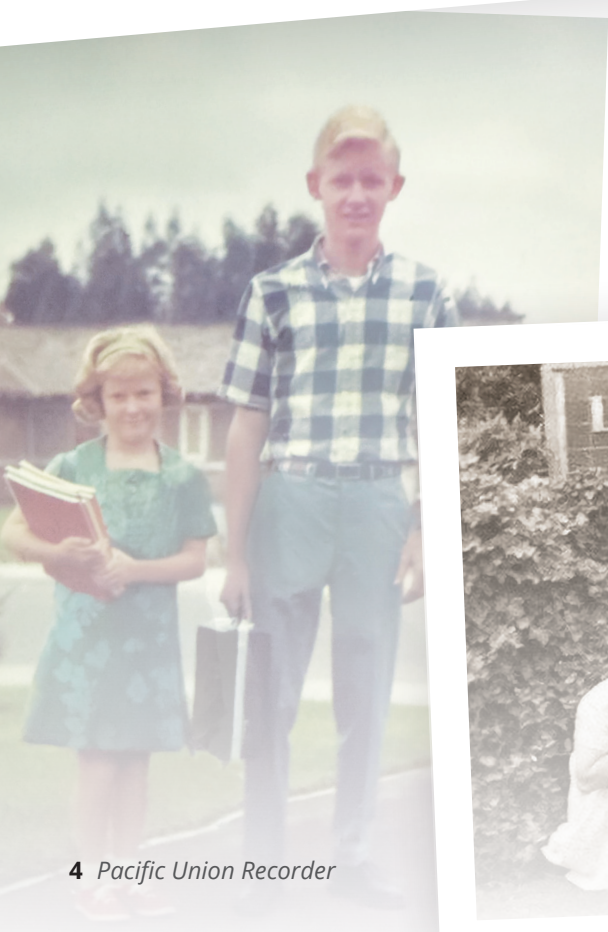




Fresno Union Academy band mascot and her older brother.



Mrs. Helen Willhelm, longtime business education teacher at Rio Lindo Adventist Academy.



Only



Jesus made His incredibly significant impact on the twelve disciples in just three years! The older I get, the more three years seems like the blink of an eye. Three years was a very short span of time to teach His important lessons.

Every school year, teachers have only 180 days to teach their lessons and make an impact on their students.

I was raised in the rhythm and the tempo of the school year. My dad was an Adventist teacher. During the three years before I started school, we lived directly behind the academy where he worked. There were two bus routes that provided transportation to the students at the school, and he and my mother each drove one of the routes. That meant my dad also drove the bus on various school excursions, including trips with the music groups, and our family would travel along. My older brother was in the band. The music teacher invited me to sing “Jesus Loves Me” in my native Danish as part of the music performances. I still remember it, so you know it meant a lot to me to be included.

I also remember the kindness of Miss Watschke, a longtime teacher at Fresno Union Academy. It was a special treat when I was allowed to sit in her studio as she gave private music lessons. I learned a great deal while I sat quietly watching—mostly about

180 Days

By Berit von Pohle

Miss Watschke’s love for her students and her dedication to helping them love music.

The year I was in third grade, the class didn’t even have our teacher for the full 180 days! The enrollment at La Sierra Elementary had outgrown the facility, and two classrooms met in the basement of the church just up the street. And when school started, there was still a hunt to find teachers for those classrooms. The location of our classroom and the delay in finding



a teacher would have been enough to make that year memorable. But then it got even better: Mrs. Trubey arrived to be our teacher. She wasn't a lot taller than we were, but she made a huge impact. She achieved the perfect balance of pushing us to do our best and making sure we knew we were loved. As I look back from today's vantage point, I realize it must have been a challenging year for her. The academy maintenance crew came every Friday afternoon to collect the desks and store them, and they brought them back every Sunday afternoon. But we students were learning and loving every minute of it.

In the spring of that school year, our class put on a program for our parents to share with them what we'd learned about California history. There were

skits and readings and songs. For some reason, Mrs. Trubey asked me to conduct one of the songs. I don't know why—I certainly was no musical prodigy. Maybe she saw the profound enjoyment music gave me. She was one of several teachers who found a way to engage this student in the love of learning and leadership.

I was fortunate to have Mrs. Willhelm in my life for all four years of academy. When I was a ninth-grader, a set of circumstances led to the opportunity to take Office Practice in addition to Typing. Because of this, I was in class



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that span of 180 days for 46 years to plant seeds and nurture
the growth of hundreds of students.



with Mrs. Willhelm twice a day. She already knew who I was though a connection with a member of her extended family, and she had decided to keep a close eye on my growth and development while I attended Rio Lindo Academy. When I was asked to work in the principal's office, she gave me the extra guidance she thought I needed at times—like, when something I produced wasn't quite as representative as she thought it should have been.

More importantly, Mrs. Willhelm nurtured the skills that came naturally to me, and as I finished my junior year, we both realized I had taken every class she taught. She asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. By this time, an interest in teaching was not “cool,” so she helped me explore other options. We found something that

was a good possibility, and Mrs. Willhelm created a class for me to take as a senior that would prepare me for that career.

Things changed that year. Ultimately, when I left academy, it was with the goal to be a teacher—in fact, a business education teacher like Mrs. Willhelm. In just four years, with guidance from this committed Adventist teacher, I'd seen the potential I had to make a difference in the world.

These are just a few of the teachers who used their limited time to change my life. A story could

be shared about every teacher I encountered in elementary school, academy, college, and graduate school. What a gift I've been given to be educated by Seventh-day Adventist teachers in Seventh-day Adventist schools.

That gift has been



compounded by my interactions with Adventist teachers who were my colleagues. We learned from each other, prayed together, and laughed a lot.

That gift of Adventist education set me on a path to use that span of 180 days for 46 years to plant seeds and nurture the growth of hundreds of students. I could tell story after story of watching the progress of a student, of pointing them in the right direction, of seeing them experience professional success as an adult, of praying with students, and of witnessing them choose to follow Jesus.

Each year, educators use their limited time, their 180 allotted days, to prepare students for the next phase of their life—the next grade, the next

educational level, a vocation, a career. And then we celebrate as those students make a difference in their world.

Luke 11:1 tells us, “One time Jesus was praying in a place. When he finished, one of his followers said to him, ‘...Lord please teach us how to pray, too’” (ICB). Think of how often you have recited the Lord’s Prayer with other believers. Think of how many people—over centuries, around the whole world—remember that lesson, know it by heart!

Jesus came to teach. Maybe education is really just another word for discipleship.

Berit von Pohle is vice president for education of the Pacific Union Conference.



INSPIRE...

Why

Believing in the education of all students in Seventh-day Adventist schools, we exist to inspire the continual improvement of students and educators to become “something better”.

(Education, 296)

How

INSPIRE a climate of improvement by:

- Enhancing the effectiveness of teachers,
- Strengthening the expertise of educational leaders,
- Coordinating a cohesive school system.

Cooperate in preparing citizens for the future, and the world to come.

Adventist Education
PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE