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Class of '85

Six graduates mark a 1st for Clarenceville School District

By Lorraine McCilish
Staff writer

Six women who had their high school days cut short in their teens donned caps and gowns last weekend to accept their diplomas in graduation ceremonies in Farmington Nursing Home.

The ceremony and graduation party drew members of both Michigan and Clarenceville Board of Education, adult educators from throughout the state, nursing home executives and staff, as well as friends and family of the graduates for the first event of its kind in the school district.

The new high school diploma holders are Blanche Armstrong, 83; Agnes Of-sanko, 74; Cecelia Domanski, 71; Mildred Kelly, 84; Viola Dwight, 81; and Miriam Steinberg, 66.

The women completed their high school studies in classes that have been given in the home four times a week for the past eight years.

"There has always been about 30 residents who were enrolled in the classes," said Rose Morgan, activities director for the home. "For the first six who made it, there is much to celebrate because we are so proud of them."

ARMSTRONG is a native of Tennessee and one of nine children. She left the rural school she attended there to care for her ailing father and, when he died, moved to Pontiac to help keep house for her sister. Later, she lived for a while in Lansing with her niece.

She never married and never worked outside of her house. She has lived in Farmington Nursing Home since 1977 and said attending school classes there was one of her greatest pleasures.

OF-SANKO is an Illinois native but moved to Detroit when she was 8. She left school after completing the 11th grade to work with LaSalle Wine and Champagne Inc., where she stayed for 22 years.

During that time, she was one of the first women in the state to win a court case for working women. In her court battle, she was supported by her union as well as a professional women's club.

When Of-sanko's son was a student in Clarenceville's first school, on Eight Mile between Grand River and Middlebelt, she became active in the school's Mothers Club, forerunner to the PTA. She was instrumental in many fund-raisers that helped to provide dental work for students here in the '30s and early '40s. Often, those Mothers Club meetings were hosted by her in her Farmington Township home.

Of-sanko's son graduated from Wayne State University, earned both a master's degree and a doctorate and is now personnel manager for Southern California Edison Co.

DOMANSKI is a native of Detroit, attended St. Stanislaus Elementary School for eight years and Northeastern H High School for three years.

She was employed with Colonial Laundry, where she assembled boxes, until her marriage to an engineer in 1938. Her husband died after 30 years of marriage, when he was 51.

Domanski has two sons and five grandchildren. She is a ballroom dancer, a swimmer and a gardener whose expertise is with roses.

KELLY GREW up in Chicago, where she attended St. James Parochial School through elementary grades and some high school until she went to

work for Lakeshore Bank and Trust Co. She was in charge of that company's savings department before marrying a Detroit man, a co-owner of Kaltz Bros. and Kelly Fuel and Coal Co.

She picked up studies in Detroit with classes in John Powers School of Modeling, then taught modeling and modeled here for many years through her marriage.

Kelly has one son, one daughter, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

DWIGHT GREW up in Kansas, Ill., and attended rural school there through the 10th grade until she dropped out to help at home with three brothers and one sister.

She was housekeeper for an aunt and uncle in Illinois for a while, then house-

keeper for another aunt and uncle in Detroit. She was married here in 1950 and has one son, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

She was employed for 16 years as a dining room helper in King's Daughters and Sons Nursing Home. She still continues to crochet, a favorite pastime, and always has some needlework in the making.

STEINBERG is a native of Detroit who attended Fairbanks, Crasman and Thirkle Elementary Schools.

She has worked most of her adult life with retarded people. She became a resident of the home in 1977, rarely missed a class and is considered by the staff as one of the most studious of the graduates.



Music is the subject for the conference between Diano Troxtel (above left) Judy Rutilla and Rose Morgan. Troxtel is director of the 23-member choir from Marian, Oakland-West Hion party. Rutilla is a teacher for adults in Clarenceville School District. Morgan is activities director for Farmington Nursing Home who fought for funds to keep the high school completion courses going when school budgets got tight. At right, Rose Gavig, coordinator of adult education for Clarenceville schools, directs the graduates and speakers in rehearsals for the ceremony.



Cecelia Domanski waits for her cue during the playing of "Pomp and Circumstance" in rehearsals that preceded graduation exercises Saturday

In Farmington Nursing Home. The 71-year-old graduate is with music therapist Diano Troxtel.

10 receive diplomas at Oak Hill

Following on the heels of Clarenceville School District's first graduation exercises in a nursing home at Farmington Nursing Home last Saturday, 10 residents of Oak Hill Nursing Home will receive their diplomas in ceremonies that begin at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 8, in the home on Grand River and Gill Road.

The graduates are Anna Baker, born 74 years ago in Tennessee; Madeline Barret, a 92-year-old from Pennsylvania;

and Jan Duncan, age 88 and a native of Scotland.

Marilyn Hodges is 39, the youngest of the graduates, and the only one of her class who will not be included in the ceremonies. She has chosen instead to receive her diploma with Clarenceville High School's class of '85.

Graduate Anna Sheppard is 81 and a native of Austria. Julia Wilczewski is 91 and a native of Poland.

Lola Bailey, a resident of Oak Hill's annex, is the oldest member of the class, born 103 years ago in Michigan.

Others from the annex who have earned their diplomas through the Clarenceville district's high school completion classes are Jean Gasparotto, age 68 and a native of Italy; Lucille Johnson, 85 years old and a native of Illinois; and Stella Quashnock, 82 years old and a native of Pennsylvania.

Staff photos
by Randy Borst



Agnes Of-sanko wrote and delivered the speech on behalf of the graduates, which in essence was a thank-you to both educators and nursing home staff that brought the high school completion classes into Farmington Nursing Home. The 74-year-old graduate is with nurse Joanne Neu.



Farmington Nursing Home's new diploma holders are Cecelia Domanski (at left) Mildred Kelly, Miriam Steinberg, Viola Dwight, Agnes Of-sanko and Blanche Armstrong.