

# Centenarian educator remains an inspiration to students from decades past

By Mike Bush

**KSDK** -- At the corner of quaint and charming streets is Hermann, Missouri, located about 80 miles west of St. Louis. You can learn a lot here. And not just about Missouri wine.

In a sophomore class at Hermann High School, Julie Lassiter is trying to get her [students](#) to focus on English.

"At times it may be difficult, there are so many distractions," says Lassiter.

Fifteen and 16-year-olds don't yet appreciate their education, but that's not a problem just down the hall. The students in that [classroom](#) are either from the 1970s or in their 70s. And they're back in high school for one simple reason: their English teacher, Dorothy Heying.

"Dorothy got me through school," says Joey Kallmeyer, class of 1954.

"She brought the best out in me," adds Howard Klenk, class of 1952.

Dorothy Heying was an educator for more than 50 years.

"If you don't like it, you don't have any business in the classroom," says Heying.

Born in St. Louis, Heying says she came to Hermann with her husband in the 1930s. Even then, she was shorter than many of her students but she had a big presence.

"She sure was strict. Especially to me," jokes Roger Blumer, Class of 1952.

Although, as Carol Kallmeyer of the Class of 1954 explains, it's "strictness with a sense of humor, so you didn't feel little when she got finished with you."

Heying's philosophy has always been to give her students something to take home besides homework.

"She had a way of knowing what your potential was and bringing that potential out," says Lois Puchta, Class of 1965.

Like the time she tried to get one of her more difficult [student](#) interested in the

colossal classic, "Moby Dick."

"So what does she do?" says Klenk. "She goes to the drugstore and gets one of these comic illustrated books about 'Moby Dick' and brings it to me."

Klenk says he ended up liking the story.

And although she never had kids of her own, Heying will tell you she's been more than blessed.

"Well, I don't remember how many children I've had, I lost track. But I know it was over a thousand," she says.

When you've helped light the way for so many, you deserve a celebration; especially when the celebration is your 100th birthday. That's why so many of Heying's former students came back to Hermann High School and even sat in the classroom with her.

"That's why we're here, because of the role model she's been for all of us," says Puchta.

Dorothy finally put away the chalk and eraser 30 years ago.

"The day I [retired](#), I cried all day," she says. But clearly, she's a teacher for life.

"It's really joyous. And it's exciting too because it really affirms our profession," says Lassiter.

Thanks to Dorothy Heying, generations of students in Hermann understand that teaching from a book is never as effective as teaching from the heart.