

Empty nest leaves behind melancholy thoughts as well very few changes for bedrooms

And then it was just two again – for now.

This past Sunday, we moved Marissa, our last daughter to go back to college into her dorm at Purdue University. I am prayerfully hopeful that Marissa will be able to stay on campus and attend part-of her classes in person as has been prepared and planned for.

Both Laura and Andrea will stay at their respective schools regardless, as they are both in apartments this year. Marissa, however, opted to stay on campus one more year, so there is always the chance she will be returning home sooner that the expected break at Thanksgiving.

But, for now, Larry and I are once again empty nesters, except this time it is different. This is the first time that one of the two bedrooms that our daughters have lived in is now no longer anyone’s.

In fact, my husband Larry asked me what I was going to put on the walls in that bedroom. It caught me off guard. I had not thought about decorating the room. It just did not seem quite right to change it into something other than the room Laura and then Andrea lived in.

Since both Andrea and Laura have semi-permanent living arrangements now, it seems my room to do something with. Marissa’s room will stay preserved as hers since she will be home when her dorm is closed and until she moves into an



A SLICE OF LIFE

Linda Wilk



apartment in August 2021.

It is surreal to realize that after having at least one daughter move home each summer, two of the three will not be coming home this summer, leaving one of the two bedrooms fair game for me to renovate. I do plan to keep a bed in the room and two beds in Marissa’s so when one, both or all three daughters come home for a visit, they have a place to sleep.

As I contemplate this new purpose for the bedroom, I must admit I am a bit melancholy, realizing a chapter in my parenting life has ended and the next chapter is being written without me. No longer will my daughters be home daily for meals. I know they will make appearances at holidays and when they are needed, kind of like I did when I

left for college.

That being said, I have always wanted a place to keep my exercise ball, yoga mat and hand weights, other than the attic and living room. And it would be nice to have a place to get dressed early in the morning before Larry has to get up to go to work, when I go to the Y at 5 a.m.

So, I thought maybe I could multi-purpose the bedroom. As for the walls, well, not sure, other than taking down the few high school photos Andrea left behind and the Letter A artwork.

I have a sewing machine that sits in the corner of the dining room and when needed is set up on our dining room table – that could be set up in the extra bedroom on the extra desk left behind.

Of course, there is that nagging thinking that I should not change the room too much so that when Andrea and Laura come home for holidays and vacations, they know they still have a place to sleep and be welcomed.

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I know once I moved out of my parent’s home, along with my brother and sister, over time both my brother and sister’s rooms were transformed, while mine remained a bedroom. I think now most likely mine was not inhibited because I lived too far away to go home at night when visiting my parents. My sister lives in the same town as mom and my brother lives an hour away.

My sister’s room became my mom’s sewing room and my brother’s room became a catch all storage room. So as life is changing for me once again, I will move forward and embrace the new chapter that life has in store for me and Larry. Yet, also making sure to leave remnants the same, so Laura, Andrea and Marissa know their home will always be their home away from their homes.

Dawn Brown 2020 recipient Tony Maidenber

Dawn Brown, who joined the Community Foundation of Grant County in 2005 and has served as its President/CEO for eight years, is the 2020 recipient of the Tony Maidenber Award.

The award, which is given for community service, was presented Aug. 12 during Indiana Wesleyan University’s annual employee convocation.

“Dawn is a very innovative thinker,” said IWU President David Wright, who presented the award. “She has the ability to see around the corner at ‘what could be’ as opposed to getting stuck in the present reality of ‘what is’.

Dawn is a person who values partnership and works for the best of the community without regard for personal or organizational credit.” Under Brown’s leadership, the Community Foundation has given away nearly \$2 million annually in grants and scholarships. The Foundation tries to

touch every aspect of the community through serving and supporting countless nonprofit organizations, according to an IWU news release.

“Dawn is deeply passionate about making Grant County a great place to work, live and play and has a passion for addressing childhood poverty in the county. She has done incredible research on the causes and solutions to systemic poverty in our community and works through the Foundation to support the work of organizations working to change this reality,” the news release said.

IWU introduced the community service award in 2002 and presented it to Maidenber, a former Marion mayor and former Indiana state senator. The award was later named in his honor and now has been presented to 20 people. Anyone in the community is welcome to nominate candidates for the honor.

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www.newsherald.org

Don L. Hurd, Publisher

president@hoosiermediagroup.com

Ed Breen, Reporter

Alan Miller, Reporter

Sean Douglas, Sports Editor

sports@newsherald.org

Accounting and Legal Ads - Julie Loehmer, accounting@thepaperofwabash.com

Sales - Arlene Long, along@thepaperofwabash.com

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