



Joani

“Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver, the other is gold,” Joani Maskell sings as she pours over the vintage Girl Scout songbook *Embers*, circa 1974. “I love the songs.”

One of more than 100 pieces of memorabilia spread out on the dining room table, the book brings back cherished childhood memories for Joani, but the sorority organization is more than campfires, badges and s'mores to her; it's a legacy.

Joani's Grandma Callie qualified for the first rank in scouting, Tenderfoot, in 1928, unmindful of the generations that would follow in her footsteps—not only the young women in her family, but millions of other girls throughout the country and around the world.

Now celebrating 100 years, the Girl Scouts of the United States of America empowers girls through enriching experiences, skill development and the camaraderie of other girls.

Grandma Callie's involvement with the organization began just 16 years after founder Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Low of Savannah, Ga. organized a group of 18 young women into the first troop in March 1912. Originally called American

Girl Guides, Low hatched the idea of forming a group for young ladies after visiting Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in England. She dreamed of taking girls from isolated home environments into the outdoors, where they could learn self-reliance and resourcefulness.

A dream Joani's mother, Margaret, shared eagerly. “My mother was quite adventurous,” Joani says, holding a black and white print of Margaret riding on an elephant's back. “I have no idea what she was doing up there.”

Both Joani's grandmother and mother were involved in the Girl Scouts for more than 40 years, taking particular interest in organizing mariner troops in Long Island, N.Y. The Girl Scout Mariner Program was designed for older girls who were interested in water-based activities.

Supporting the interests of young women is a major focus for the organization, second only to helping them discover new interests. Members earn

grandma Callie



Girl Scout Legacy

By Laura Hampton

badges by exploring any number of topics from cooking to financial literacy to water conservation.

“We give girls the opportunity to learn by doing,” says Nancy White, Girl Scouts of Gateway Council Director of Communications. The hope is that girls will choose to earn a badge based on their personal interests. The requirements to earn a badge vary based on subject matter, but activities can include meeting with people in the field of interest, performing related hands-on activities and reflecting on what they have learned by writing essays.

Recognizing from her own experience that the Girl Scouts helps shape young women's lives, Joani was eager to get her own daughter involved at an early age. Named after her great grandmother, Callie, the fourth generation of Palmer family Girl Scouts, has fond memories of the girls who were in her troop all the way from Brownies to Seniors. “I remember making s'mores in the microwave. They blew up.”

As one of the leaders for Callie's troop, Joani helped organize activities to keep the girls engaged. Some were just for fun, like trips to Disney World and Juliette Low's home in Savannah. But others were intended to help the girls explore professional options.

"I got to actually go into a hospital and see an open heart surgery and knee surgery," Callie says. Although she chose education over medicine as a profession, the experience made a lasting impression on her. "It was amazing. Unless you're a doctor or nurse you don't get to see what it's all about."

Although Callie has fond memories from the troop's outings and adventures, the most unforgettable experiences for her were the times the group organized efforts to help others.

Callie's troop volunteered to clean at B.E.A.K.S (Bird Emergency Aid and Kare Sanctuary) off Heckscher Drive, painted buildings in the community and visited homeless shelters at Christmastime to play games and do crafts with the children.

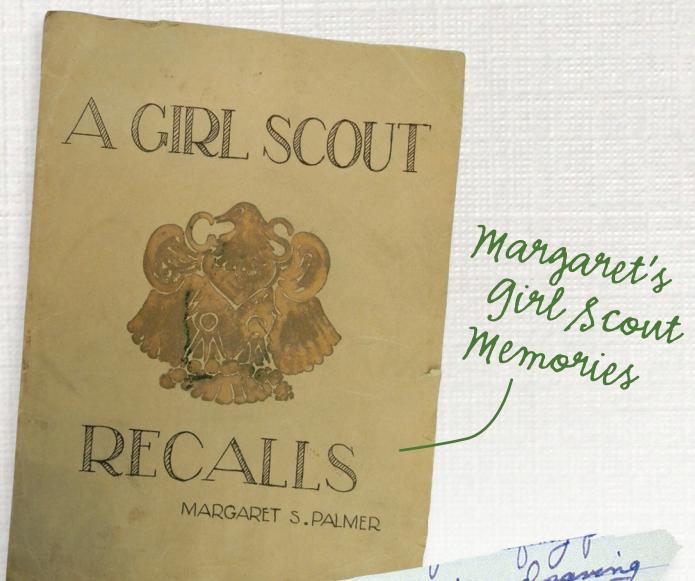
"Giving back—I think that's the main thing," Callie says. "There are always people that you can help."

A self-proclaimed shy child, Callie credits the organization with helping her bond with other girls. Through the years she and fellow troop members formed a sisterhood. "One of the girls was in my wedding."

The young ladies have all grown into women and moved on to lead full lives. Joani beams proudly as she recounts the accomplishments of each—one's in physician assistant school, one is getting her Ph. D., one's in law school... "I'm very proud of all of them."

To Joani, the girls she lead through various stages of growth and discovery are more than childhood companions for her daughter, they are family—her Girl Scout family—millions strong, thanks to pioneers who dreamed of giving young women the opportunities to go out into the world and explore who they wanted to be—pioneers like Juliette Gordon Low, Mother Margaret and Grandma Callie.

Daughter
Callie's Vest



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