

Nicest Thing Anyone Has Done for Me

Her Marriage Bloomed

I STARTED COLLEGE in 1939, thanks to a scholarship that covered tuition, fees and books. My parents paid for the dorm, but I still needed to get a job to pay for my clothing and other expenses.

I got a job at a local floral shop. One of my first jobs for Mr. Pratt, the owner, was putting thin wires in the heads of flowers and down the stems to be used in making corsages.

I did that in the front of the shop while Mr. Pratt was in the back. He told me not to wait on customers, but to call him.

While I was concentrating on my work, a customer came in. I didn't speak to him, but he came over, watched my work and said he'd like to wire some flowers.

He wants to do my work, I thought. He wants to wire flowers.

That got my attention, and I rushed to the back room and told Mr. Pratt a customer wanted to wire flowers. Luckily, before I could say more, Mr. Pratt said, "Where to?"

The man wanted to send some flowers by telegraph.

I continued to work for Mr. Pratt for the next 4 years.

I married my fiance, Hank, on the day I graduated. He'd bought a small farm and needed my help as soon as possible.

On May 23, 1943, in the middle of WWII, we were married in the college chapel. Both our families came for the graduation and wedding, meeting each other for the first time.

When we arrived at the chapel, it was beautifully decorated with potted palms and flowers. There were corsages for me and my sister—my maid of honor—along with boutonnieres for Hank; his brother, who was his best man; and his two ushers.

All were provided by Pratt's Flower Shop. What a wonderful wedding gift!

—Louise Van Arsdale, Santa Rosa, California