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First Year Experience: Writing Matters - Sundays With Al

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Sundays with Al

By Emily Dicksa



Henry 'Al' Lorenz, Jr.

March 2, 1938 - July 21, 2006

Dear LeEster,

I wanted to write to you about your husband, Al Lorenz, and the incredible difference he made in my life. I am sure you are aware of the amazing person Al was, but I wanted to let you know how lucky I feel to have spent the time with him that I did.

Al always taught me to be thankful for my blessings and the important people in my life. Now, he is someone I feel grateful every day to have known. So many of the lessons and qualities I learned from him play a major affect on my life now, and they always will.

I met Al for the first time as I walked into his Sunday school classroom, when I was only in fourth grade. I still remember how shy and unsure I was, but how Al made me feel welcome. I didn't know what I was getting myself into. At the time, I didn't know how my life would be changed. Al wanted every kid to know the Lord, to know that they are loved, and to learn some of the most important lessons about how to live.

I knew nothing about Christianity, or anything that went along with it. But over the time I was in Al's class, he taught me more and more about it. Al was the one who helped me accept the Lord into my heart. Although it may sound cliché to the world, that has changed my life dramatically. I then began to learn more from Al about what it meant to live a life that followed

Christ. Al was big on teaching how it is not necessarily about the religion, but the relationship. He always said the thing that should matter the most was your personal relationship with God.
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Al's classroom was a place where everybody was welcome; a place where I felt loved and accepted. He strived to make sure every kid felt valued and appreciated, and I know he changed many lives just by this one factor.

Some of the best experiences I had in Al's class were the fieldtrips. The monthly trips on a school bus to McDonalds became a ritual for many years. It seems like such a simple, cheap place, but no matter what, our class always had fun. And I look back on it amazed at how Al was speaking into our lives and making a positive difference no matter what we were doing. I have memories that will last forever from those trips.

Al also taught me what it meant to live a life of kindness and compassion, and many other qualities. He taught people these assets by example, by the way he strived to live. I learned what it meant to help other people, whether they just need help with a small task or help because they are less fortunate. I learned what it meant to treat other people how they deserved to be treated and how I would want to be treated: with respect and kindness. Al taught me to have patience and understanding, even at the hardest times. Al also taught me that it is ok to make mistakes, because that is the best way to learn. These are the things I believe have had the biggest impact in my life and always will.

I wondered how Al could always handle teaching a rowdy bunch of fourth and fifth graders without getting frustrated or annoyed, but I now realize why he loved it so much. I volunteer at the same church as a leader for middle school girls. And although I always try to be the best example and teach them as much as I can, I always end up learning even more from them. And it is one of the most rewarding experiences ever. I am 18 years old now, and I hope I bring back happy memories with this letter.

I know that Al touched many lives, both in his Sunday school classes and wherever he went. I feel incredibly blessed to have known him for the time that I did, and I know I speak for many others as well when I say that.

Much Love,
Emily

