

Dorothea Stephenson

Anaheim

An Irish lass and good Catholic, Dorothea Stephenson says, “I made a Novena on January 5, 1939, just before going to a dance.” As the Boys Catholic Central students marched in, her eyes caught those of Joe Stephenson. They danced and her life changed forever.

Dorothea and Joe were married on May 27, 1942, in Lubbock, Texas. Although Joe was all-city and all-state in football, basketball and baseball, it was the latter sport to which Dorothea and Joe Stephenson would be committed.

As he was advancing from farm clubs to the majors, New York Giants, Chicago Cubs and Chicago White Sox, they traveled each baseball season and celebrated each of their first 10 anniversaries in a different state. Once he signed with the Boston Red Sox, Dorothea and her family could live anywhere. “We settled in Anaheim in 1955, the same year as Mickey Mouse,” said Dorothea. We were attracted to its community atmosphere, location and schools for our growing family.”

In addition to her family and baseball, Dorothea’s interests included charity work. Her first venture was at St. Boniface Church and School, where she became a room mother

and president of the Mother's Guild. Through the church she became involved with Young Ladies Institute, a Catholic women's organization. As Welfare Chairman, she helped initiate the Anaheim Interfaith Shelter, Halcyon, and began the group's monthly newsletter.

When her children were young, she also coached both boys and girls softball and volunteered with the Boy Scouts, Brownies and Girl Scouts.

In 1978, Dorothea joined Assistance League Anaheim and served as president in 1983. During her term, ALA received a Disneyland Community Service Award, established Iris, an auxiliary for professional women, and Senior Citizens Fellowship, a monthly program and lunch for the city's seniors. As well, she got involved with Operation School Bell, a program that provides elementary school children from disadvantaged families with school uniforms, underwear, jackets and shoes. For many years she has served as chairman of program advertising for ALA's annual fashion show, as well as serving as chairman of Amenities.

A member since 1982 of the Harp Guild of the Pacific Symphony Orchestra, she has worked on raising funds to bring concerts to elementary school children. And, as a member of the Anaheim Arts Council since 1980, Dorothea has served as treasurer and member of the annual Soiree committee. She also worked on the annual Children's Art Festival and concerts at Pearson Park. For many years she oversaw the display cases at the Anaheim Civic Center, making sure the items were changed regularly.

Since joining the Anaheim Sisters Cities in 2002, she has traveled with the group to both Ireland and Japan, and continues as a board member and volunteer on special events. And, although she recently joined the Women's Division of the Anaheim Chamber of Commerce, she has supported the organization for many years.

Dorothea has been involved with Anaheim Beautiful and is currently one of the members of the Arts in Public Places committee. As a member of this group, she visits businesses that have art displayed and makes recommendations for awards.

She too has received awards. In 1996, Dorothea was the recipient of the Annie Accolade presented by the Women's Division of the chamber, and in 1983, she was named Mother of the Year, an award that reflects her strong devotion to her family.

Despite Dorothea's extensive community service and work with the arts, her family has always been her priority. She and her late husband are the parents of six children: Jerry, a major league scout with the Red Sox, who also played with the Dodgers; Thomas, who played for the Red Sox organization and became a CPA; JoAnn, a teacher and basketball coach who was inducted into the California Basketball Hall of Fame; Robert, a U.S Navy veteran and National Parks employee, who died in 1990; Mary Lou, a teacher, athletic director and basketball coach; and Joe Jr., a former Red Sox organizational player and now a coach and teacher. She also has 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.