

“If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em”

A look into the life of a woman in the Air Force

Kyra Lindholm

It’s a joke that Dr. Sharon Gober uses to explain why she became a member of the United States Air Force. If she couldn’t beat them, she would join them. And join them she did.

Every great story has a prologue, and this one begins with the marriage of Andrew Gober and Sharon Mulder in 1992. Andrew Gober was a Second Lieutenant (O-1) in the Air Force at the time. Gober finished graduate school in Michigan while her husband was stationed at a base in California. She bore the title of military wife and was a dependent for three years on the base with her husband.

The active duty member (the one in the military) is known as the “sponsor.” The spouse and the children of the sponsor are called “dependents.” Living on the base, Gober had to show an identification card to receive supplies such as food and necessities. She got the sense that she was only receiving these things because of her husband. In other words, it was pointed out to her that her sponsor was doing all the work.

Gober decided that she wanted to have an equal say, not only in her own relationship, but also among those on the base. She realized that her calling to be a social worker could be dually lived out as an active duty member of the Air Force. In 1995, she became an official member of the Air Force.

She made this decision so she could be with her husband, but she also did it for herself. As an active duty member of the Air Force, she would cease to be a dependent and stand with some rank on the base. Gober said that once she wore the uniform, she was treated differently. The changes were subtle, but they were still there. Gober is currently ranked as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Since her time in California, Gober has been stationed not only all over the country, but around the world. She has lived in Germany, Washington D.C., Arizona, South Korea and now Omaha.

Gober and her family have lived in Nebraska for five years, which is an unusually long span of time to be stationed in one spot. Gober attributes this to her teenage children, Zach and Rochelle.

“The Air Force tries to give the families some predictability and stability,” Gober said. “We wanted to try and keep the kids in a stable school system and group of friends.”

While Zach and Rochelle have no problem fitting in, Gober works with those who do.

She treats patients at the Ehrling Berquist Hospital down the street from the Offutt Air Force Base. Her patients consist of soldiers who have returned from active duty abroad and are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a type of anxiety disorder that can occur after someone has seen or experienced a traumatic event.

“My work deals with those who bear the psychological wounds of war, those injuries you can’t see,” Gober said. “These are independent, strong, tough young men who are willing to go out there and fight for our country. When they come home, they’re a wreck. They can’t fit in.”

Gober counsels mostly young men and their families who are having trouble coping and readjusting to life outside of the field. She loves her job and knows that her calling was to help others by being a social worker.

“If I can help just one person a day, I count that day as a success,” Gober said. “And I get to do that every day.”

Although being a woman in the military is a feat of its own, Gober still considers herself old-fashioned in the sense that she believes that women are not the same as men.

Being a woman in the military, she does not find prejudices, per se, but she knows the hardships that the male soldiers have to bear alone. This was shown to her when she was deployed for six months to Afghanistan in 2007. This was an incredible experience for her.

“The caliber of strength of our young men overseas is unbelievable,” Gober said.

She worked with around 20 to 30 soldiers who had been stationed on the same hilltop for six months.

“Some of these guys hadn’t seen another female in four or five months. They are so isolated. They might be sitting in the same spot for a year with only one trip home the entire time,” Gober said. If there are no Taliban forces to resist, the months can get very long and the lack of new company can be very hard on the troops.

Throughout her time in the service, Gober says that her most incredible and fulfilling experience was her deployment to Afghanistan.

“That adventure for me was definitely a cultural experience. While I love Omaha, Offutt and the people struggling with everyday life, at the same time, here are these young men sitting on a mountaintop to defend our country,” Gober said.

Women are only allowed to be in defensive positions in the military, non-combatant. This means that there are no women soldiers in the infantry or involved in any type of immediate hand-to-hand combat.

After seeing how these men live for a year at a time, Gober acknowledges that she, as a woman, could not live that life. This is not to say that she does not contribute to the military effort in other ways.

“The Air Force has two sides to it really. On one end of the spectrum, there is the powerful military side; and on the other, there is the new, diplomatic medical side,” Gober said. “The medical field brings a whole new humanitarian solution to the world. We try to bring peace and diplomacy that way in an attempt to restore stability in the world.”

Surprisingly, being a military wife was even more challenging for Gober than being in the military herself. She was separated from her husband at times and could not control when he could be with her and when he had to leave. Once they started a family, however, the challenge shifted its focus.

“The most challenging part about being in the military is keeping my family together,” Gober said. “The kids moved every two to three years. Zach is the only reason we are here for six years. You have to understand



If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em. Dr. Sharon Gober has been a member the Air Force since 1995. She counsels soldiers suffering from psychological disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder. Photo courtesy of Dr. Gober.

that the family serves the military just as much as the active duty members.”

With that being said, Gober stressed that there are many sacrifices that come along with the duty.

“It is the most incredibly fulfilling calling. It’s my purpose, but it’s not for everybody,” Gober said. “God gave me this gift, and I think you have to have a sense of purpose in whatever you are called to do.”

The respect that many have for her participation in the service is the

same respect Gober has for women who are homemakers. As fulfilling and rewarding as her career is, she admits to feeling some guilt about not always being able to be there for her kids.

“As a woman and a mom, I tremendously respect those stay-at-home moms, but I knew that I was called to do more. It doesn’t make me better, it just makes me different,” Gober said. She is very thankful to the community that backs her. She says that people help her and her family in the smallest of ways that make the biggest impact.

In all actuality, Gober was not looking to “beat” anyone. Her choice was not about a competition between men and women. The motivation that drove Gober’s decision to join the Air Force stemmed from her calling to do more.

She has sacrificed and contributed to a greater good that many citizens do not fully see or understand. Gober is an inspiration to girls everywhere to take charge of their lives and follow their calling to make a difference in the world around them.

Dr. Gober’s Journey in the Air Force



Graphic by Erin O'Brien



Offutt Air Force Base: Fun Facts

Offutt began in 1918 as Army Air Services. The name was changed in 1924 in honor of Jarvis Offutt, who was from the Omaha area.

In 1940, the base was the site of the Glenn L. Martin Company, a new bomber plant.

The base started as Fort Crook, named after George Crook, a Civil War veteran. The fort's main task was fighting the Indians in the area in the late 1800s.

The first atomic bombers were built at Offutt, including the ones that bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

On April 26, 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt toured the base. On September 11, 2001, President Bush arrived and gave an hour long teleconference from a war bunker on base.

Graphic by Allison Dethlefs
Becky Fuqua

Photos of Offutt Air Show by Brittany Hytrek

Year of Leadership

Mrs. Sharon Gober exemplifies what it means to be a female leader because she took charge of her own life. She did not wait for permission from others to pursue her calling. She empowered herself through her own decisions and actions. The girls of Marian salute her! Marian's first event for the Year of Leadership was to bring Sherri L. Smith, author of "Flygirl," to campus on Sept. 3. The Network Staff has plans to profile a female leader in the community each issue.

Graphic by Kyra Lindholm
Molly Rakoczy

What should be next year's ALL-SCHOOL READ?



"'19 Minutes' by Jodi Picoult."
- Caley Maszk, senior



"'Maximum Ride' by James Patterson."
- Sammy Brown, sophomore



"'Circle of Friends' by Maeve Binchy."
- Faith Wilwerding, junior



"'Saving Juliet' by Suzanne Selfors."
- Samantha Gardner, freshman

If you have a suggestion for next year's all-school read, click the link on the lower left side of the Marian Homepage [www.marianhighschool.net]

Graphic by Alex Eilers and Erin O'Brien
Photos by Shelby Stefanski and Becky Fuqua

From coffee makers to Christmas decorations

Uncovering the mystery of the teacher free table

Molly Rakoczy

A small, white skull fountain gushes out dyed red water. The fountain greets answer-seeking students, now filled with trepidation as they enter the TAR room to ask their questions on last night's homework.

But never fear, the skull is only one of the many treasures taken from the teacher free table. Among office supplies, holiday decorations and a coffee maker (which now may be found in Mrs.

Mrs. Remmick's cabin), the skull fountain made the teacher free table its home for a time until it disappeared into the great halls of Marian.

Located in the teachers' workroom on second floor, the teacher free table is a place where random, unwanted objects can be left and claimed.

Sometimes called "the Goodwill table," it has been around for as long as any teacher can

remember. Social studies teacher Mrs. Kim Remmick recalls it being at Marian for all of her 13 years here. She is just one of the many teachers who has taken advantage of it.

Religion teacher Mr. Mark Koesters found the free table especially useful when he moved to a new house last year.

Pointing to a box whose size could easily hold a wild raccoon, he said, "I probably filled five to 10 boxes like this and brought them to the table."

Like many other teachers, Koesters has placed items such as books, Christmas decorations, extension cords and lamps on the free table.

"Sometimes I go get a cup of coffee, and by the time I get back, whatever I've just put on the table is gone," he said.

According to the unwritten rulebook of the teacher free table, items should only stay on the table for a week. By Friday, everything should either be taken home or given to the Goodwill.

Spanish teacher Mrs. Beth Shanahan often makes that Goodwill trip. She doesn't go every Friday; rather, she takes it when the table is full of items that have already been picked through.

"The unusual things go first," Shanahan said. "Sometimes things like manuals are left behind."

The origins of this fantastic innovation are unknown. Koesters said that it has gained popularity throughout the last two years. He speculated that it began as an accident, just a few forgotten items left on a table marked "free."



One Man's Trash... The skull fountain finds a new home in the TAR room, thanks to science teacher, Mrs. Sharon Genoways. The fountain is one of the many items that has been taken from the teacher free table to be put to use in the classrooms. Photo by Erin O'Brien.

"Nobody is too good for the free table," Shanahan said. The table's popularity grew as teachers brought in random items such as children's puzzles, makeup and glasses. Often Marian clothing items, extra club t-shirts and other teacher resources are the first items to go.

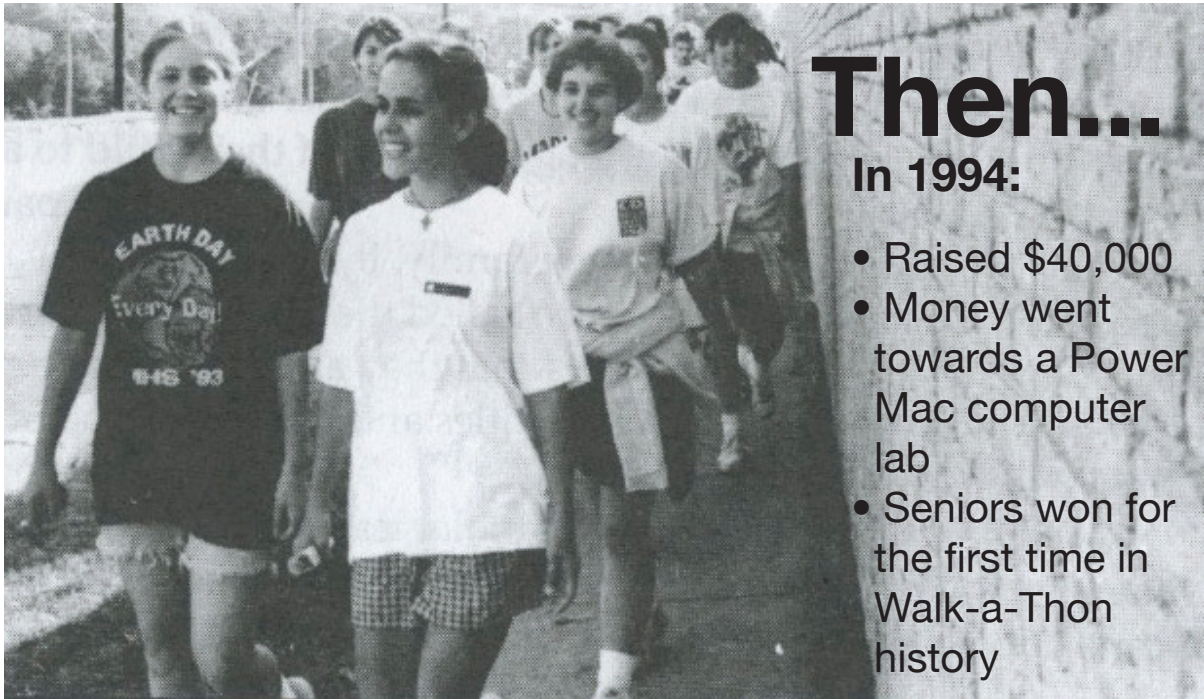
As the Halloween season approaches, the skull is scheduled to reappear in the TAR room. Science teacher Mrs. Sharon Genoways holds her valued fountain and looks around.

"We used to keep it in the back of the classroom," Genoways said. "I don't know where we'll put it this year. Probably on the desk so it's the first thing people see."

"Sometimes I go get a cup of coffee, and by the time I get back, whatever I've just put on the table is gone."

-Mr. Mark Koesters

Walk-A-Thon



Blast from the Past. Seniors Stephanie McCann, Leslie David, Diane Davis and Lisa Lanthrop walk down Fort Street. This photo was on the front page of *The Network* in September 1994. Photo by Katie Morrissey and Anna Bjorkman.

Then...

In 1994:

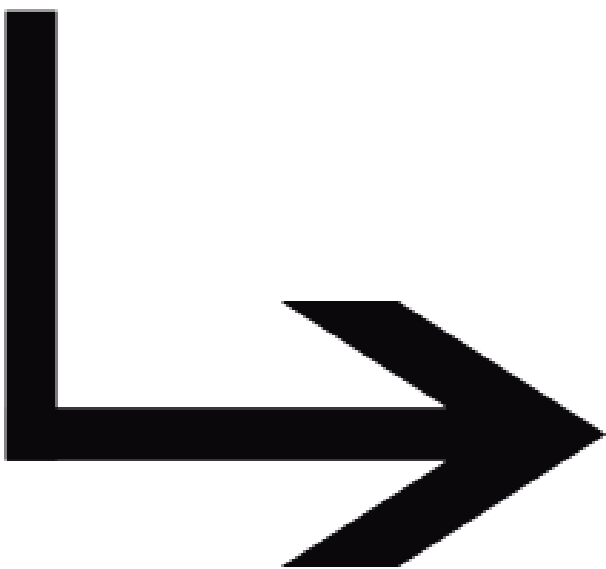
- Raised \$40,000
- Money went towards a Power Mac computer lab
- Seniors won for the first time in Walk-a-Thon history

And Now

In 2010:

- More than \$110,000 raised
- Results determine the order of classes for Field Day Color Block
- Matching T-shirts!

Graphic by Erin O'Brien
Alex Eilers



WAT's the rush? Seniors Molly McCarthy and Katie Powell race through Keystone with Head of School Mrs. Susan Toohey close behind. The walk on Sept. 24 brought the news of a record-breaking amount of money raised by the school with each class meeting its goal. Student Board organized the fundraiser under the theme "Walkin' on Sunshine." See page 20 for individual class totals.