

Family has always been first for Alton's Nancy Elson

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON – Children, grandchildren and family have always come first for **Nancy Elson**.

Nancy Elson has been many things in life, the wife of **David Elson**, retired Alton Superintendent of Schools, a nurse, a nursing instructor and worked for both St. Joseph's Hospital and Memorial Hospital. She was also a school nurse with Alton School District and provided hospital and community education for both St. Joseph's and Saint Anthony's Hospital.

What she is most proud of in life are her four children, three boys and a girl, and now six grandchildren.

“Looking back in time and thinking about raising the kids, it just went so fast, too fast,” she said. “As parents we are focused on protecting our children and exposing them to life’s pleasures, we don’t take time to just enjoy them. With grand kids, we get to enjoy without worry. The grand kids are the best gift our children can give us. They are a reward for being the best parent you can be.”

Nancy married David Elson on March 22, 1969, prior to their college graduation at the University of Evansville. With a bachelor’s in nursing she started working at Memorial Hospital. When they first thought they might not have any children, they adopted their oldest son. Twenty-two months later, Nancy gave birth to twin sons. With three boys at home, she could not work. David was a young underpaid teacher at Alton High, so he worked extra jobs and as soon as she could, Nancy started working evenings and weekends to supplement the family financially.

Ten years later, Nancy and David had a little girl. Nancy always supported the family so they could take vacations, do basketball camps and make college a reality. She once also worked with Visiting Nurses. She touched almost every medical facility in the River Bend region in one way or another in her career. One of her greatest loves was the development of Saint Anthony’s Diabetes Treatment Center and Midwest Occupational Medicine to new employers.

David Elson said in 2005, the family suffered the heartbreak of losing one of their sons to a battle with depression. As hurtful as this was, Nancy always was one to lead her family through the crisis. To this day, every Sunday evening, she gathers the family for food, fun and fellowship, David said.

Today, one of Nancy and David’s sons is a supervisor at U.P.S. Another son is director of Latin Information Technology at Kimberly Clark. Her daughter has followed Nancy’s footsteps and is a registered nurse at Gateway Hospital. Nancy now has three grandsons and three granddaughters.

David Elson has one word to describe his wife and the mother of his children: “She is remarkable.”

Nancy and David have been married for 47 years and she said she wants to make it to 50 years with both of them in good health.

Nancy’s advice to other mothers is take the time to listen and learn about each of your children individually and hang on to the family traditions.

She is thankful she been able to spend the years in the nursing field.

“I guess I am one of those people who want to take care of people,” she said. “I guess it was always the same way with my family. I always wanted my family to come before me.”