



In celebration of the month of love, we are honoring the lives of Arbors tenants **Dwane & Ruth Thompson** and their amazing 71 years of marriage. With Dwane's recent passing, Ruth states she will always cherish his great sense of humor, easy-going and loving spirit as well as their special memories together over the years.

Ruth (Eliason) Thompson was born in Sheffield, Iowa in December 1927. She had one sister who was seven years younger. She recalls childhood memories of playing with rabbits and kittens as she followed her father into the fields.

Dwane Thompson was born as one of six children on a farm in Kanawaha, Iowa in September 1924. During his childhood, Dwane helped his father with many of the chores on the farm. Unfortunately, Dwane also contracted a severe case of typhoid fever at the age of sixteen. Thankfully, his sister (a nursing student) was able to help him recover and learn to walk again. However, due to the severity and duration of his illness, Dwane was unable to finish high school.

How did Dwane and Ruth's journey together begin? At the conclusion of high school, Ruth joined the Cadet Nurse Corp. in Mason City, Iowa. At the age of nineteen, she was working as a student nurse at St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital in Mason City. Dwane, who was twenty-three at the time and had just returned from serving in the U.S. Navy, brought his father into the hospital to be treated after a car accident. Three months later, Dwane asked Ruth out on a date. Their courtship lasted about a year, although their time together was limited due to the time constraints of nursing school. However, they were able to enjoy meals and movies together as well as participate in a variety of activities with other couples.

After Ruth's graduation from Cadet Nurse Corp. and a six month engagement period, Dwane and Ruth were united in marriage on October 2, 1948 in a Lutheran Church in Kanawaha. For the first twelve years of marriage, they began raising their first three children on Dwane's family farm in Kanawaha. Life was challenging, as they had no running water or a bathroom. At one point, they lost their cattle due to a disease and struggled to sustain the income needed to support their family. While Dwane looked after the children, Ruth worked a nursing job and raised 1000 chickens on the farm to help produce more family income during that time. Despite their hardships, Dwane and Ruth were able to enjoy card clubs and square dancing with other couples in the early years of their marriage.

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In 1960, Dwane's family sold the farm. The couple relocated to Bloomington, Minnesota, where they purchased Dwane's cousin's two-year old home and had their fourth child. Dwane worked as a courier for Road Machinery, worked for Briggs Transportation and then drove city bus. He also sold shrubs in his spare time to give the family some extra income. He passed a test for civil service and began working at Bloomington Post Office, where he dedicatedly worked for twenty-eight years until retirement. Ruth had passed her nursing Board exam (June 1948), but she was too young to get registered at that time. She worked as a graduation nurse until she was eligible for registration at the age of twenty-one. She then pursued an RN position at Methodist Hospital. She worked her way up to a nurse manager position, and retired from the hospital after thirty years of dedicated work.

While working and raising their children, Dwane and Ruth were able to go on several fun family vacations. They enjoy camping in Washington D.C., Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. They also went to the World's Fair in New York. After their children were grown up and during retirement, the couple enjoyed trips together to Marco Island in Florida, Arizona, Alaska, Norway, Israel. In 1974, they went on golfing trip to Texas and decided to purchase one of the homes on the golf course. While summers were enjoyed in Minnesota, they preferred the warmer weather in Texas during the winters. They ended up living year-round in Texas for about fifteen years prior to selling their home and moving back to Minnesota. In 1985, Dwane elected to have cardiac bypass surgery, but he first wanted to enjoy a trip with his beautiful bride to Hawaii... so off to Hawaii they went!

Over their seventy-one years of hills and valleys together, Dwane and Ruth's commitment to one another remained strong. Staying active in their Christian faith helped them forgive each other and persevere through tough times in life. When asked what advice she would give to younger generations on a successful marriage, Ruth replied, "When you have arguments or disagreements, talk to and forgive each other before going to bed." Inspiring words from someone who successfully lived her own advice for over seventy years!

When asked what legacy she hopes to someday leave for her family members, Ruth discussed her desire for them to learn the blessings gained through having a solid Christian faith foundation and serving others.



In loving memory of
Dwane Thompson
(September 19, 1924 – January 13, 2020)