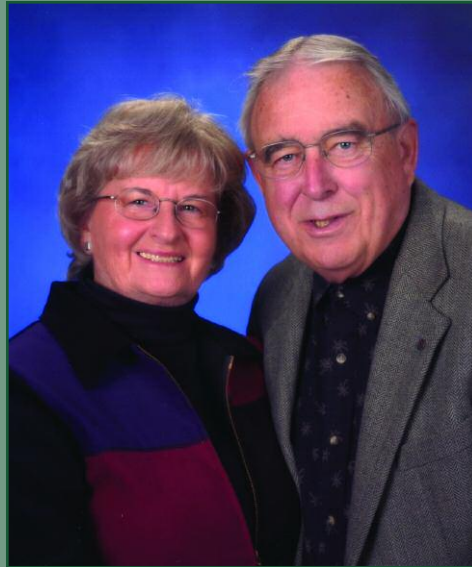


## Our Family's Northern Journey

by Diane Elcoate '85 BS

**W**e lived near Lansing when my husband, **Robert Elcoate '60 BS**, was discharged from the U.S. Coast Guard in 1956 and went to work with a state survey crew. They were laying out groundwork for the new power plant to be built at Northern Michigan College in Marquette. After work one day, he went over to Dean Bottum's office to talk and then took some tests and decided that he would use his GI Bill benefits and go to college. Bob and one other student were the only ones not from the Upper Peninsula.



This was just as the Mackinac Bridge was in the initial stages of being built, so ferry service was still the only way to cross the straits. Bob and Dr. Edgar Harden, the new president of Northern, began at the same time, when all offices and classrooms were housed in beautiful Kaye Hall. I eventually worked as a receptionist at Lee Hall when it was the student union and was secretary to Mr. Lawson, food service manager. Northern had 500 students then. We lived in married student housing: the old tin triplexes. We had two babies and had left a brand new house and were one of the last to arrive at Verville. We discovered that all the "good" contents of our unit had been "robbed" to replace broken parts for the entire area—even light bulbs. After we got the little U-Haul unloaded we bought pasties, went out to Presque Isle, sat on the Black Rocks and cried. What had we done?

After graduation Bob landed a job as an insurance

adjuster in Petoskey, for a company out of Chicago. We lived in Petoskey for 35 years where Bob later opened his own insurance agency and I had a wonderful career as an orthodontic dental lab technician. Later, I went back up to Northern, which had by then grown to several thousand students, finished my last two years, and became an English teacher in 1985.

We had been accepted for the Peace Corps, but after spending a summer touring Europe via U-Rail, found that we had missed an important deadline and were out. So we moved to Hawaii

where Bob became a travel agent and I taught at Konawaena High School on the Big Island. Three years later we came back to Michigan to raise sheep. Bob opened his own travel agency and I taught seventh grade English in Manistique, near where we found an affordable farm. A few years ago I published a book: *Seul Choix, Our Home*, a historical novel of the lighthouse in the 1930s. I am secretary of the Gulliver Historical Society and a tour guide at the lighthouse.

Our daughter, **Deborah Lords**, received her master's in speech pathology in 1984 (summa cum laude) when she moved from Spain to Marquette to do that. She now works for

DODS in Japan. Her daughter, **Meghann**, graduated from NMU in 2005 with a BA in English.

So even though we're not U.P. natives, we've almost become so.

**We had two babies and had left a brand new house and were one of the last to arrive at Verville. After we got the little U-Haul unloaded we bought pasties, went out to Presque Isle, sat on the Black Rocks and cried. What had we done?**

## Tell us what's happening in your life

Keeping Track is generated by your submissions and is open to all alumni. Send your submission to the NMU Alumni Association, Northern Michigan University, 1401 Presque Isle Avenue, Marquette, Michigan 49855; e-mail to [horizons@nmu.edu](mailto:horizons@nmu.edu); or send via the Web at [www.nmu.edu/horizons](http://www.nmu.edu/horizons). If you would like to include a picture with your submission, please send a print or digital photograph with a resolution of at least 300 dpi.

[WWW.NMU.EDU/HORIZONS](http://WWW.NMU.EDU/HORIZONS) ■ [HORIZONS@NMU.EDU](mailto:HORIZONS@NMU.EDU)



NMU Alumni Association member



NMU Alumni Association  
lifetime member


## '60s

**Tom Poisson '67 MAE** of Ontonagon is the longest-serving member of the Ontonagon County Economic Development Corporation. He is one of the original board members from the organization of the EDC in 1977.

## '70s

**Mary (Dougherty) Green '71 BS** of New London, Wis., retired in March after working as a medicinal technologist MT (ASCP) for 35 years.

**Robert Louria '71 BS** of Dearborn retired after teaching and coaching 30 years in Detroit Public Schools. He was elected to the U.S.S.S.A. Softball Hall of Fame in Michigan in 1992 and elected to the national U.S.S.S.A. Hall of Fame in 2006. [winship29@yahoo.com](mailto:winship29@yahoo.com).

 **Thomas Ochs Jr. '71 BS** of Royal Oak received the Captain Lewis Ludington Award.

**Jerry Green '72 BS** of New London, Wis., retired in June 2006 from teaching earth science and chemistry at New London High School.

**Victoria (Gregory) Dittmer '75 BS** of Grand Ledge has worked for the State


of Michigan for the past 25 years and is currently director of Michigan's Department of State Information Center. She and her husband, Bruce, have two children, both of whom recently graduated from Michigan State University. The couple often returns to the U.P. in search of old and new haunts.

**Ralph Wahlstrom '78 BA, '81 MA**, of Buffalo, N.Y., published a book, *The Tao of Writing*, and will be traveling to Paris to present a workshop on writing and peace education. Ralph and his wife, **Cynthia '79 BS**, have three children.



Three generations of Cleven family graduates. **C. E. Cleven '50 BA** (left) is a retired principal of East Grand Rapids High School. **Philip Cleven '65 BS** (right) is a retired social studies teacher and department head at L'Anse Creuse High School in Macomb Township. **Brian Cleven '91 BS** is an industrial archeologist and project manager at R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates in Frederick, Md.

## '80s

 **Soren Christensen '80 BSN** of Silverdale, Wash., retired in

January after a 26-year Navy career. [sorenjim@wavecable.com](mailto:sorenjim@wavecable.com).

**Steve Loring '80 MAE** of Cadillac retired from the Michigan Department of Human Services after 32 years as a child welfare worker. He married Fonda Soltysiak in June 2006. [sloring51@msn.com](mailto:sloring51@msn.com).

**Ron Hise '81 BS** of Worley, Idaho, was promoted to park manager at Heyburn State Park in northern Idaho. He began his career 24 years ago and is now responsible for almost 14,000 acres of state park land.



**Mike Campbell '82 BS** of Milford works as a News Bureau Chief for Metro Networks. [mbcampbell@comcast.net](mailto:mbcampbell@comcast.net).

**Peter Freccchio '82 BS** of Norway made the switch to newspaper in 2005 after working 25 years in radio (starting with WBKX at NMU). He is now a staff writer for *The Daily News* in Iron Mountain. [qfreccchio@uplogon.com](mailto:qfreccchio@uplogon.com).



**Carolyn (Holland) Blake '83 BS** of Dyer, Ind., received a master's degree in education from the University of Phoenix. This is her second advanced degree. She previously received a master's of public health administration from Benedictine University in 1993. Carolyn is married with two children and recently represented NMU at several area high school college night events.

**Larry Majetic '84 BS** of Clinton Township has been a city planner for Sterling Heights for the past 20 years.

**Judith "Jan" Jansen '85 BS** of Crystal Falls completed her master's degree in urban history at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in May 2006. She substitute teaches for the Dickinson-Iron Intermediate School District and is in the process of publishing her first novel, titled *Cistern Secrets*.

**Charles Jarman '85 BS** of Petoskey became a Dave Ramsey certified financial counselor. He is pictured here