

Eva: Hello everyone! My name is Eva Sipple -Strong. I am so honored to be able to spend some time with you tonight.

I was born in 1923. That would make me 98 years old if I were alive today. I was born and raised in Crandon, attended Siding One Elementary School and graduated from Crandon High School in 1942.

When I was 19 years old, I was working at the soda fountain in back of Augustine's Drug Store. Today, that's the building where the Pioneer Express is located in Crandon. Back in my day, the soda fountain was the place for young people to meet and spend time together.

On one particular day, this handsome soldier walks up to my counter and orders a cherry coke. He had the kindest eyes I'd ever seen.

I think he came in every day for a solid 2 weeks. He and I were both a little shy at first and I didn't actually know if it was the cherry coke he liked so much or if it was me! Turns out... it was me.

There was one little hitch though, I was engaged to someone else, and he was stationed in California so I couldn't easily go and talk to him. ....I didn't want to break his heart, but I knew what I had to do. And I have to say, that was a seriously hard letter to write..... but I knew I had to return his ring.

So- that was the end of that. Time went on and those first weeks at the soda fountain became Months . . then years passed. And Paul and I were married in 1948.

Paul!! Come say "hi" to all the people who've come to visit!

Paul: Well....it's so nice to see all of you here! What a party!!

(turns to Eva) We sure had some times! didn't we Eve?

Eva: We sure did!!

Paul: (turn to guests) I was born in Pangburn, Arkansas in 1920. I guess that would make me 101 years old if I were still alive today. My family came north to Forest County looking for better work opportunities. And when I was 20, I enlisted in the military. I proudly served in the Army/Air Corp division during WWII. The Air Force had not yet separated from the Army so at that time they were one branch of the military. I believe it was 1947 when that branch disbanded and the Army and Air Force became two separate branches of the military. I was a radio operator and

flew over China, Burma, and India. My flight plan also included Casablanca – in Morocco, I flew over Monaco – on the French Riviera (in Western Europe), and Cairo – northern Egypt. It was my job to monitor the flight plan.

I was also in charge of the fuel supply. I was very proud to serve my country this way.

Eva: After the service, we were married and we settled on a little farm right here in Argonne.

We raised a beautiful family, eight kids! They even named the road after us.....

Paul: That's right! we lived on our own "Strong Road."

Eva: We lived in a wonderful neighborhood. The Fulk's lived just a couple of fields over – Buel and Lucille Fulk are the kids God Parents. They're buried right over here! - Glen & Pauline Sipple were just around the corner, Bob and Jeanette Dixon were just up the road from us, we got all of our milk, eggs, and even beef from them, and Francis and Joyce Marshall lived just on the west end of Strong Road. All of them were just like family to us. We all supported one another and .....

Oh my!

I just had a memory...it was 1965 and all of the kids were sick with the flu. I was pregnant (again!) and the contractions were starting to come fast! - we made a phone call..... and...

as WE rushed off to St. Mary's Hospital in Rhinelander, the neighbor ladies rushed to our house to look after our houseful of sick kids, clean up messes and do laundry. (laughing)....a few days later we brought baby Karla home.

Paul: (laughing) I remember.. . That was sure something!!!

This community allowed us so many opportunities. We belonged to the VFW, the Masonic Lodge, the Eastern Star..... I was on the Crandon School Board from 1958 to 1970, first serving as Treasurer and then as Board Chairman.

Eva: We raised our family in the Argonne United Methodist Church. What a wonderful church group. Being involved and giving back to our community through all these groups was important to us, they gave us a sense of purpose and a shared community commitment. And we made friends and sure had a lot of good times along the way!

Paul: We built a successful business together too. Remember when we rented the Quonset hut back in the early 50's? We bought 6 TV's. We lined up 3 TV's on one wall, 3 TV's on the other, and put an "OPEN" sign on the door. Paul's TV and Appliance was open for business! In 1979, a young

man who had just gotten out of the service joined me in the business, that man was Mike Gruett. We incorporated our business and became Forest TV and Appliance!!.....that business has endured and is still going strong today!!

Eva: I remember (smiling) Television became a pretty hot item in Forest County in the 1950's. All the kids at school wanted to come over to our house to watch their favorite programs.

Paul: Well, we did have the first color TV in Forest County. There's bound to be a little excitement about that. The first time we watched the Wizard of Oz on a color set and Dorothy realized she wasn't in Kansas anymore?? I mean...that big burst of color on the screen was REALLY pretty impressive when we were used to seeing everything in black and white.

Eva: Do you remember that Christmas Eve we spent with Albert Schisel?

Paul: I sure do. I had worked that day and stopped by Kate King's Tavern for a bottle of brandy on my way home. Albert was the only one in the place except for Kate, so I invited him over.

Eva: I had a pair of jumper cables that I wrapped up so he had a Christmas present under the tree too. The kids were all having fun singing carols and playing their musical instruments (saxophones), ....it was a festive night!

Albert was enjoying the music so much, he wanted to go home to get his accordion and join in the fun. He let all the kids have a turn playing on that accordion.

What was that song he always played????

Paul: Don't Go Kickin' My Dog Around by Jimmy Driftwood!

Eva: Oh yes! that was it!!! Hahaha. What a memorable Christmas that was!!

*Albert Schisel comes by playing his accordion during this.....*

Eva: Then there was the cancer. :(

Paul: Ohh..... those were some hard times.

Eva: I was only 45 when I found out I had cancer. A few years later I had a radical mastectomy. I can say that out loud now, I can say Breast Cancer! we didn't talk about such things openly back then. In fact the subject was very taboo.

Paul: Yes, things are so different today.

Eva: After that surgery, I lost all feeling in my arm so I wore it in a sling so it didn't have to hang limp by my side. It was like a dead fish... That's how I thought of it, hanging there.

Paul: Yes, that was surely a hard chapter in our lives.

Eva: But you were there for me through it all, changing my bandages, making fresh squeezed orange juice for me every morning, and oatmeal.

Paul: You learned to do everything with your left hand. You cooked, swept the floor, you still typed letters – hunt and peck with your left hand, you still drove the car! All while being a support to others going through their own cancer struggle. I remember the hours you spent on the phone.....and typing letters..... before there were formal support groups in place, you were that support for so many.

Eva: This verse gave me strength.... God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

It wasn't an easy time, but keeping that perspective helped. And I know that same verse helped you with the many health challenges you faced after I was gone. Those were hard times too. But we had a good life together.

Paul: We sure did! It wasn't without challenges, but life was full of happiness, joy, real purpose, and so much love. Just look at the legacy we left behind.

Eva: Yes, our wonderful family.....Linda, Ron, Den, Patti, Diane, Paula, Johnny, and Karla. And all our beautiful grandchildren.

Paul: We have great grandchildren now!!

Eva: And there are many generations yet to come.....

Paul, I'm so glad you walked into Augustine Drug Store and my soda fountain all those years ago.

Paul: So am I Eve... so am I! Let's go have a cherry coke!