



Lester and Elizabeth Summer Family Scholarship

Purchased in 1942, the little white house at 614 Fifth Street in Devils Lake stood strong, providing shelter and support for four generations of the Lester and Elizabeth Summer family. When this work was finished, the little white house was repurposed to provide support in another way.

Lester and Elizabeth Summer were married in 1921 and farmed in the St. John and Munich, North Dakota, area while building a family of six children. As World War II ended, and grieving the loss of their son, Verlin, who died in naval combat, the Summer family decided it was time for a change. Lester enrolled in barber school, and the family moved to Devils Lake, ready to start a fresh, new chapter. The move proved to be a good decision for everyone. Elizabeth and the kids loved living in town, and the children embraced their new schools. Lester was delighted with his new occupation and especially the opportunity it provided for chats with the many kids and town folk who regularly stopped by his barbershop in the Mayer Hotel. Gradually, the Summer children grew up and moved on with their lives. Ralf

became a barber, Donald was involved in business, Joann taught school, and Burness was a secretary. Elaine, the youngest child, married Wendell Hanson, and they lived in the little white house for many years, raising their family of three children.

Upon Elaine's death in 2002, the house passed to Cathy Hanson Axtman and her children, Shelly and Cheri. They maintained the house which continued to hold memories for many Summer descendants and served as home base for numerous family gatherings.

Gradually, as the family dispersed, it became impractical to look after the house from a distance. A decision was made to "do something special with the little white house that would have pleased both Lester and Elizabeth."

The house was sold, and the proceeds were used to establish the Lester and Elizabeth Summer Family Endowment at Lake Region State College. The little white house on Fifth Street, that for decades provided shelter and comfort for the Summer family lineage, continues to do good work in the community, helping Lake Region students get an education. •