

Getting to Know Elder Carol Cutler Linder



Q. What is your education/career path?

A. I attended McCurdy Mission school in Española from grade one through twelve. At the University of New Mexico, I started as a physical education major with a plan to be a coach and I never expected to become a scientist and college professor. I look back on my educational journey and it was shaped by saying yes to opportunities and listening to my mentor who exposed me to the joys of research and teaching. This led to a master's degree in exercise physiology and a doctorate in biological sciences at the University of Texas at Austin. This was followed by a postdoc in reproductive biochemistry at Washington State University, a year at Oregon State University in the Department of Animal Sciences, and my first professional job at The Jackson Laboratory, a world-renowned mouse genetics research institution, in Bar Harbor Maine. I was hired as biology faculty at Highlands University in 2004. I am most proud of the successes of my former students who I taught and mentored in the classroom and research lab. For the past year, I have been enjoying new challenges and opportunities as the Academic Director of Allied Health and Public Service at Luna Community College.

Q. Where did you grow up?

A. At two, we moved to the Española Valley from my birthplace of St. Louis, MO, when my father started a medical practice after training at Washington University. We lived in traditional adobe houses, first in Pojoaque and then Okay Owingeh for twelve years, before moving to Sombrillo, NM, after our home was destroyed by fire. I was fortunate to enjoy riding horses, backpacking, skiing, scouting, track and field, volleyball, and basketball.

Q. Talk about your family.

A. After 15 years away, Peter and I were so excited to return to New Mexico in 1997 with our two children, Katie and Charlie, and be closer to family. My two brothers Paul and Charlie live in the Four Corners area and our kids enjoyed spending time with their cousins. My parents retired to Las Vegas in 2000 and my mom was an active member of our church prior to her death in 2008. My father died in 2016. We were also close to Peter's parents, who had a ranch in Rio Chama prior to their deaths, his mom in 1999 and dad ten years later. Katie and Charlie were raised in the church and have a lot of fond memories of Logos, Sunday School, retreats, and mission trips to the border. Charlie, a Navy Lieutenant on the USS Rhode Island, married fellow Las Vegan Gabby Griego in the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in December 2018. Pastor Katie and Rev Chad Boliek married Katie and Maggie Morris in our sanctuary in October 2019. Katie is currently in her second year as an ob/gyn medical resident at the University of Iowa. We are expecting our first grandchild in early 2023 when Charlie and Gabby will welcome a son!

Q. What are you passionate about and how is that reflected in your life?

A. I am passionate about a lot, which is why I am involved in so many things. What brings me the most joy is teaching and working with a team committed to making a positive impact in our community and beyond.

Q. If you had a motto, what would it be?

A. Take advantage of every opportunity and do your best to create even better opportunities for others.

Q. What church activities are you involved in?

A. I enjoy being in the the vocal and bell choirs, serving as an active elder on Session, and being involved in many aspects of church life. Over the past 25 years, I have chaired Christian Education, Community Life, Mustard Seed, and Time, Talents, and Treasure committees, run the Logos program, led several youth mission trips to the border, been involved with multiple task forces, and served as a Trustee.

Q. What community activities do you take part in?

A. I enjoy being a part of both Rotary and the Las Vegas Branch of the American Association of University Women, especially Girls Can for 4th grade girls. I also sing in the Highlands' Community Choir. I am also an active member of the San Miguel Health Council, the CWS/CROP Hunger Walk organizing committee, San Miguel Mora 100% Community Medical Action team and the Montanas del Norte Area Health Education Center Advisory Council.