

Rocky Mountain High, Colorado by Nancy Martz

While finishing up a Master's Degree at the University of Wisconsin, I received a phone call from Dr. Ed Beatty who had started a college in Greeley, Colorado, and urged me to come out for an interview. Now it is forty two years later, and I'm a retired professor emeritus from Aims Community College living happily in Windsor Gardens in Denver. Over the many years of my teaching career, I would drive back to the Midwest for family visits, always watching in my rear view mirror as the Colorado Rocky Mountains became more and more distant until they disappeared. Then there were the flatlands of Nebraska or the more scenic route I sometimes took through South Dakota's Bad Lands before I crossed over the state line into Iowa.

Once back on the farm, I could never stay longer than three days before looking longingly westward, the Rocky Mountains in mind, but the corn, bean, and alfalfa fields in my view. I'd been at my career here only three years when my dad died in a farm accident caused by a heart attack. When eventually my mother sold all the buildings and had all the trees removed to turn the whole farm into crop land for the renter, my trips back were nostalgic and often sad. My mother seemed to become more and more distant to me, and with the house gone, the white board fence and double driveway gone, the barn, the hog house, the chicken house, the corn crib, the shop, garage, and machinery sheds gone, and even every tree out of hundreds gone, I had trouble finding where my growing up home had been.

Before long, it seemed like going back was a thirteen hour driving burden and the mountains in my rear view mirror were too gorgeous to leave behind. Eventually Colorado became my mind's home when one by one my loving family passed away, and I married and built friendships to last a lifetime next to the Rocky Mountains.

Recently, my sister decided she needed me more than she needed Iowa, and that led to an expensive experiment in which she tried to see Colorado through my enthusiasm. She couldn't and returned to Iowa. As much as she loves her native state, I love my adopted home here in Windsor Gardens, Denver, Colorado. I can't imagine living anywhere else.

Where else could I find friends and companions down the hall, up the elevator to other floors, across the beautifully landscaped yards to the other buildings, and along the tree lined canal as I walk my two little Shih Tsus. Where else could I find such a splendid view of the Rockies as I pull out of Windsor Gardens and turn towards Cherry Creek on Alameda. Where else could I find scores of creative, recreational, cultural, political, physical, and intellectual activities right here in the Windsor Gardens complex. While I've always loved Colorado, I've found the niche of my heart's content right here in Windsor Gardens, and having travelled the world in my younger years, I know a good home when I have finally found it.