

**Mrs. Sunshine**  
**Brenda M Hiemstra**

## Table Of Contents

### **Page**

- 1. Dedication Page**
- 2. Favorite Recipe**
- 3. Poems**
- GrandParent Biography**
- 4. Childhood**
- 5. Teen/Adulthood**
- 6. Identity**
- 7. Aging**
- 8. Present**
- 9-10. Life Lessons/Legacies**

I want to dedicate this Biography to Brenda M. Hiemstra. A lot has happened in these years that I've been here. You're an inspiration to me, you're always the shining sun of the day. No one could've gone through a husband's death with such young grandchildren like you had to. Whether it's having a conversation or playing your old card games, I grasp wisdom from the words you praise. You've helped me in so many ways now it's my turn to thank you. I worked so hard on this Biography because I want you to be proud of me, because I'm proud of you and I'm so lucky to have you as my grandma.

## **Chocolate Chip Cookies**

**PREHEAT** oven to 375° F.

**COMBINE** flour, baking soda and salt in small bowl. Beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar and vanilla extract in large mixer bowl until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in morsels and nuts. Drop by rounded tablespoon onto ungreased baking sheets.

**BAKE** for 9 to 11 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely.

**PAN COOKIE VARIATION:** Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease 15 x 10-inch jelly-roll pan. Prepare dough as above. Spread into prepared pan. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool in pan on wire rack. Makes 4 dozen bars.

### **SLICE AND BAKE COOKIE VARIATION:**

**PREPARE** dough as above. Divide in half; wrap in waxed paper. Refrigerate for 1 hour or until firm. Shape each half into 15-inch log; wrap in wax paper. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.\* Preheat oven to 375° F. Cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices; place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely. Makes about 5 dozen cookies.

\* May be stored in refrigerator for up to 1 week or in freezer for up to 8 weeks.

**FOR HIGH ALTITUDE BAKING (5,200 feet):** Increase flour to 2 1/2 cups. Add 2 teaspoons water with flour and reduce both granulated sugar and brown sugar 2/3 cup *each*. Bake drop cookies for 8 to 10 minutes and pan cookie for 17 to 19 minutes.

**Poem #1**

***Grandma's are for stories from the past.  
Grandma's are for caring about everything in your life.  
Grandma's are for staying up late movies.  
Grandma's are for the best friends you'll never lose.  
Grandma's are for the key to making you smile.  
But, most importantly of all, Grandma's are for warm hearts.***

**Poem #2**

***This poem is for you grandma  
For your warm hugs  
For your awesome humor  
For your bright smile  
Because you are always happy  
You are one of us  
You always do your best  
I love the way  
you never give up***

## Childhood

Brenda M. Hlemstra was born on September 7th, 1940 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Her first name was decided after a famous singer and her middle name was after her mother. Growing up she had a sister and a brother. Most kids while growing up have a favorite hero or role model in this case Brenda didn't. Every little girl dreams of being famous or a princess, Brenda actually wanted to become a wife and a mother. The only thing she wanted when she graduated was to become a wife and mother.

Many have a vivid<sup>1</sup> memory of their parents but when it comes to Brenda she actually doesn't have any when it comes to memories about her parents she draws a blank. Her father was a great handyman he actually built homes for a living which would draw in a lot of money for her and her siblings. All throughout her life you would see girls wearing dresses Brenda was one of the many that took part in that. Dresses were a big hit you could do almost anything in a dress and they were so comfortable. There are stories about troubled kids but she wasn't one of them growing up she was taught not to do something she knew she would get disciplined for because come on who likes getting disciplined.

There is only so much a brain can hold onto that includes the best memories that no one wants to lose. Brenda draws a blank when it comes to memories because as life goes on things tend to fall behind without even noticing. Memories can be like words they go into one ear and out the other. As she was growing up her dad tended to be gone a lot more than other dad's. With him being away she was taught to be cook, clean and take care of everyone at a young age.

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<sup>1</sup> Vivid memory describes a bright and bold color. An intense feeling, or an image in your mind that's so clear you can touch it.

Her mother and her became close than ever and she gained characteristics <sup>2</sup>from her mother which also made their relationship stronger.

### Teen

The older you get the more things change such as daily hangouts, likes, and dislikes. From playgrounds, open fields, to going to beaches, roller rinks and friends houses all the time. As a teen Brenda was one that was always out there, she was never stuck sitting in her house watching tv. In fact she didn't watch much tv, she was more active than the typical lazy watch tv eat junk food teens.

### Adulthood

When she first started working she did office work. The way that she decided what she wanted to do with her life was go to work right after school. How she met the love of her life Eugene, it all started at work he worked in the factory part she worked in the office and her job took her out into the factory, it was like love at first sight. She did not go to college but that doesn't make her any different that anyone she is as smart as anyone probably smarter than most. Instead she took her life and did what she thought was best and she got the one thing she could've ever asked for and that was for a big happy family.

Some features from her son Jim have been passed down to one of her grandkids Lynsey she's quiet at first just like her father. On the other hand she is very outgoing, peppy, and could ramble all day long if she had the choice to which she gets from her mother. The main thing that she remembers about Lynsey when she was born is oh so how cute she was and still is, but she was the size of a baby doll and she hardly weighed anything. Now she's the same as ever she could be a toothpick but her height skyrocketed.

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<sup>2</sup> Characteristics are features or quality belonging to to a person, place. Or thing and serving to identify it.

There isn't just one story that was her favorite about each of her kids Randy, Tim, and James she couldn't choose because there are just too many to keep track of without mixing them all up. The best thing about her kids is that they all stayed out of trouble and seeing how they're all boys she got a lucky. It takes being a parent to keep all 3 boys in check at all times.

### Identity

Some of the characteristics that she shares with her mother are she is very independent and she likes to shop. Of all things she does not think she is like her father at all. The #1 most important thing that her parents wanted her to do was just to simply grow up and become an independent, strong, mature adult. They couldn't ask for anything more simple than for her to grow up. One person from history that Brenda remembers is her mother but not for what she looked like, how she dressed, it was for her independence.

Her mother made everyone know just how much of a strong and independent woman she was and Brenda wanted to be just like her. The most memorable phone call she ever received was from her husband Eugene. They always had something to talk about, there was never a problem with communication between the two of them. She remembers one of his calls because he was one of the best people that was in her life, and he passed away. Many fear of losing a loved one but Brenda actually fears of losing her independence which means so much to her it's her everything.



**Independence <sup>3</sup>show's you're strong and capable of taking care of yourself once it's gone she fears she won't have much in life anymore. Looking back into the past and present day she can honestly say that she doesn't think she has changed the way that she feels about herself. It's always been positive and will stay that way forever. One thing that has stayed the same and always will is the love that she has for her family granted it should always be that way. Through the good times and the bad a family always stays together, she could never stay mad at family because there's that bond that was created at a young age and can never be broken.**

### **Aging**

**Flash back to the 20's,30's,40's,50's,60's and 70's. In her 20's she got married and had her first child Randy, in her 30's she had another child James. In her 40's she started having grandchildren, in her 50's she started working in retail. When it came to her 60's she stopped working in retail, finally in her 70's she started having great grandchildren. If she could go back in time to any age she doesn't want to go back to any age and wants to keep living life how it is. There were good times and bad times but she would never want to go back in time to any certain age.**

**Looking back at her life she didn't have any expectations at all during her life and she thinks she's already old so doesn't see why she should start having expectations now. Now a days she looks forward to going out to eat and shopping with friends. Along with having visits from family and being able to have get togethers with everyone to stay in contact and keep the bond that she has with everyone. The hardest thing for brenda about growing up was one having to stop being a kid and second was having to change ways to go out and get a job and become a successful adult. One thing she wishes she didn't have**

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<sup>3</sup>Independence is the fact or state of being independent. You can take care of yourself without anyone's help.

the ability to do is still having the memory of bad situations that have happened in the past and not being able to let go of them.

There really is no way to prepare for old age it's something that doesn't come with constructions. Choose what you want to do with your life and find your path sooner rather than later. It's something that comes as you get older and it's better not to have to walk through the world alone.

### Present

A typical day is keeping the house and yard cleaned, going shopping, babysitting grandchildren, or spending time with two of her closest friends. The present is more frightening for her now than it was in the past. There are so many more dangerous, non paying attention things out there. In the past there was less things to worry about and we didn't have the advanced technology that we have today. Dreams sometimes are a fantasy but not always sometimes they come true and for brenda they did.

All she ever dreamed about was getting married and having the children that she wanted and that's exactly what happened. In reality she knew that all her dreams would come true, she never lost hope because when you want something to happen you have to fight for it. The most important things to her now are her family and friends. Because family and close friends are people that will always be there for when you need a shoulder to lean on. What she calls fun is going shopping or out with friends. She is always out and about, she's not one that can stay stuck in a house when the weather is beautiful.

### Life Lessons/Legacies

The very best moment that she has is being married and having a family because it was literally the best thing that ever happened to her. The most important successes in her life is still being here as in being alive. One thing that

was the most difficult to handle was losing her husband. Going from him always being by her side to totally vanishing was something that took awhile to move on. She had a semi big family that helped her through it as they all faced the devastation<sup>4</sup> of his death.

There aren't any certain stages of life that she has a vivid memory of more than any other one. As you get older your memories tend to start to blend together forming one big masterpiece. One message she would send to her children and grandchildren is to go and visit her more, it's been ages since she's seen each one of them. Most people when they look back on their lives have things that they wish they would've done differently. But Brenda believes she wouldn't have done a single thing differently that everything she has done was and is for the best.

Something she threw away that she wish she hadn't of done was throw away all of her old dolls, each one represents a memory. Little things like arts and crafts she has kept from her grandchildren because each thing that they give her is a way of showing that they still love her and are thinking of her. Superpowers everyone wants them but she would choose the ability to stop child abuse<sup>5</sup> the world needs the children of today they hold the world's future of tomorrow. The best piece of advice she can give anyone for living is have faith in God he is the only one that can put you on the right path if you have faith in him.

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<sup>4</sup> Devastation is great destruction or damage. Severe and overwhelming shock or grief.

<sup>5</sup> Child Abuse is physical maltreatment or sexual molestation of a child. Any bruising or physical markings on a child.