JOYCE BILLINGS, BA, RN, CFP
by Eileen Kelz, Jane Kennedy
and Georgette Frazer.

Joyce Billings is a fiber artist. In Marshfield she's best known for her woven, quilted and knitted creations. Those of us who are lucky enough to know her also know that it doesn't stop there. In many ways, she has also woven us and the whole community together. In her many roles in life as artist, wife, mother, grandmother, friend, co-worker and neighbor she has helped so many of us find and strengthen the common fabric that exists between us. In the process, she creates order, beauty and a whole lot of good times!

There have been times when she's worked outside of the community's spotlight. She's been the "family glue," raising children, coordinating multigenerational family reunions, lending a willing ear to the stories of her family, and then writing up and sharing many of them. She gifts us with handcrafted treasures - enduring gifts individualized to her loved ones' tastes and needs. Her home has always been a warm and colorful oasis, touched by her love of natural objects: seasonal collections of flowers, shells, fall leaves and chestnuts.

Growing up in Wyoming, Joyce's childhood was spent exploring the ranches and foothills near the magnificent Big Horn range. She enjoyed a life that was close to the land, accompanying her father and siblings on hunting and fishing trips. She excelled in school, graduated with her RN from the University of Wyoming and then began service in the Navy as a nurse.

She met her husband, Ken, while working at a Naval hospital in Philadelphia. After serving in the Navy they moved several times, with Joyce offering her healthcare skills as well as office coordination and bookkeeping support to her husband's medical practice. She transitioned to office management and accounting work when they settled in Marshfield, taking courses at the UW campus and passing the CFP (Certified Financial Planner) exam along the way.

Several local firms enjoyed the gifts of her accounting and organizational skills and experience. She was an office worker for Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MACCI) and Time Federal Savings and Loan. She then managed office operations at Lifetime Financial Services for over 20 years before her retirement. Joyce enjoyed creating more efficient ways to do the work. She left her desktop clean every night, as if to confidently say, "We've got this."

There have been other times when Joyce has stepped into a leadership role in a critical moment,



Joyce Billings

such as in 1996 when she acted as the volunteer Executive Director of the newly launched Marshfield Area Community Foundation and led fundraising efforts to secure the group's first dedicated office and first paid staff position. She wouldn't let go of her unpaid job until she knew it was safely in the hands of a qualified, paid manager, Terry Malueg.

She formed a local Creativity Group which was behind (along with others secretly known as the "Bodacious Bombers") the yarnbombing of downtown Marshfield, wrapping sculptures, light poles and other fixtures downtown in yarn creations. To memorialize the downtown's yarnbombing, she wrote a children's book called "Ribbit's Quest," about two hand-knitted animal friends who lived in the tree outside of the Public Library and went on adventures together, which she has shared with many including the Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library. The Creatives also knitted and crocheted a Coral Reef display for the library; and for years dressed a sculpture, Tillie the Turtle, in seasonal clothes outside of the MACCI office. As President of the New Visions Arts Board, Joyce also chaired the annual Mother's Day Art Fair which was a spring event that brought joy, and lovely artwork, for our homes and businesses.

Joyce enjoyed sharing her own artistic talents with others by teaching Navajo Weaving through the UW Continuing Education Department. She also brought her family together by developing an illustrated family history book that included each of

her 40 cousins and their families.

Along the way, Joyce supported many other community groups with her artistic and organizational abilities. She was a Cub Scout leader, costumer for plays at the Senior High, Director on the United Way Board, helped to coordinate a regional weaver's group, and managed funds for both the Fun d' Arts and Cultural Fair events at the UW Campus in town.

Joyce credits the friendship and collaboration of many others for all that she's accomplished, especially mentioning Marilyn Hardacre, Betty Ptacek, Carl Meissner, Paul Rogers, Ann Waisbrot, John Bittrich, and Lori Belongia.

Our lives will necessarily hold moments where things come together and times when things seem to be coming apart. In a dynamic world, creating order and beauty from the craziness of daily life is sometimes difficult to achieve. Joyce Billings has dedicated her life to creating joy, beauty and togetherness for her family, her friends and her community.