

VOLUNTEER Focus

Lucille and Charlie Porto

Lucille and Charlie Porto have raised a great deal through the years — a fine family, bountiful vegetables, funds for Dowling and even students' grades. Their personal Dowling tradition stretches back more than 50 years yet is as up-to-the-minute as the class of '88. This is the year their youngest son, Joseph, graduates from Dowling AND the year Charlie's going to the fiftieth year reunion of his Dowling classmates!

The Porto family ties and Dowling ties are intricately interwoven. Lucille and Charlie graduated from St. Joseph and Dowling, sharing the tradition with eight of their siblings — Charlie's three brothers and three sisters, Lucille's two brothers.* They include Charlie's youngest sister, Linda, among their own kids when enumerating the second generation of Porto grads. Linda came to live with them when her mother died. She graduated from St. Joseph's in 1963 and is studying in Italy this summer. Theresa Porto Waltz — SJA '66 — is living in Wallingford, Connecticut, with her husband David, and their three children, Brett, Jessica and Kristin. John — DHS '68 — lives in Johnston, Iowa, with wife Julie and their children, Patrick, Jennifer, Gina, Michael Vincenzo and David. Eileen Holzmüller — SJA '71 — and her husband, John, live in Des Moines with their children,

Eric, Anne and Kate. Michael — DHS '72 — his wife, Gail and their sons Ian, Thomas and Michael live in Tipp City, Ohio. Carolyn — DHS '77 — is married to Paul Johnson, and they live in Lawrence, Kansas, with their daughter Katherine. Peter — DHS '79 and Charles — DHS '82 are single and living in Des Moines.

Portos have produced more than a wonderful family. They've helped Dowling in countless ways through the years. Lucille has spearheaded the Bake Sale, prepared the New Parents' Dinner, served as a classroom monitor, and given hours and hours to the Dowling Guild.

"I started working on the Bake Sale back when it was a St. Joseph's fund raiser down at the Hotel Fort Des Moines, more than 25 years ago. I'm starting to cut back, though," commented the woman who co-chaired the event this year. After all, her committee only made 60 dozen wandas this year, down from last year's 84 dozen!

Lucille had also handled the annual New Parents' dinner each fall, welcoming families to Dowling with her delicious lasagne.

Charlie is also a faithful Guild volunteer, contributing a range of talents. He whipped up 28 loaves of honey wheat bread for this year's Bake Sale. He has been tutoring Dowling students for



more than seven years, working one-on-one with students, especially foreign students. He started out as a classroom monitor, filling in for Lucille when she took a part-time job about the same time he retired from the U.S. Postal Service. Charlie claims he started "Because she (Lucille) forced me to."

He's stayed because he enjoys helping the kids. He now tutors individual students and has worked in math, reading and English.

When this year's students needed help in algebra, Charlie took the book home and studied it through the winter. "It's amazing how much deeper algebra is now than when I took it. But I could do it fifty years ago, so I'm stubborn enough to figure I can still do it today!"

The Porto household is multi-generational. Lucille's 100 year-old father, John Vincenzo Giudicessi lives with them part of the time.

The Portos are also well-known for their garden. "Oh, it's not like it was," says Lucille. "We just put in enough for ourselves this year. When the kids were growing up, they could earn enough money to go to college selling vegetables."

Lucille and Charlie Porto exemplify the Dowling/St. Joseph spirit with amazing dedication and devotion.

* [This row on the family tree includes (on the Porto side): Anthony — DHS '40, Mary Louise Porto Anania — SJA '41, Thomas — DHS '45, Richard — DHS '44, Joanne Porto Comito — SJA '50, and Linda — SJA '63. On Lucille's side there are: Rose Giudicessi Scigliano (deceased), Laura Giudicessi Brightman, Mary Giudicessi Sullivan, Frances Giudicessi DeCarlo, Ann Giudicessi Essy, John D. Sr. — DHS '38, and Joe — DHS '48.]