



## Emma Hoffert

Water has always been a part of my life, whether I realized it or not. My family is full of avid fishermen who would do anything to spend some time on the water, one of them being my grandpa. I can still picture him in one of his worn-out fishing shirts, full of holes, sitting in the driver's seat with his Skeeter hat on.

As a kid, I always thought it was so awesome going in the boat and getting to go fishing, since living in Fargo made it harder to do than it was in Bismarck. Whenever I went fishing with my grandpa there was always one rule: whoever caught the first fish got a candy bar. I remember one day in particular during the summer, my family had come to Bismarck for the weekend. My dad wanted to go fishing so badly, since we didn't get to do that back home. So instead of just the guys going, we loaded my whole family into Old Red, my grandparents' little boat. It started off exciting, with it being the first time that summer we got to go on the river, but as time went on, it got more and more boring. It was so hot, I could feel the sweat dripping down my back. After a while, nobody had caught a fish and everyone, especially me and my little brother, was getting really bored. That's when my grandpa first told me about this rule of his. As soon as I heard him say candy bar, I got up and cast my rod right away. I was not giving up until that candy bar was mine. I remember the specific spot we were in, in a drop off right by the tree line, when I felt a tug on my line. I got scared at first and thought it was just the water, but then I felt it again. I reeled in the fish, and out of the six people in that tiny boat, I was the first one to catch one. I could not contain my excitement and could only think about that candy bar that was waiting for me.

Once we finished fishing and loaded up the boat, we went to the gas station by my grandparents' house. My grandpa walked me in and I felt like I was in heaven surrounded by all the candy. That day will forever stay in my memory as the first time I was able to connect with my grandpa.

My grandpa is not just a grandpa to me. He is a mentor -a patient, wise, and dependable man. He always seems to know just what to do in any situation life throws at him. He has helped me more times than I can count. From giving me rides wherever I needed to be, to reassuring me that everything would be okay after I tore my ACL. I appreciate and admire him more than words can express.

This is just one of my many memories of water that have helped to foster the relationship I have with my grandpa. Spending time with him, whether in the boat, at the beach, or on the dock, has created countless memories that helped shape our relationship. I slowly started to see him as not just my grandpa but someone I look up to and deeply admire.

As I have gotten older and started to reflect on my life, I realize that all those times on the water weren't just about fishing or getting that candy bar. It was about the memories we made together that have made our relationship grow stronger.

Water was never just part of the background of my life, it was the place where my relationship grew with my grandpa. Every laugh, every joke, every moment helped shape me and our relationship into what it is today.