



Mindee Limon and husband Wally with their six children at the wedding of their oldest daughter. Courtesy photo

## **Mother of six loves school**

Limon doesn't have resolutions for 2014, because she's still plugging away on the goals she set several years ago. "You don't think about it," she said. "You just keep doing what you need to do."

By RACHEL COLEMAN

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With a New Year around the corner, Mindee Limon isn't contemplating new goals. The mother of six, hospital phlebotomist and soon-to-be nurse is relishing her break from college.

"I'm just sleeping," she said with a laugh. "I feel like a lady of leisure, since we got a whole month off school."

Limon, who earned a perfect grade point average of 4.0 last semester, is a little more than halfway through her journey to become a nurse. Her experiences in and out of school are useful for people who want to make changes, she said.

"A lot of it is, 'What not to do,'" she said with a laugh. Even so, Limon is steadily gaining ground on her goal of becoming a nurse. It all began when she was a teenager herself.

"Years and years ago, I talked to a cousin who was a nurse, and I thought, 'I want to do that,'" she recalled. The desire didn't resurface until Limon took a job at SWMC, and realized "I wanted to do more than stick a needle in the patient's arm and go on my way," she said. "I kind of always knew I wanted to be a nurse. I've been with a couple people when they passed away. I've been with my friend when her baby was born. Those can be the two most beautiful times in life, and I just want to be there, as a nurse."

Limon's clarity took time to develop.

She started college three times, beginning right after high school. A person who "tends to bite off more than I can chew," she said, she enrolled in 21 credit hours' worth of classes as a freshman at a private Christian college.

"I had never been away from home, I never studied in high school... I wasn't ready. I quit after two months and came home clinically depressed."

Limon's second attempt at Seward County Community College, also failed.

"I was working two jobs, taking night classes," she said. "It didn't work."

The third time around, she enrolled at Oklahoma Panhandle State University in Goodwell. But she lived in Guymon, worked in Liberal, and dated a boyfriend who lived in Hugoton.

"I was all over the place," she said. "It didn't work."

Having attended the school of life, as she calls her varied experiences since then, Limon was finally ready to buckle down when she returned to the classroom at SCCC nearly three years ago.

"My kids haven't seen me for the last three years," she joked. "My husband, Wally, is great — he takes care of the laundry, and the kids help out. I don't know that we really talked about it, what it would be like if I went back to school, we just did it."

The family connection is part of what keeps Limon motivated.

"I know I have five girls and a son who are watching me, who can see you can do anything you put your mind to," she said. "That is part of my motivation."

"My youngest is 5, and she keeps telling me, 'Mommy, I'm going to be a doctor like you,'" Limon said. "I don't have specific goals for them, but I do want to inspire them. Education is what gives them independence. There's nothing wrong with getting married and having children, but they should have options."

Another quality Limon hopes to demonstrate is a love of learning. Although her college studies are goal- and career-oriented, she also relishes the opportunity to try new things.

“I have classes I’m taking that have nothing to do with nursing, but I just feel I have to do them in order to learn,” Limon said. “I took music appreciation to finish up my associate’s degree, and I’ve taken aquaerobics, tai chi, and Spanish which should help me. I’m not sure it has, so far, but it should.” She paused and added, “I love school.”

“I’ve had people tell me that I inspire them because I’m doing this. But I’m not doing it for that. I’m doing it for myself, for my family and because it’s what I love to do.”

Limon said that might be the key to succeeding in new goals.

“When you really want to do something, you will find a way,” she said. “It’s almost like you can’t think about how hard it is or how hard you’re working. You just do it.”