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Area native authors, illustrates kids book

'The Story of the Unique Sheep' looks at farm life

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By PAUL LaPANN (plapann@newsandsentinel.com), Parkersburg News and Sentinel

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PARKERSBURG - Parkersburg native Dianne Barnett Lough has written and illustrated a book - something she has wanted to do for a long time.

"The Story of the Unique Sheep" is a children's book about farm life written as an educational tool, said Lough, a 1968 graduate of Parkersburg High School who lives in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Daughter-in-law Laura Lough collaborated with Dianne in writing the book. Laura Lough lives on Square Peg Farm in Lexington, Ky., with her husband, Dr. Christopher Lough.

Article Photos

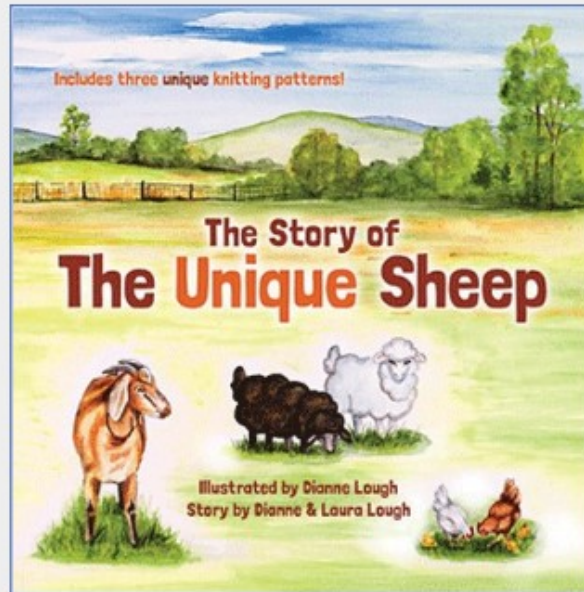


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The book shows how wool is spun into yarn and the yarn is dyed - Laura's expertise. Laura owns The Unique Sheep, a company that sells hand-dyed yarn and roving for knitting and crocheting online and in yarn shops across the world, and is a fiber artist.

The Loughs' Kentucky farm was an inspiration for the book.

"It's a sweet little book about farm life and farm animals," Dianne said.

Dianne hopes this book will inspire young readers and listeners to fall in love with farm life and be inspired to become whatever they want to be.

Dianne's watercolor paintings of farm life accompany the story.

"Elizabeth the Shetland sheep lives on a farm filled with color. She wishes her wool was something more interesting than white - so one day she makes her dream come true..." according to a press release about the book.

"In this charming children's tale, Dianne and Laura Lough tell the story of how the spunky sheep Elizabeth inspired Laura's wool-dyeing business, The Unique Sheep. At the end of the book are three simple knitting projects perfect for the whole family."

Dianne Barnett Lough enjoyed drawing as a child and took painting classes from Dorothy Decker in her Vienna studio when Dianne was 5 years old. She earned a bachelor's degree of fine arts from Marietta College. Dianne enjoys painting landscapes, birds, animals and seascapes.

Dianne's paintings of Parkersburg scenes are sold at The Gallery, 614 Green St. in Parkersburg, where "The Story of the Unique Sheep" will be available.

Dianne retired from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem where she was manager of the bookstore - designing T-shirts, painting murals and working on an online catalog there - and worked in the children's library. She picked up tidbits about children's literature while working in the college library and knew she wanted to write a children's book someday.

Dianne was crowned Miss West Virginia in 1970 and competed in the Miss America pageant the following year in Atlantic City, N.J.

Her mother, Helen Barnett, lives in Parkersburg and her father is the late Dr. Charles Barnett, longtime Wood County medical examiner and family physician/surgeon.

She is married to Mike Lough, a 1967 graduate of Parkersburg High School, who recently received a 30-year award from Shell Oil Co.

The "Story of the Unique Sheep" is being published by Cooperative Press and can be purchased on Amazon.com.

While the book is described as ideal for children ages 3-7, older children will still be interested in the yarn-making process and the beginner knitting patterns, according to a press release.

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