



Alzheimer's
Australia SA
Living with dementia

PERSONAL LIFE HISTORY BOOKLET

Prepared by
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for
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1997

FOREWORD

A person's life represents the accumulation of a wealth of experiences which form their social and life history. Every person's memories are unique to that individual. This booklet has been designed to collect the unique social and life history of an individual with dementia. This life history will help individualise the care of the person with dementia and maintain their identity. It will also help people caring for the individual to know them and develop strong relationships with them.

As everybody is an individual this booklet has been designed to be adapted. Space is provided in the booklet for photos and objects which are important.

The booklet may also be used to promote reminiscence with the person. It does not provide information about how to conduct reminiscence, however, a bibliography featuring books on reminiscence and other relevant subjects has been included in the appendix. Brief definitions of dementia, individualised care and reminiscence are also outlined in the appendix.

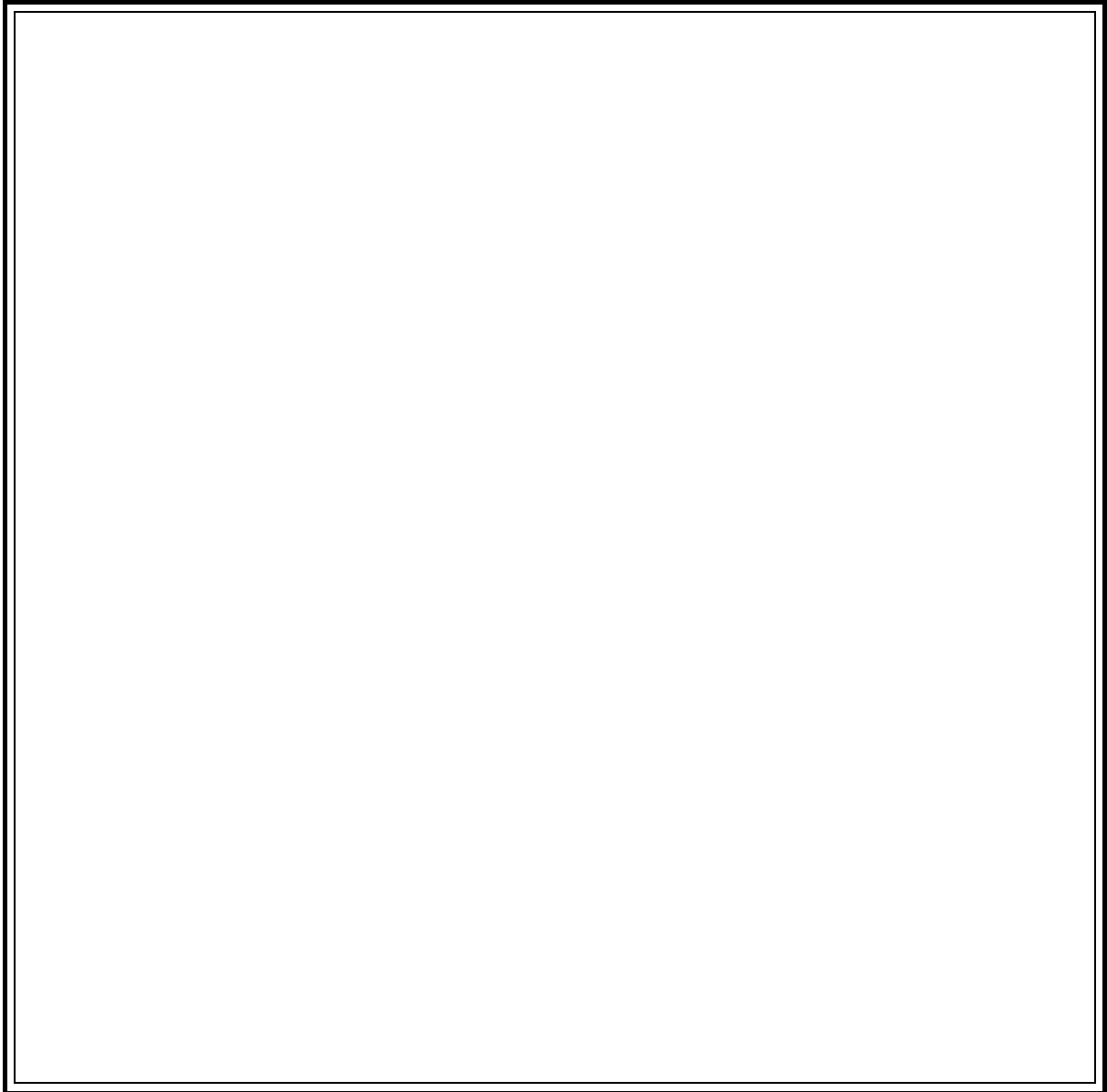
Pages have been included within the appendix to note when and how the booklet is used with the person with dementia and their reactions to its use. This information will provide other people with information about the best way to use the booklet with the person with dementia. It will also highlight areas where more information could be useful or outline if certain topics are no longer relevant.

Every person has some aspects within their social and life history (e.g. death of a loved one, experiences of war) which may stir up painful memories. Information regarding painful experiences may not be appropriate to include within the main context of the booklet if it agitates the person with dementia. However, it is still important staff and people caring for the individual are aware of these memories as it may help explain behaviour patterns. It will also make them aware of subjects which will upset the person with dementia. For this reason space has been provided within the appendix to include any of this information.

It is my hope that the use of this booklet can bring enjoyment to the individual whom it is about, their relatives and carers. Feel free to individualise it to make it as relevant as possible to the person with dementia, and enjoy yourself.

Kate Gregory
Occupational Therapy Student
1997

This booklet details the life of



Birth

_____ birth date is _____

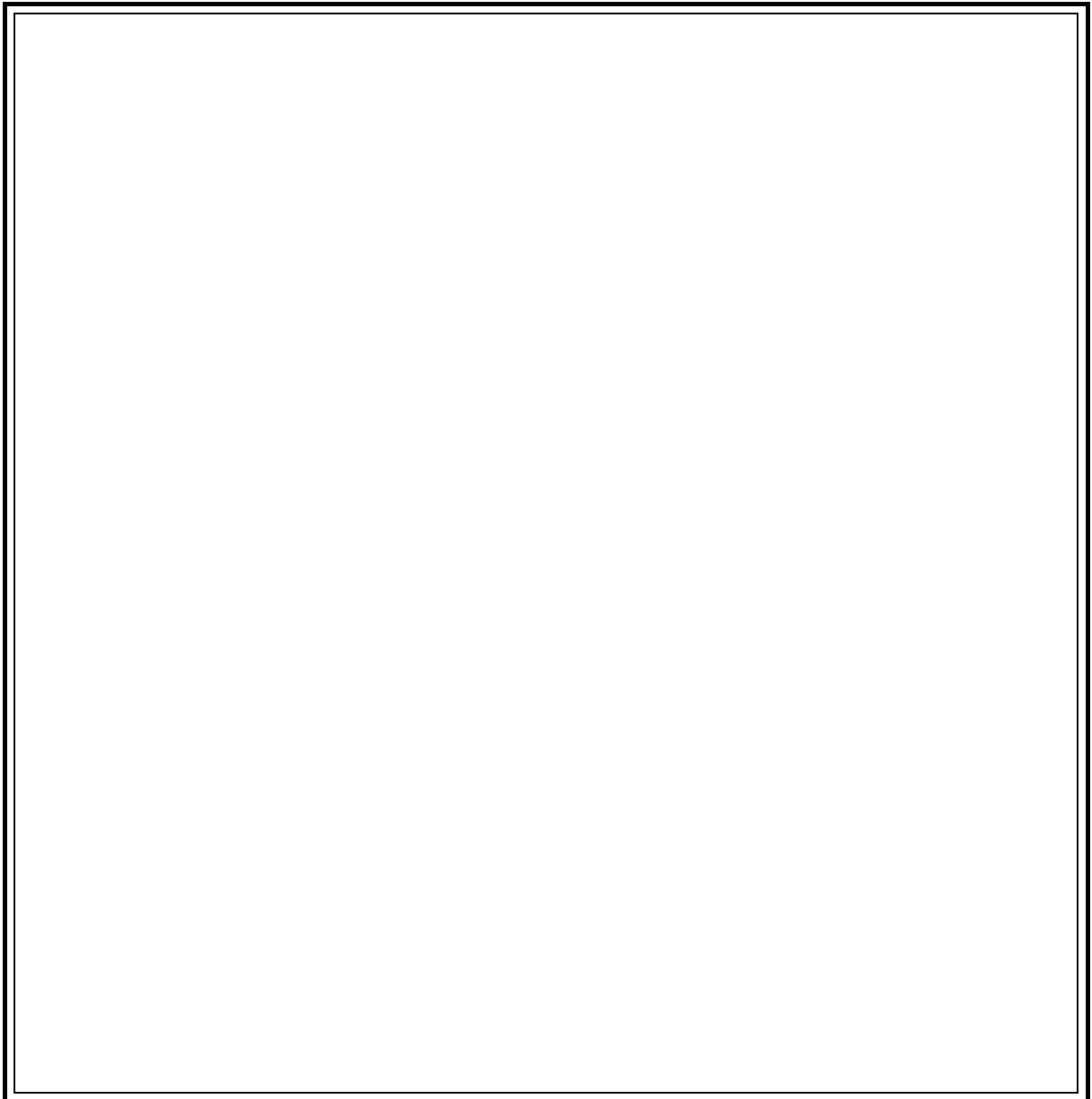
_____ in the year _____

and was born at _____

(location)

Special circumstances and photographs

Include how the person got their name, whether they were born premature or late, etc.

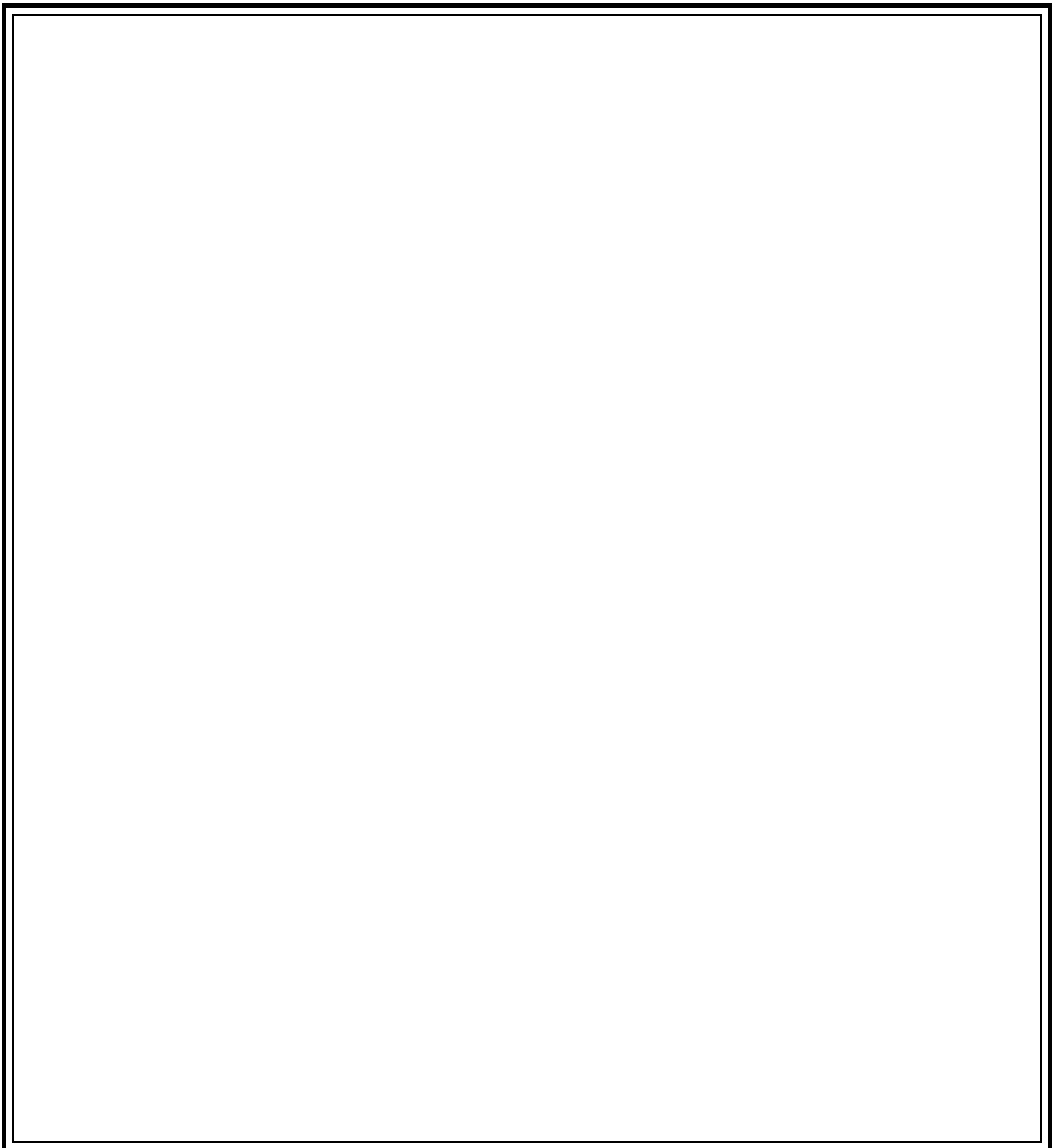


Parents

_____ is the _____
child of _____
and _____

Special memories and photographs

Include details such as how the person's parents met, photos or stories relating to their parent's wedding.



Siblings

date of birth

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Special memories and photographs

Include stories about games they played together, trouble they got into, things they enjoyed doing and sharing with their siblings.

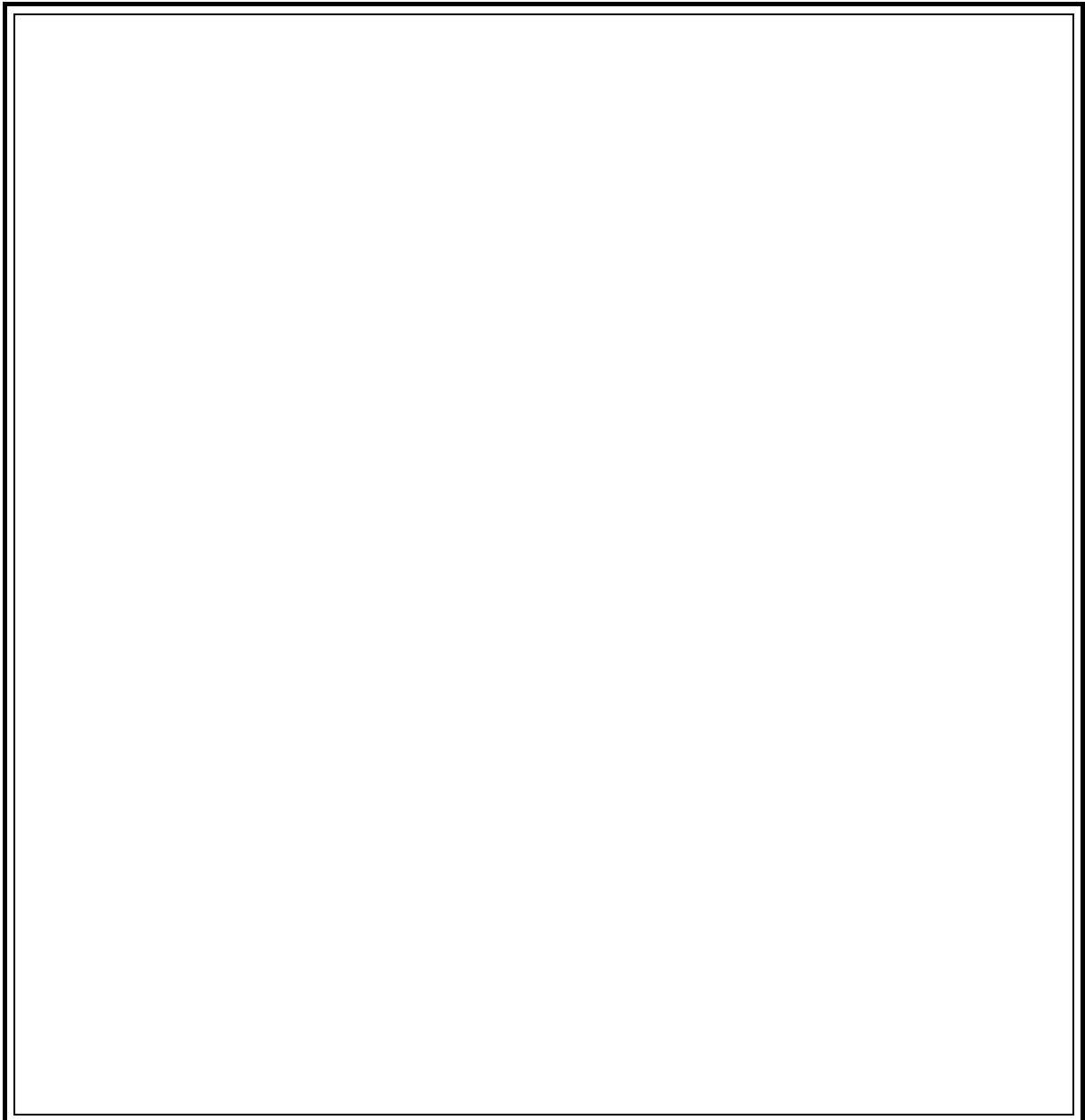
Childhood

During their childhood _____ lived at

(street or suburb, if known)

Special memories and photographs

Include stories of neighbourhood friends, chores they had to do, details of the house they lived in, any games and sports they played, favourite hiding spot and trouble they got into.



Religion

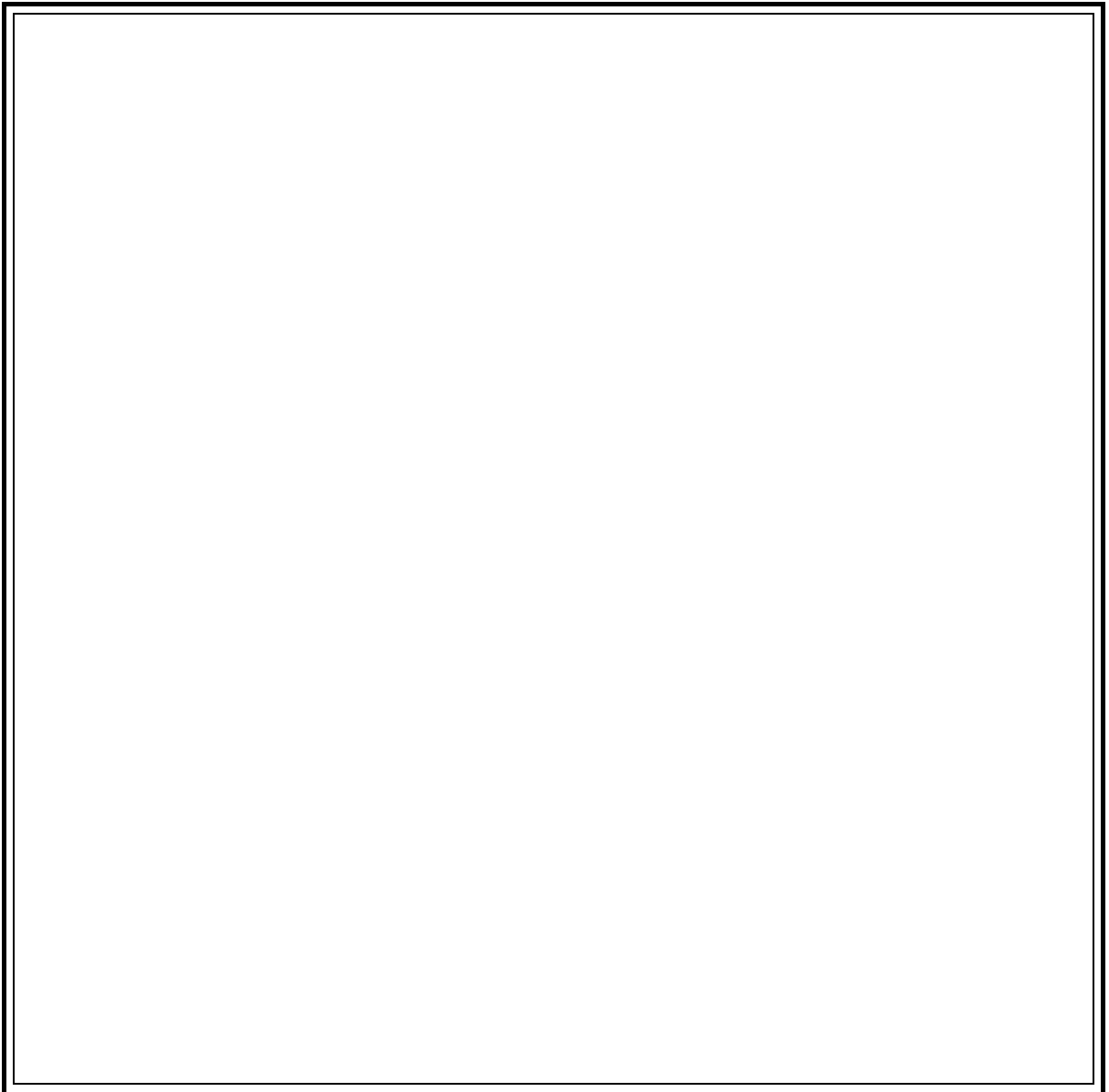
_____ is of _____ faith
(denomination)

and attended services at _____

(name of church)

Special memories and photographs

Include information about whether the person belonged to a Sunday school group, church related youth group, church committee, or was involved in other social functions, or special ceremonies or services.



Education

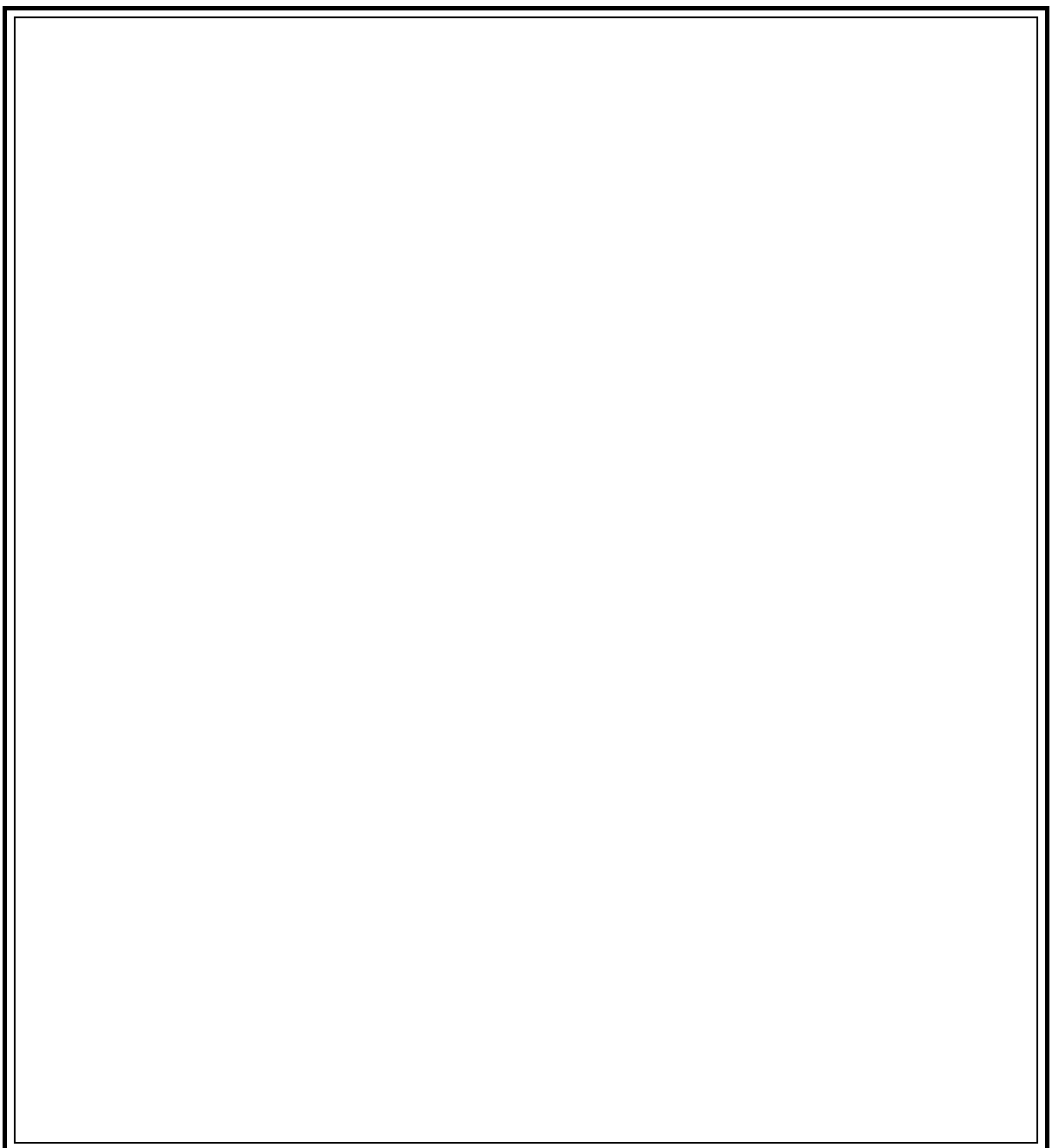
_____ undertook their schooling

at _____

(education facility)

Special memories and photographs

Include stories from their school days, if they enjoyed school, how they travelled to school, education level reached, any special awards received.



Work

_____ started their first job
with _____ in
(company name)
the position of _____ (job title)
and was _____ years of age.

Special memories and photographs

Include information about how they got their first job, whether they enjoyed their job and how long they stayed with the company. Also include details about other companies the person worked for and different positions they held.



Marriage

_____ married _____

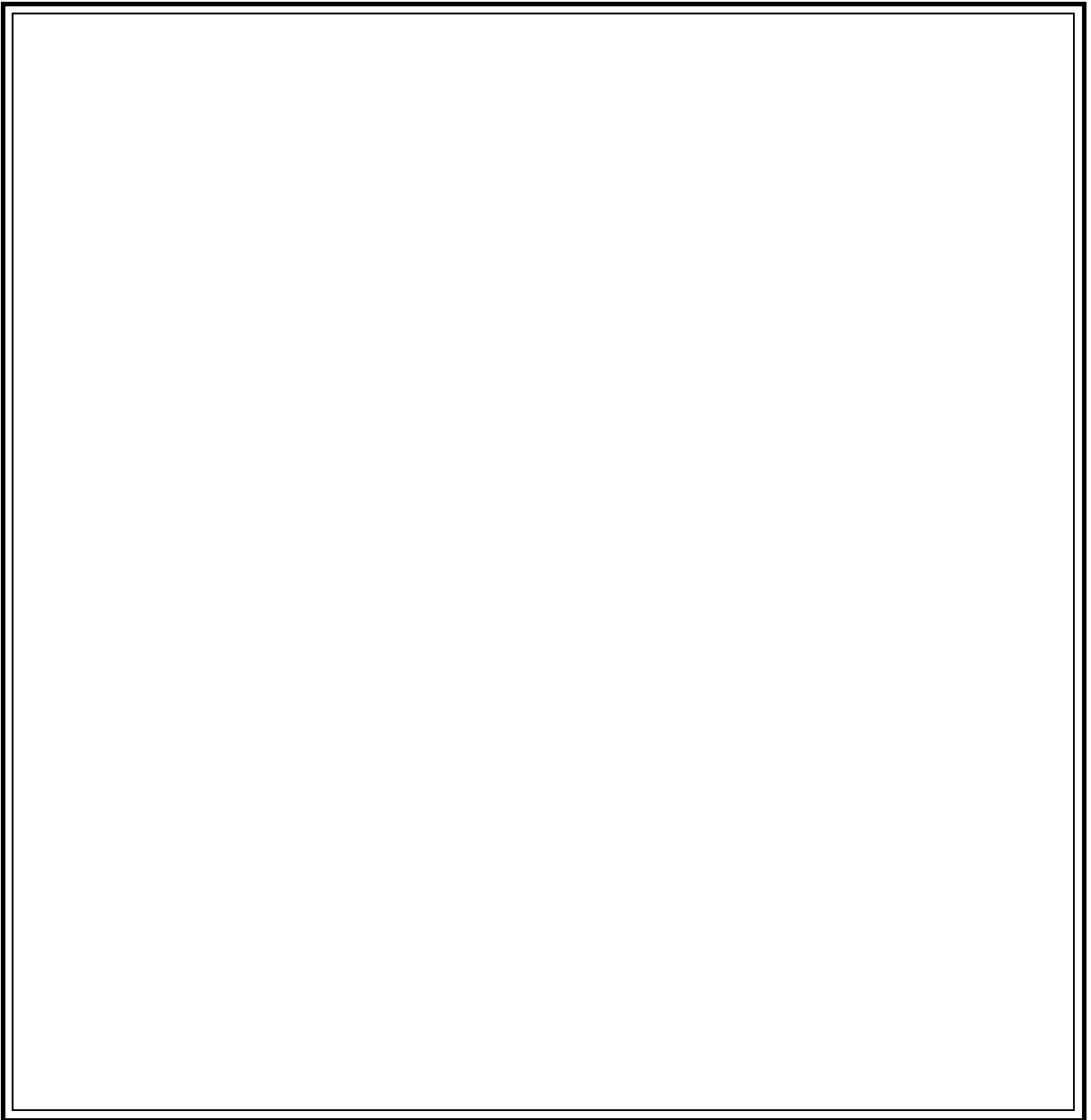
on _____ at _____

(date)

(location of ceremony)

Special memories and photographs

Include details of how the couple met, how long they were courting, the marriage proposal, how long they were engaged, details of the wedding ceremony, reception and gifts received.



Children

_____ and _____

have _____ children, their names and birth dates are

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Special memories and photographs

Include the person's favourite stories about the child / children, activities they enjoyed with the child / children, favourite holidays they took with the child / children.

Retirement

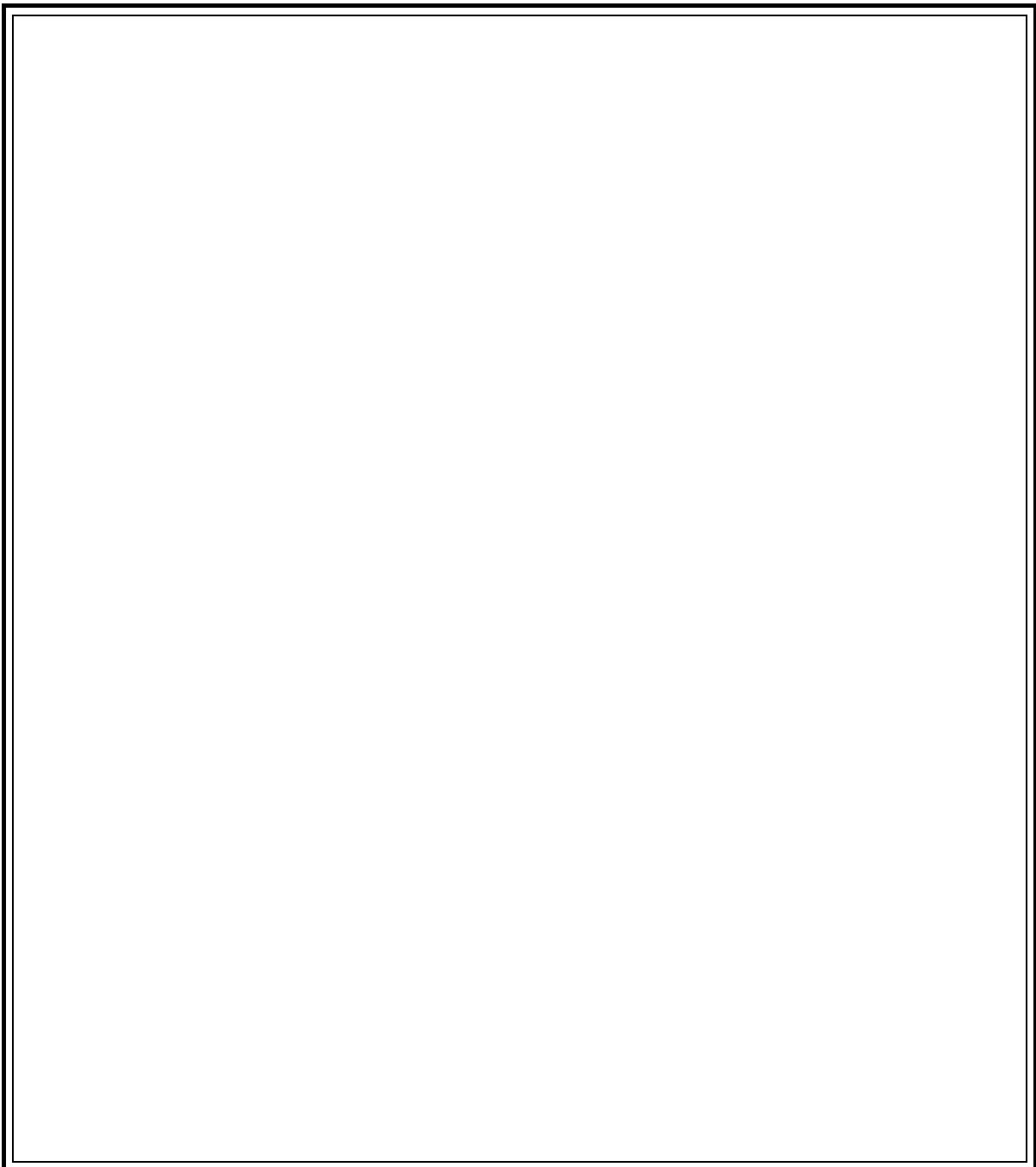
_____ retired from work on

_____ after _____ years of work.

(date)

Special memories and photographs

Include details of parties given and gifts received to celebrate retirement, what plans were made for retirement, feelings on day of retirement, etc.

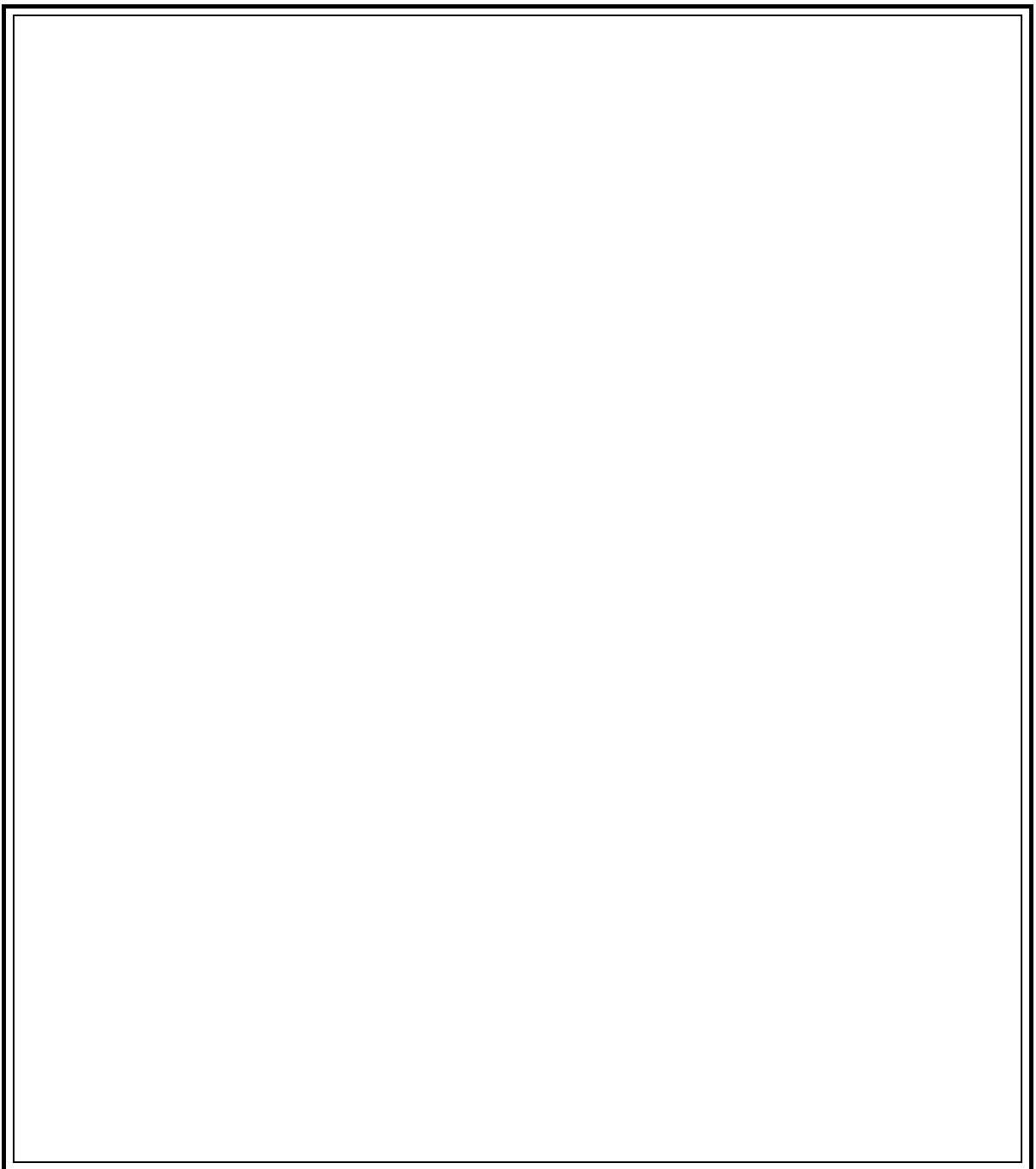


Friendships

_____ closest friends include

Special memories and photographs

Include stories about activities / travels they did with their friends.

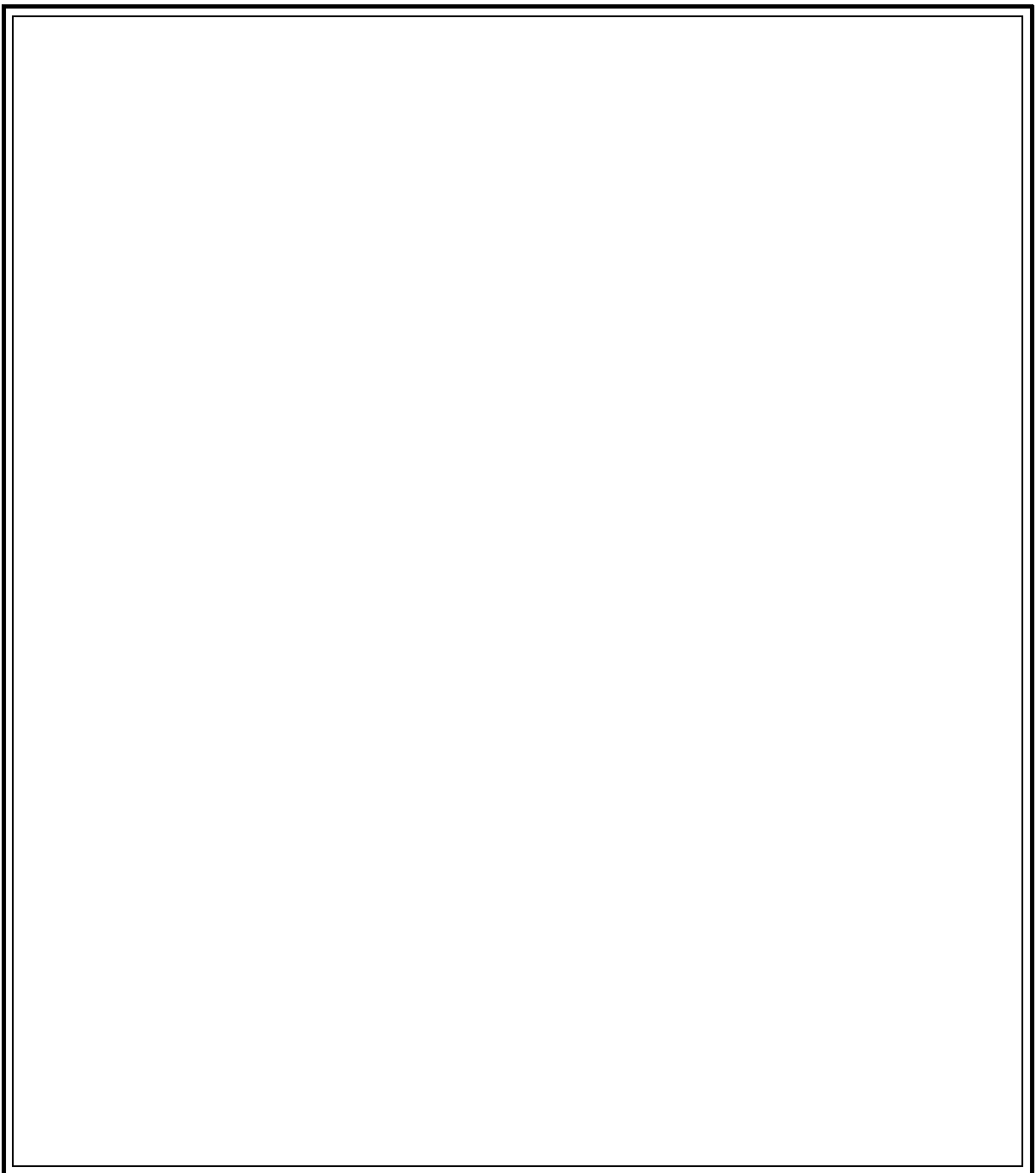


Creative Expression

Creative expression not only refers to artistic pursuits and activities people do physically but can also be gifts a person may have, such as the ability to make people feel at ease. A person may consider their creative expression to be the manner in which they brought up their children, or their skill in a certain field of employment.

Special memories and photographs

Include details of the person's creative expression.

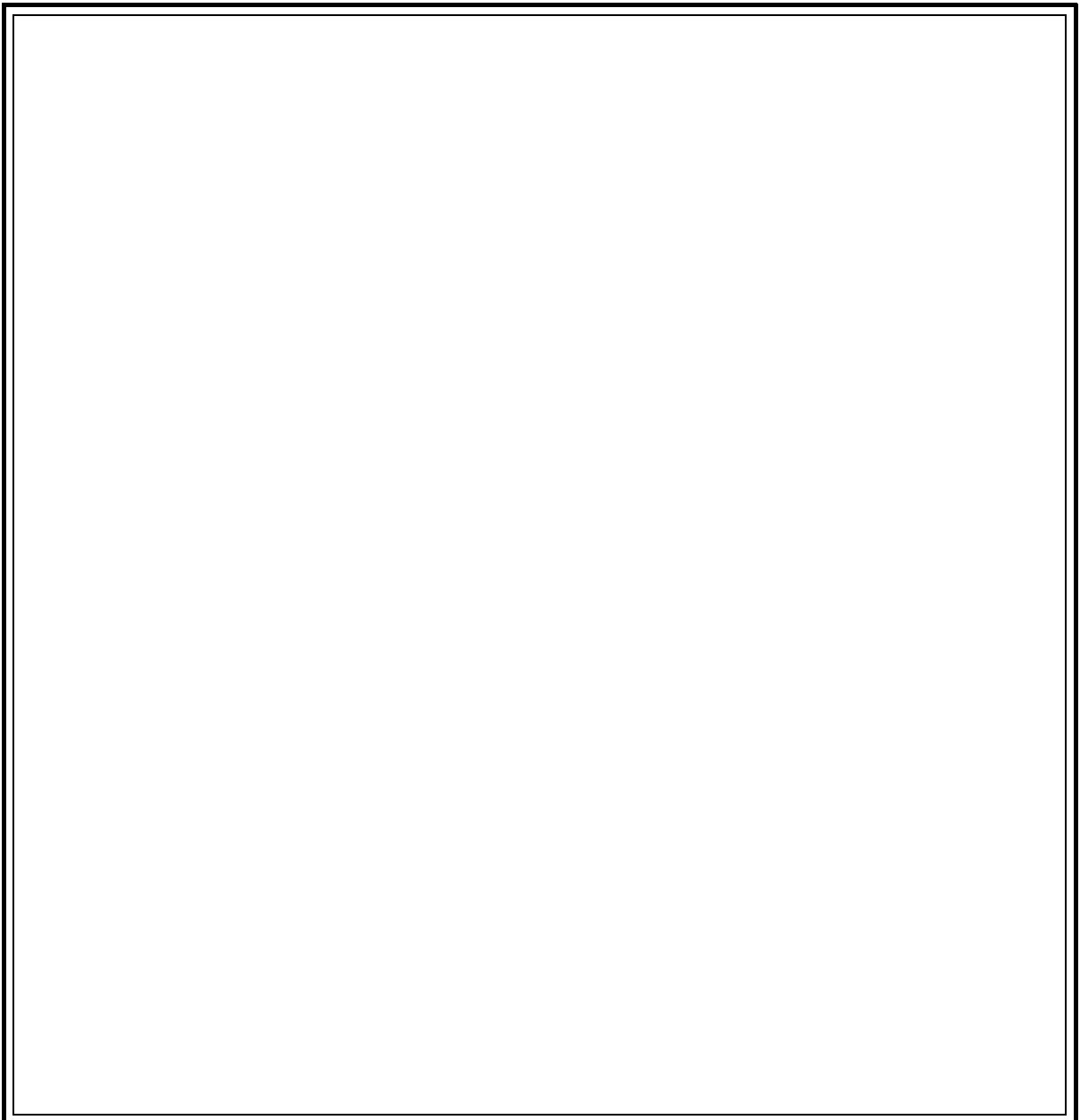


Hobbies and Interests

_____ hobbies and interests include

Special memories and photographs

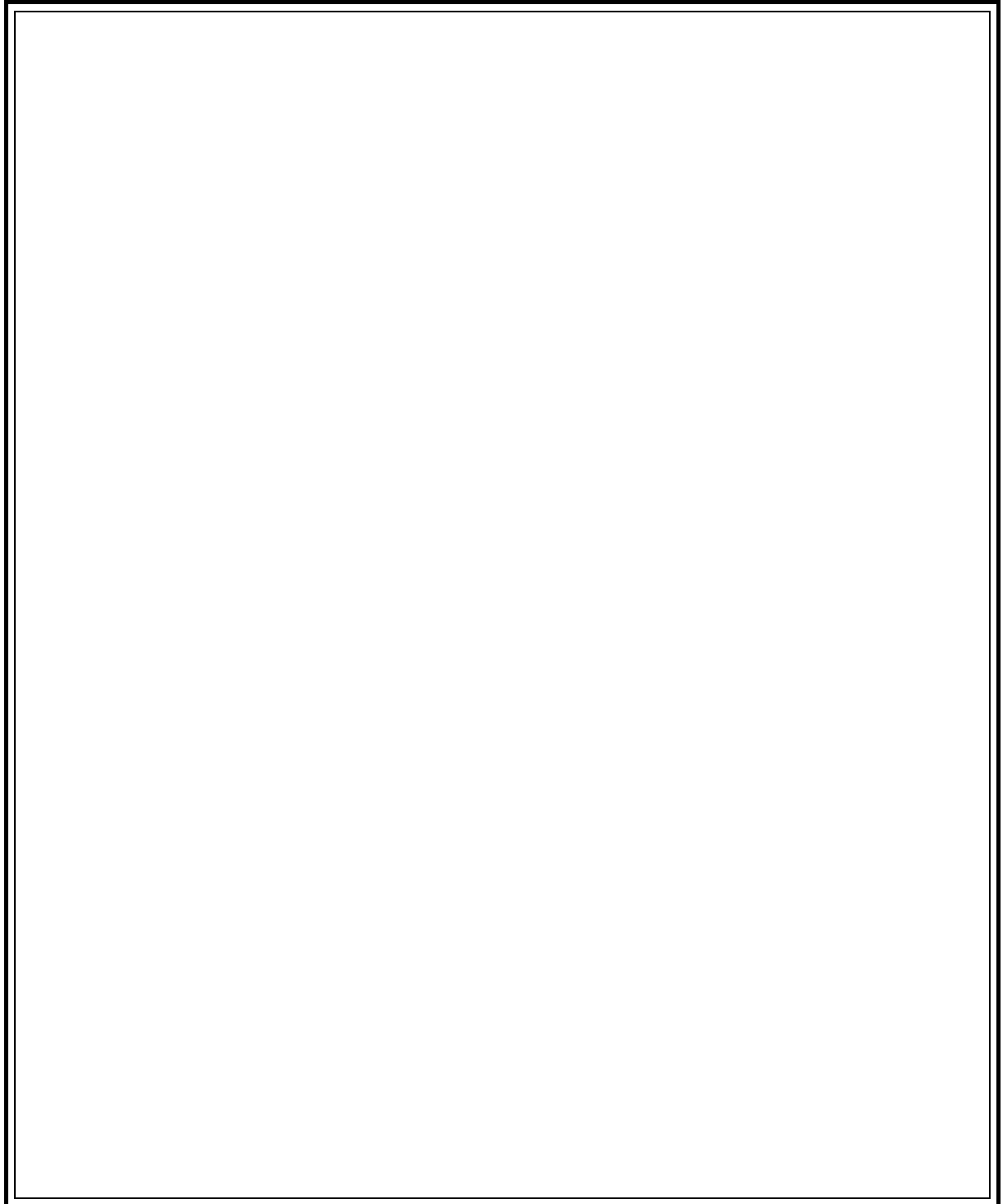
Include stories about their involvement in hobbies and interests, any achievements they were particularly proud of, any sporting or hobby clubs they were involved in. Include the type of music, books and movies they enjoy.



Travel

Outline the person's travel experiences, where they travelled to, with whom and if they enjoyed travelling. Also include stories and anecdotes about their travels.

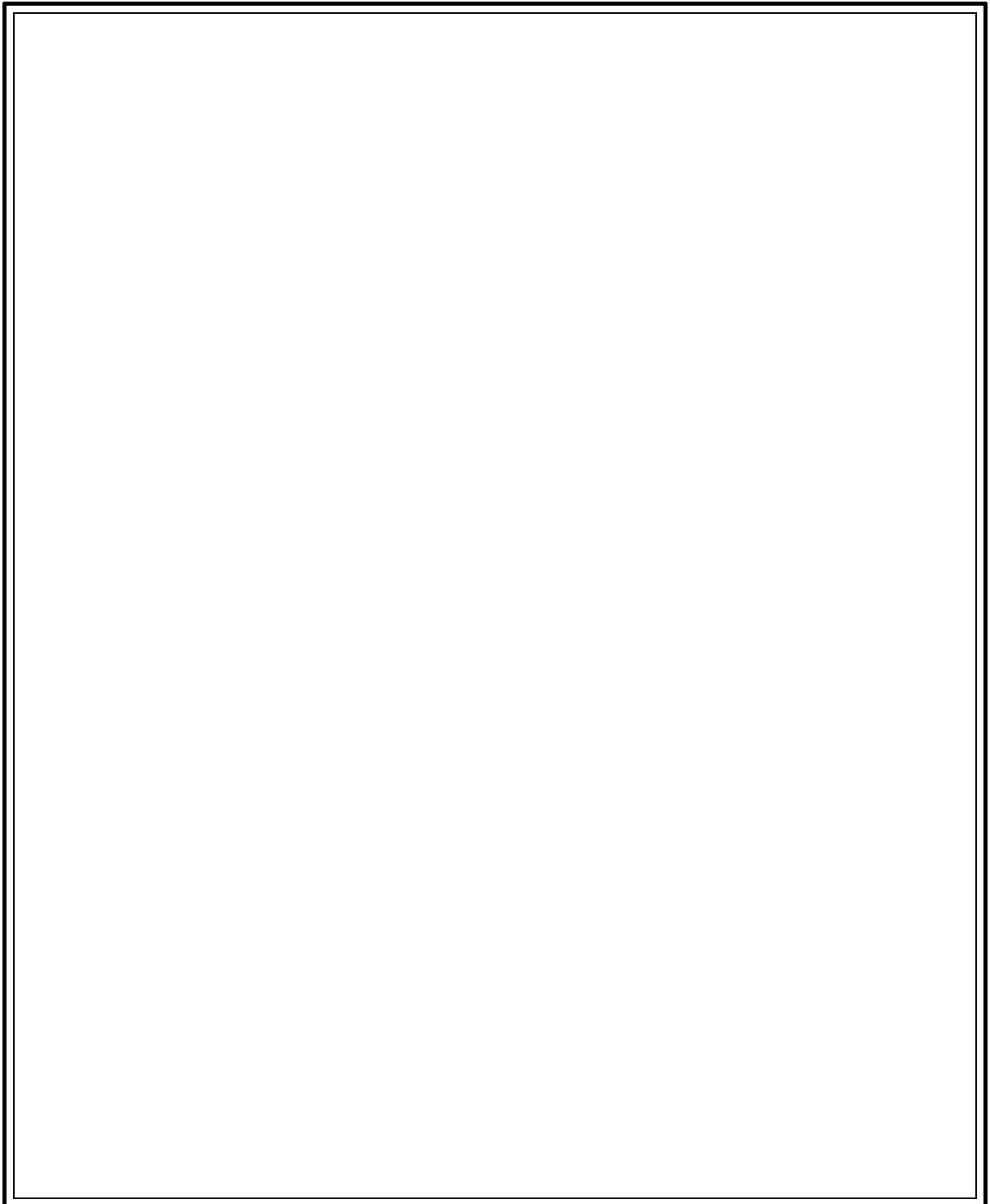
Special memories and photographs

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line border, intended for special memories and photographs. The box is currently blank.

Important Values and Beliefs

Include information about what they regard as their personal philosophy on life. This may be demonstrated by favourite sayings or stories of incidents in the person's life.

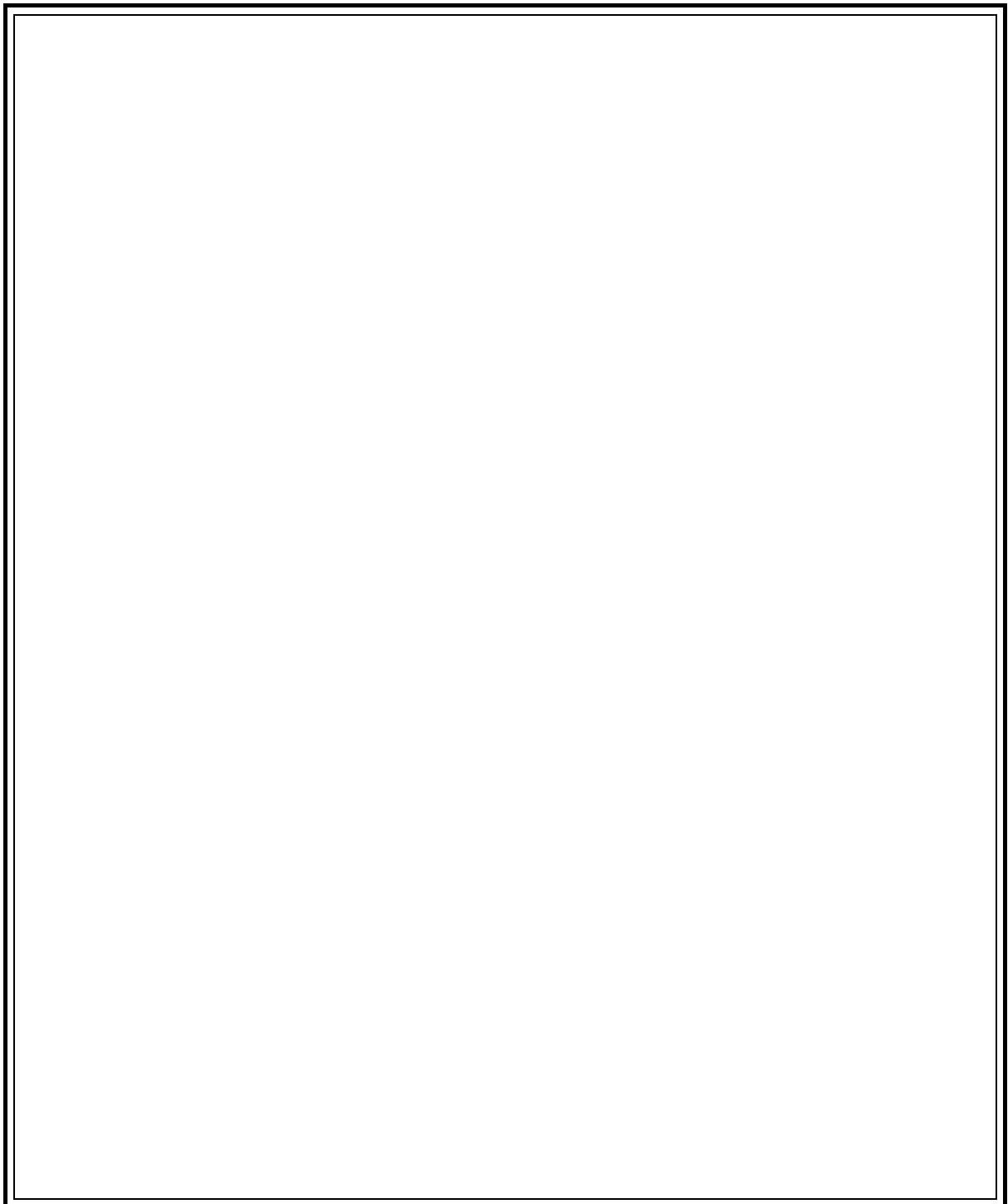
Special memories and photographs

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line border, intended for the user to write about special memories and photographs.

Particular Likes and Dislikes

Include information about the person's likes and dislikes in regards to food, music, movies, books etc. Did the person like animals and have pets, if so what type? Was the person an outdoors type, what was their favourite time of the year, what was their favourite time of the day? Include any memorable stories relating to the person's particular likes and dislikes.

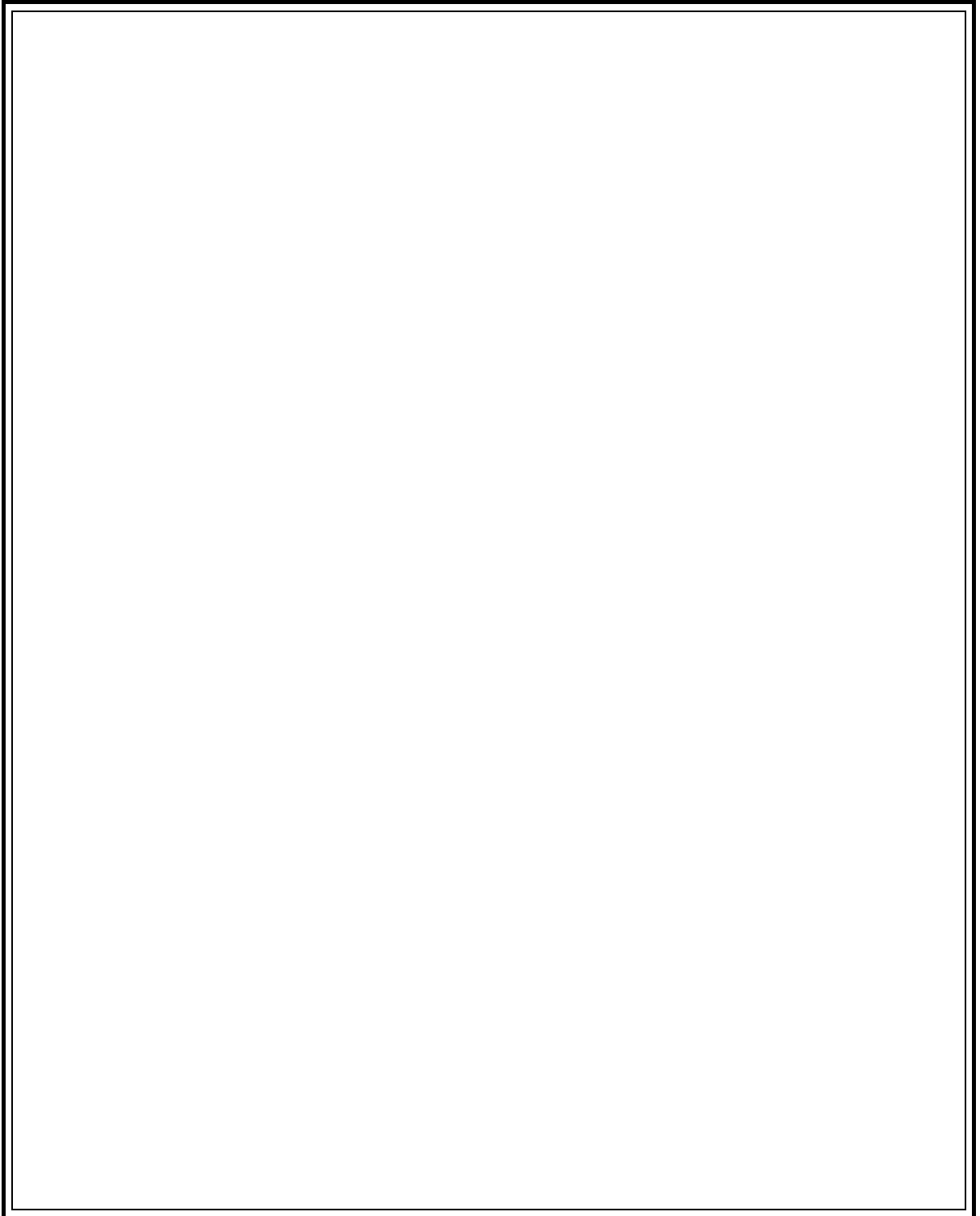
Special memories and photographs



Nicknames

Include stories and information about what the person prefers to be called, any nicknames they have and how they acquired their nicknames.

Special memories and photographs

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line border, intended for special memories and photographs. The box is currently blank.

APPENDIX

USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Dementia refers to a loss of intellectual function (e.g. thinking, remembering and reasoning) of sufficient severity to interfere with an individual's daily functioning. Dementia is a general term used to describe illnesses with a progressive and usually irreversible loss of mental function. Dementia is not a disease in itself but a term for symptoms (i.e. memory loss, confusion, disorientation, loss of insight and changes in personality) which may accompany certain diseases or conditions, the most common being Alzheimer's disease.

Reminiscence is a natural process which all individuals undertake. It is the act or habit of thinking about or relating past experiences. Reminiscence enables the listener to understand part of the teller's mind whilst enabling the teller to relive and rethink aspects of the past. During reminiscence the carer learns about and appreciates the life of the individual with dementia. The carer is also able to gather information concerning the individual's psychological factors, underlying health beliefs, coping skills and cultural perspective.

Individualised care is defined as an interdisciplinary approach which acknowledges elders as unique persons and is practiced through consistent caring relationships. Individualised care uses personal knowledge to create ways of living which are congruent with past patterns and individual preferences. It centres on the person and each individual's goals rather than task and rule. Research has indicated that individualised care may improve an individual's functional status, wellbeing, family relationships, mortality rates and social interaction. In order for individualised care to work within a residential setting the carers must know the person, develop a relationship with the person, provide choice and facilitate resident participation and direction.

Painful aspects of social and life history

Information for carers to read regarding painful aspects of the person's life, which is not being included in the main text of the book, could be written separately and shared only with appropriate people as you choose.

PERSONALISED REMINISCENCE BOOKLET DIARY

This page is to be used to record when and how the booklet is used with the person with dementia and their reactions to its use. Such information will be useful in determining how often the book is used and what sections the person with dementia finds most enjoyable. Once this is established further information could be added. Also, if the person with dementia becomes agitated by certain information this can be documented so all carers are aware of what may be difficult memories for the person. Copies can be made of the following page for the diary to be an ongoing feature of the booklet.

Date: _____ Time: _____

How the booklet was used: _____

Reactions to use: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

How the booklet was used: _____

Reactions to use: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

How the booklet was used: _____

Reactions to use: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

How the booklet was used: _____

Reactions to use: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

How the booklet was used: _____

Reactions to use: _____

Bibliography

- Coleman, P (1986) *Ageing and reminiscence processes: social and clinical implication*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Forsythe, E (1990) *Alzheimer's disease: the long bereavement*. London: Faber & Faber.
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- Norris, A (1996) *Reminiscence with elderly people*. Winslow Press: Bichester.
- Oakley, F (1993) *Understanding the ABC's of Alzheimer's disease: a guide for caregivers*. Rockville: American Occupational Therapy Association.
- Prochazka, Z. Henschke, P. Skinner, E. and Last, P. (1993) *Dementia: memory loss and confusion; a guide for caregivers*. Alzheimer's Association: Glenside SA.

Where to obtain advice and further information

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Mary Hansch
Jan Gniel
Pam Rooney
Alzheimer's Australia SA Inc
Resthaven Leabrook Aged Care Facility



Alzheimer's Australia SA Inc Mission Statement

Providing services and advocacy that enhance
the quality of life for people living with
memory loss or related disorders.

*Alzheimer's Australia SA Inc encourage / permit
photocopying of this booklet.*