



Plattsmouth Alumni Association

Linking the Past with the Future

Published August 2010



Mary Skalak Named 2010 Plattsmouth Alum of the Year

Mary Skalak has been honored by the Plattsmouth Alumni Association as the 2010 Alum of the Year for the diverse roles in her life that have touched the lives of so many people of Cass County.

Mary is the daughter of William and Pearl Evers of Plattsmouth. It is their model of community service and dedication and the influence of growing up among the residents of the Plattsmouth Masonic Home that gave Mary a sound foundation for her future. Mary graduated as salutatorian of Plattsmouth High School in 1945. In 1946 she married her high school sweetheart, Donald Skalak '44. After staying home with their two young daughters, Connie and Laurie, Mary completed her Bachelors Degree in Education With *Distinction*.

Mary's teaching career began in a one-room country school in Cass County. Bestor School (48th Street north of Hwy. 66). She loved creating programs that the students could present to their parents and friends. She has always thought that country schools were great places to teach because the older kids help the younger kids learn, unfortunately getting to school during Nebraska winters was rather difficult at times. She taught a few years at Bestor School before accepting a position in the Plattsmouth School District. In Plattsmouth she taught all three grade levels: elementary, junior high, and high school. She received her Masters Degree while teaching English and Social Studies at Plattsmouth Junior High. Mary soon advanced to the head of the English Department at Plattsmouth High School. Mary worked hard to be a creative educator of young people, her students worked diligently to earn her respect. While diagraming a sentence may have seemed tedious at the time, it was the basis of what her students remember her for; her creativity in turning imaginative students into play writes, poets, and creative writers. Mary modeled her dedication to children and community outside the classroom as well. She and Don were busy with activities as their daughters grew, they coached, drove, hosted, fund raised (sold yumburgers), and chaperoned! Both of their girls graduated from PHS, Connie in 1967 and Laurie in 1970.

In 1970 the family moved to Elmwood. Mary didn't miss a beat in her teaching career with the move. She finished her teaching career at a country school once again, College Hill School, southeast of Louisville. Teaching occupied over 30 some years of Mary's life, educating more than 3000 students in Cass County. She is especially touched when she receives letters from former students who have also become teachers. Mary retired from teaching in 1984 and became a reporter and photographer for the *Plattsmouth Journal*. It was this position that led to her work as project director of the *Cass County History Book*. Producing this publication demanded that she become an authority in the history of the county. This historical record of our county is a compilation of stories of families, communities, and businesses. Mary also helped establish the Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation. She and Don continue to furnish and decorate a room in the Aldrich home, so that others can experience history when they visit. Helping others appreciate the legacy of *A Lantern in Her Hand*, has been a delight of Mary's. It is no surprise that each daughter and all three grandchildren have complete sets of first edition books by Aldrich!

Everything in life became less urgent for Mary and Don once they experienced life with grandchildren. As the three grandchildren have moved away from Nebraska, Mary and Don have traveled the country to visit and continue creating memorable experiences with their grandchildren. Mary has written a book of poetry for each of her four great grandchildren.

A quote from her Alum of the Year nomination is a fitting ending to this Mary Skalak story. "It is not for one great accomplishment that Mary is honored as Alum of the Year, but for a lifetime of accomplishments. In the words on her Medal for Excellence in Teaching from the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, 'to one who has made a notable contribution to youth in the highest tradition of our free nation'. The values of Mary's work will live for the future through the lives and actions of those she taught and loved."

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11TH ANNUAL ALL SCHOOL BANQUET HELD MAY 29, 2010

Approximately 160 classmates and guest came together to celebrate their return to their alma mater. Old friends and new coming from across the country and across town. Some coming for the 11th year and some for the first time! Brian Harvey '94, our President served as the Master of Ceremonies. Tina Wooters Harvey '96 started the evening off on the right note by leading us in the singing of our National Anthem. The Reverend Debra McKnight '95 recited a poem about Nebraska and then offered an invocation. Jeff Wiles '81, Plattsmouth High School Principal, bragged about the accomplishments of his high school students this past school year and a little about what he looks forward to next year. Our meal was served by members of the High School Band. An excellent meal was prepared by Nancy Snodgrass Kiroff '78 of Kiroff Catering. After the meal a short video of the POPS (Providing Opportunities for Plattsmouth Schools) Foundation was shown to better inform those present about the connection between the education foundation and the Alumni Association. The Alumni Scholarship winners Corey Cundall, son of Mark '83 and Julie Strouf '84 Cundall and Alex Eggert son of Richard '80 and Leigh Ann Huebner '82 Eggert were introduced. Gill Peterson '48 gave an up date on the Joe York Memorial Scholarship Fund, thanking the membership for their support. Mary Evers Skalak '45 was introduced as the 2010 Alum of the Year. Another highlight of the evening was the introduction of the honor class members present. Brian once again acknowledged the hard work of the high school band members serving the banquet, encouraging everyone to help with their next band trip by collecting a "tip". He also invited Zac Konrad, the high school band director to give a short report on what is coming up for the band program. We are hoping that the continuous sound of chatter and laughter indicate a good time was had by all. We look forward to seeing you next year!



Members of the PHS Instrumental Music Department pictured to the right were servers for the PHS Alumni Banquet. A huge thank you to these kids and director Mr. Zach Konrad for all you did to make the 2010 Banquet a success.



2010 HONOR CLASSES



Helen Koubek Svoboda
Class of 1930



Joe Loveless
Class of 1935



**From left, Betty Ruffner Beebe, Lunetta Falk
Hutchinson and Marvin Lillie**
Class of 1940

2010 HONOR CLASSES CONTINUED



From left, Mary Evers Skalak
and Bette Baumgart Sedlak
Class of 1945



Jenny Spidel Williamson
Class of 1950



From left, Joann Koubek Pechacek, Barbara Anderson
Meisinger, Margaret Svoboda Kilibarda, Kenneth
Johnson, Gail Peterson Johnson and Don Freeburg
Class of 1955



Front from left, Pat Smock Singletary, Sharon Haecke Lybarger, Shirley Gunsolly Masten, Bette Knutson
Himmelein, Loretta Thornton Draper, Dorothy Farris Cosimano, Sharon Miller Pohlmeier, Charles Bax and
Gayle Heigl; and back, Charles Stoehr, Lynn Hendrix, Charles Pankonin, Frank Lebens, Bob Reade, Brian
Nelson, Dennis Brink, Clyde Thompson, Charlie Toman, David Cappell, Robert Hild and Michael Horn
Class of 1960

Hall of Fame Induction

The Hall of Fame Induction of Roger Beverage '63 and Cecil McKnight will take place at the Plattsmouth High School on August 27, 2010. The Public is encouraged to attend the Induction Ceremony and Reception at 1:00pm in the High School Auditorium. The new Hall of Fame members will also be introduced during Half Time of the Plattsmouth vs. South Sioux City Football Game.



Cecil McKnight was born and raised in Nebraska City, Nebraska. In high school he was active in Band, Football, Basketball, and Track, holding the long jump record for many years. He graduated from NCHS in 1946. Immediately following high school he was in the U. S. Navy stationed on the West Coast for two years. He returned to Nebraska to attend Peru State College on the GI bill. While in college he played football and ran track. He graduated from Peru State College with an Education Degree in 1952. His first teaching position was in Morrill, Nebraska, teaching industrial arts and coaching football and track. In 1954, Cecil, wife Lila and two young sons moved to Plattsmouth, Nebraska where he spent the next 38 years teaching and coaching the young people of Plattsmouth.

Although Cecil coached almost every sport during his 38 years at Plattsmouth he is well known across the state for the outstanding athletes he coached in cross country and track. Cecil's track teams won 45 duals, 21 triangulars, 48 invitational championships, 13 conference championships, 13 district titles, and was a runner-up at the State Meet three times and State Champion Team in 1976. He had seven individual first place finishers at the State Meet and over the years qualified 252 athletes for State, an average of 6.8 per year.

Cecil began coaching Cross Country in the fall of 1972. Over the years his boys and girls teams racked up 31 invitational wins, 28 second place finishes, 6 District runners up, been District Champion 7 times, State runner-up once and was State Champion for three consecutive years in 1973, 1974, and 1975. During his head coaching years the teams finished in the top ten, fourteen times in 20 years of running.

Cecil McKnight was fondly known as "Cap" by his students. He has been the recipient of many awards over the years, a few of them are: Nebraska School Activities Association Service Award, Peru State College Service Award, Honorary Starter at the Peru State Invitational Track Meet, 25-year Coaching Award from Nebraska Coaches Association, 25-year Service Award from the Plattsmouth Booster Club, Games Committee member at Nebraska State Track Meet, Nebraska Coaches Association "Binnie & Dutch" Award, and the Nebraska High School Hall of Fame.

During those 38 years of teaching at PHS, Cecil also kept up with the activities of a busy family and community member. He and Lila have three sons and one daughter, which gave him the opportunity to be a boy scout leader, run the summer youth baseball program for many years, help build the Legion Baseball field, sell yamburgers as a band parent, teach driver's education during 24 summers, attending countless sporting events, band programs, and dance recitals. He continues to be a member of the First United Methodist Church, American Legion Post 56, Eagles Aire 365, 40 & 8 – Voiture Local 1218. His community involvement was recognized when he was named King of Kornland in 1984. His children live fairly close by. Jim, a dentist, and Sandy (Holman) live in Plattsmouth; Tom, a family physician, and Evelyn (Vinduska) live in Fremont; Scott, an ophthalmologist, and Debbie (Fleming) live in Liberty, Missouri; and Jodi Traut, a lead business analyst for Fiserv, lives in Omaha. Cecil and Lila have 2 granddaughters, 8 grandsons, 3 great-granddaughters, and 1 great-grandson. One of Cecil's favorite past-times has been attending events and activities of his grandchildren. This year he started a new generation of soccer games and dance recitals! He enjoys watching Husker football, attending the College World Series. He continues to play golf as much as possible, is active in many activities at the Plattsmouth Community Center, especially card marathons and enjoys catching up on all the news at morning coffee with friends. Cecil and Lila will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary August 27th. Their secret is remaining active and always on the go!



Roger M. Beverage is a 1963 PHS graduate. Roger is the youngest of three sons born to Dick and Mary Warren Beverage of Plattsmouth. Roger was very active in high school. He actually started his high school band career as a 6th grader playing trumpet. He played in band and many small groups. His talent was acknowledged by being selected as first-chair trumpet in the "All State" band his junior year. Roger became a "starter" for the football team as a freshman. His positions over the years were center, left tackle, deep snapper and defensive tackle. He was Most Valuable Lineman and Co-Captain in 1962. Roger was a three-year letterman in basketball, beginning as a starting center his sophomore year. He received All-Conference honors and Most Valuable Player during the 1962-63 season. Roger was also a three-year letterman in track. His events were shot-put and discus. His best put was 48'1" at the Ak-Sar-Ben Conference Championship his senior year. Roger was a pitcher and first baseman for the Plattsmouth Junior Legion Baseball team during the summers of 1959 to 1963. In 1962 Roger was a delegate to

Governor Frank Morrison's first-ever "Governor's Youth Conference". He was also given the honor of Outstanding History Student his senior year at PHS.

Upon graduation in 1963, Roger attended the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. In June of 1967 he received his BA in History, with minors in Political Science and English. He immediately enrolled in the University of Nebraska School of Law. The Vietnam War and change in draft deferments made his years in law school a bit unusual. While working on law school curriculum he also went through the University ROTC program. During his senior year Roger worked as a law clerk for the Honorable Paul White, Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court. Roger was still an over achiever in his academic and ROTC work. He became the Brigade Commander of the University's ROTC unit, he was named "Outstanding Oral Advocate" by the Nebraska Trial Lawyers Association, was a member of the University's National Moot Court team (Senator Ben Nelson was also on his team), recipient of the Donald Walters Miller scholarship, and named to the **Order of the Coif**.

Upon graduating *With Distinction* in 1970 Roger received his commission in the United States Army. Prior to reporting for active duty Roger served as law clerk to the Honorable Robert Van Pelt, Senior U.S. District Judge for the District of Nebraska. During his two years of active duty, Roger was assigned to The Judge Advocate General's School at the University of Virginia. His duties included survivor assistance officer, legal assistance officer and public relations. Captain Beverage was released from active duty in 1973 followed by six years in the Reserves. Roger's professional career brought him back to Nebraska where he practiced as a trial lawyer, primarily representing insurance companies and banks for a private firm until August 1979. He also did *pro bono* work representing indigent clients. He was active in the State Bar Association, serving as Chairman of the Young Lawyers Division from 1976 to 1978. He also served on the Board of Directors of Nebraska Continuing Legal Education, Inc. from 1976 to 1987, chairman in 1984-85. In 1979 Roger was selected as the Executive Vice President of the Nebraska Bankers Association, which is the trade association representing Nebraska's commercial banking industry in the legislative and regulatory process. In 1984, Governor Bob Kerry appointed Roger as the Director of the Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance. This position came with supervisory responsibility for state-chartered banks, thrifts, credit unions and the Securities Bureau. He was also the Receiver for the failed Commonwealth Savings Company.

In 1988 Roger was selected to be the Executive Vice President of the Oklahoma Bankers Association. So the family moved to Edmond, Oklahoma. The Association represents the \$75 Billion banking industry in Oklahoma, he was promoted to President & CEO in 1991. Most of his time is devoted to legislative strategy and advocacy or "lobbying" at the state and federal levels on banking-related matters. He is especially busy these days working on "financial reform" since the collapse of the nation's housing market and the near-collapse of the financial system. He has served as the Chairman of the Alliance of State Bankers Associations, a member of the Board of Directors of the American Bankers Association, a member of the Board of Directors of the American Bankers Insurance Association, a board member of Banclnsure (an Oklahoma Insurance Company). Since 2002 he has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the State Chamber of Oklahoma and the Treasurer since 2006. Roger is a member of Leadership Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Academy of State Goals. For more than twenty years he has served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, being a faculty member for seventeen years. Roger is a member of the Nebraska and Oklahoma State Bar Associations, the American Bar Association, and is admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States.

Roger and his wife Paula still live in Edmond, Oklahoma. They have five children and seven grandchildren. He states his favorite past times are spent with family, especially the new adventures found in grandchildren. He also enjoys reading and supporting his special interest groups of The Infant Crisis Center in Oklahoma City, Veterans groups related to the Vietnam War, including Paralyzed Veterans, and he always has a soft spot for stray dogs and therefore works with animal shelter and protection groups and the ASPCA.

CHANGE

It can be a hard pill to swallow. Some of us have a difficult time when familiar surroundings or events change. *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson, is a good reference if you need help dealing with change! The Change that will challenge the community of Plattsmouth and Cass County is the changing of the name of the 79 year old festival that takes place in Plattsmouth every September. The Kass Kounty King Korn Karnival will now become **The Plattsmouth Harvest Festival**.

The Celebrating of the beginning of Fall with family and friends will remain the same! There will still be a King and Queen of Cornland, with a Coronation on Thursday, September 9, 2010. The Kiddie Parade will be held at 1:00pm on Friday, September 10th, and the Grand Parade will begin at 5:30pm on Saturday, September 11th. When planning your costuming, remember that this year's theme is "Where Corn is Still King".

There have been some subtle changes over the years which have been precursors to the way this celebration looks today. The County participation has given way to many of the communities of the county having their own celebrations in the fall or summer months. Cut backs in finances have made it difficult for high school bands to participate in the parades. The Nebraska Schools Athletic Association has taken over the state football scheduling so there isn't a home football game during that weekend. Public perception in connection with the KKK's and the use of K's instead of C's has lost its appeal in a politically correct, forward thinking world.

This is a historic year, countless hours have been spent by city and county volunteers to make the change a positive one. The Festival is still sponsored by the Kass Kounty King Korn Klub and remains the "oldest continuous harvest festival in Nebraska". Terry Little, Korn Klub president states, "We are maintaining some wonderful traditions of the past, but incorporating some new ideas as we march forward into the future." For up to date information about the Festival events, go to the Festival web site (www.plattsmouthharvestfestival.com).

The thing that won't CHANGE, is the spirit of the community as we come together to celebrate the harvest time of year, which keeps us grounded in an ever changing world.

Class Notices

CLASS OF 1950 will hold its 60th reunion on September 11, 2010 at 6:00pm at Eagles. Contact J. Williamson at 296-3144 for information and reservations.

CLASS OF 1975 will hold its 35th reunion on September 10, 2010. Social Hour starts at 6:30 pm at the Plattsmouth VFW. Please send photos (new and old) to Bruce Ramge at brrandmar@cox.net If any questions contact Karen Smock Eledge at karen_ledge@yahoo.com Hope to see you all there!

2010 ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Corey Cundall the son of Mark and Julie Cundall will be attending Nebraska Wesleyan University this fall.



Alex Eggert is the son of Rich and Leigh Ann Huebner Egger and will be attending UNL this fall.

A third scholarship was given to Alexandria Burch, daughter of Shauna and Rob Rice, she will be attending Nebraska Wesleyan University this fall.

Alumni Salad Luncheon Returns

The Luncheon Committee will show its flexibility and ability to handle CHANGE!

A change in date for the luncheon is being made to promote a greater attendance at the luncheon. Whatever the reason; the hectic pace of the Karnival, the beginning of the school year, or the Nebraska Football schedule. The committee is changing the date to make it easier for YOU to attend. The luncheon benefits the Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. Attendance is not limited to Plattsmouth Alumni. The only requirement is to have a good time!

The date is October 2, 2010, starting at 11:00am, in the Plattsmouth Middle School Gym. \$8.00 per person! Lunch served at 12:00

It is a "Create your own celebration," luncheon. For a mere \$8.00 per person attendees can experience a great lunch with friends. Reserve a table for 8, bring the decorations of your choice and enjoy a family style lunch. The table decorations are only limited by your imagination. Past participants have decorated for their favorite holiday from Christmas and Independence Day to Dr. Seuss's Birthday. Some have celebrated their favorite sports team, favorite decade, occupation, or season. OR You don't have to decorate at all, just enjoy the work of others and a great lunch with friends. However, there is the coveted traveling trophy to consider! **Come join the fun!**

**ADVANCED RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN
SEPTEMBER 27, 2010**

For the luncheon to take place, a minimum of 10 tables must be reserved

Mail reservations to

Plattsmouth Alumni Assn.
P.O. Box 283
Plattsmouth, NE 68048

For more information call
Sandy at 298-8513.



ALUMNI LUNCHEON RESERVATION

Name (Host) _____

Phone Number _____

I would like to reserve _____ tables (8 people per table)

Total \$ enclosed _____ (\$8.00 per person)

Plattsmouth Alumni Association
P.O. Box 283
Plattsmouth, NE 68048

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Become an Alumni Association Member TODAY!

_____ Enclosed is my **annual membership fee of \$5.00 per person** for the Plattsmouth Alumni Association.

_____ Enclosed is my **LIFETIME Membership fee of \$125.00 per person**.

Name (maiden name) _____ Graduation Year _____

Name (maiden name) _____ Graduation Year _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Please put my name on the list of Alumni for the following activities: _____

In addition to my annual membership, I would like to make a donation in the amount of: _____

Place my donation in the _____ General Fund, _____ Scholarship Fund.

Total Enclosed \$ _____