

Plattsmouth Alumni Association

Linking the Past with the Future

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2011

SPOTLIGHT ON DR. MARGARET OFE FLECK '77



Margaret Ofe Fleck is better known as Missy Ofe a 1977 Plattsmouth High School graduate. She was born in Tecumseh, Nebraska to Carl "Pooch" '50 and Jayne Gorton Ofe. Her four siblings are also Plattsmouth graduates; Susan '73, Tom "Moose" '76, D.J. '81, and Mike '84. Missy attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center-College of Nursing, Lincoln Division where she earned an Associate Degree in Nursing in 1981, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing in 1984, and a Master of Science Degree in Nursing in 1990. Most recently, she received her Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Education and Human Sciences from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2010. Missy lives in Tecumseh, Nebraska with her husband Larry Fleck. Her children include Grant Paul Campbell who is a language arts teacher at Bellevue West High School in Bellevue, Nebraska and Clare Jane Campbell who is a senior pre-dental hygiene student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

In 1981 Missy began her career as a professional registered nurse at St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center in Lincoln, Nebraska. She spent three years in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit providing care to premature infants and their families. She moved to Tecumseh in 1984, where she spent 6 years at the

Johnson County Hospital providing bedside nursing care to patients across the entire life span. This job involved knowing the patients personally as well as professionally. Upon completion of her Masters in 1990 Missy was hired by UNMC to teach maternal-child nursing in the undergraduate program on the UNL campus. As an Assistant Professor, Missy has been providing both didactic teaching in the classroom and clinical teaching in the hospital for 20 years. As a means of maintaining competence and confidence in nursing skills at the bedside, she also works part-time as a staff nurse in the nursery at St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center.

Regarding nursing research, Missy conducts investigations involving parenting transitions within family structures. Missy's dissertation, *Perceptions of Young, Single African American Fathers and Early Childrearing Involvement: A Phenomenological Study*, was a qualitative inquiry aimed at describing the essence of young, single African American fatherhood characteristics as well as the social and cultural context in which childrearing interactions develop. Her research team has conducted and published numerous studies on roles and transitions with parenting as well as on the use of simulation in health care learning.

As a nursing educator, Missy has received various awards. In November of 2010, she received the Chancellor's Council Silver "U" Award for dedication and commitment to excellence to UNMC. In 2009, she was recognized as the Outstanding Nurse Educator from the Nebraska Nurses Association. The Kathryn Sandahl Philip Award for Creativity and Innovation award was granted to her by the University of Nebraska Medical-College of Nursing in 2008. The UNL Parents Association and UNL Teaching Council awarded her the Certificate of Recognition for Contributions to Students in 2007. In 2004, the St Elizabeth Regional Medical Center-Perinatal Department presented Missy with the Excellence in Service Award.

Dr. Fleck is currently the president of the Nebraska Nurses Association-District 3, and a member of the nursing honorary association Sigma Theta Tau International, Gamma Pi and Nu Rho at-large chapters.

She is an active member of St. Andrew Catholic Church in Tecumseh and a participant on the Parish Council. For relaxation, Missy and her husband Larry enjoy restoring her maternal grandparents/great grandparent's home in Tecumseh. They also enjoy golfing, following the Huskers, and traveling to visit friends and family including Larry's three children and four grandchildren.

As an educator herself, Dr. Fleck feels she is indebted to the invaluable high school faculty she encountered at PHS. She states, "Those selfless faculty members laid the foundation for my lifelong learning philosophy. Whether my high school experiences involved formal or informal learning toward the pursuit of knowledge, my goal now is to guide, empower, and self-motivate college nursing students to be altruistic, patient-centered practitioners."

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DATES TO REMEMBER

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STEVEN E. RISHEL, CPA - '71 ROXANNE PFEIFER, CPA - '77

CLASS OF 1951 The Class of 1951 is looking forward to celebrating their 60th Class Reunion by gathering together at the Alumni Banquet on May 28th 2011. The committee will be sending out information soon as to the schedule of events for the weekend. Committee members available for questions are: Elaine Nickles Lurkowski at 402-331-4730 or slurkowski@cox.net, Dorothy Hild Meisinger at 402-298-8823, Dean Meisinger at 402-296-3965, or Bob Moore at 402-298-7574.

CLASS OF 1956 The Class of 1956 is planning an informal get together at Jonny's Steak House on Friday, May 27, 2011 at 6:30pm. On Saturday, May 28th at 6:00pm the class will be recognized for 55 years at the All-School Alumni Banquet. The party will continue after the banquet at the home of Don & Janice Wiles Freeburg. Look for more details in the mail.

CLASS OF 1961 The Class of 1961 will hold their 50th class reunion on May 27, 2011 at the Fairways Restaurant at Lake Ridge Golf Course at Beaver Lake. We will also have the opportunity to attend the annual Alumni Banquet on May 28, 2011. For further information please contact Jerry and Joyce Buechler Heim at 402-298-8542 or 6420 Ranch Road in Plattsmouth, NE 68048.

CLASS OF 1971 The Class of 1971 will celebrate their 40th Class Reunion on July 1, 2011 at the Country Bar and July 2nd at Slattery Vintage Estates. Details will be in the mail in April. Contact Debbie Gold Morrogh at chatcalin@aol.com or 337-278-1835 or Lisa Metzger Grotrian at Metzger.lisa@gmail.com or 402-679-3200 or Facebook for more information.

CLASS OF 1976 The Ultimate 1970's Beach Reunion Returns. Draw a coconut on your calendar, the Class of 1976 celebrates their 35th reunion on Saturday, July 10, 2011 at the Plattsmouth Country Club transformed into the Acapulco Las Palmas. This all-class party hosted by the class that wears Bermuda shorts and flipflops year round, is not to be missed. Family, friends and all beach bums welcome! For more info, contact your party planner Beverly Todd at beverlytodd@windstream.net, or 402-235-2117, or find us on Facebook at Plattsmouth High 1970s

CLASS OF 1991 Save the Date!!! Plattsmouth High School class of 1991 will be having their 20 year reunion on June 17th and 18th, 2011. Become a friend on facebook (phs class of 1991) to stay up to date on ideas and planning. For more info e-mail Jenny Wehrbein Widick at jennywidick@yahoo.com

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHS GRADS!

Do you have a child or grandchild graduating from PHS in 2011? If so, please make them aware of the following scholarship opportunities. Contact the Plattsmouth High School Guidance Office for more details, 402-296-3322.

- The Plattsmouth Alumni Association Scholarship
- Joe York Memorial Scholarship
- PHS Class of 1951 Scholarship
- PHS Class of 1960 Scholarship



402-296-6227

Charlie Kerns '54

Terry Kerns '78

A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE ~ The Fitzgerald Building



A trip down memory lane for some, a step into history for others, and high hopes for the future for most. The Fitzgerald Building, built in 1870 is still an impressive building at the corner of 6th and Main in downtown Plattsmouth. The KKM Investors group of Omaha has put some effort (and approximately \$600,000.) into transforming the modest income apartments into 18 comfortable, modern hotel suites. The previous developer had done approximately \$2 million worth of renovation in the building. The original intent of the investors was to renovate and sell the units as condos but the down turn of the economy and the failing real estate market forced the investors into thinking in terms of a hotel.

The history of the Fitzgerald centers around a man who became a "self-made" millionaire. John Fitzgerald was born on April 29, 1829 in Limerick County, Ireland. In the 1840's John's father took his sons and fled the poverty and decay of Ireland for a better life

in America. According to the writings in the *History of the City of Lincoln:* John Fitzgerald was a natural leader of men. He began as a laborer on the construction of the Erie Canal and during the winters he worked for area farmers. "His quick perception and ability to work with people showed him how he could do the work (digging ditches) by contract, make money for himself, secure better wages for his companions and give greater satisfaction to the farmer. The farmer accepted his proposal and in twenty-four hours time, John Fitzgerald was a contractor, his fellow workmen became his employees, and he stood on equal ground with his former employer. The job was finished much quicker than the farmer had calculated and the work was done to his complete satisfaction. The laborers received higher wages than their agreement with the farmer had called for and John Fitzgerald had a good round sum of money to the credit of his profit and loss account. That was Mr. Fitzgerald's first contract and today he speaks of it with greater pride than of all the enterprises of magnitude he has since completed."

The Fitzgerald family turned to building railroads in the East during the Civil War. The railroad eventually brought them westward to Nebraska. In 1868 he took a contract for the extension of the Burlington railroad through lowa to Plattsmouth. Plattsmouth was Mr. Fitzgerald's first home in Nebraska. He was involved with some major railroad line contracts such as: the B & M from Hastings to Denver, the St. Louis & Canada road through Indiana, the Cincinnati Southern road through Tennessee, the Denver, Memphis, and Atlantic. John Fitzgerald was known as a "natural civil engineer". He had other interests as well, he owned 8000 acres of land near Greenwood in Cass County and 6000 acres in Gage County. One of his properties in Plattsmouth was the Fitzgerald Building, the home of the First National Bank of which he was president for many years. He moved to Lincoln to establish the West Lincoln Brick & Tile Works, was a controlling interest in the Rapid Transit Company, a director of the First National and Union Savings Banks of Lincoln, president of the Nebraska Stockyards Company, president of the First National Bank of Greenwood, along with many mercantile investments in Lincoln and throughout the state. According to the Lancaster County History: "John Fitzgerald is regarded as one of the best financiers of the State of Nebraska." He was responsible for the rail lines that connected our smaller towns to the main rail lines to extend commerce and travel. John Fitzgerald was always an Irish-American patriot, his sympathies for the oppressed of his native Ireland commanded a good deal of his time, energy, and financial support. He became involved in the ill-fated Fenian invasion of Canada by purchasing a large quantity of arms for use in the demonstration, which were never used, but were stored in the basement of his large Plattsmouth building. John Fitzgerald died in December of 1895, a well respected developer of Nebraska.

For more information: the History of the City of Lincoln and the Lancaster County History

The Fitzgerald Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Stepping off the elevator on the second floor is like stepping back in time. Through careful planning they have restored the hallways and doors to where you can almost see the people who lived and worked there in the late 1800's. Some of our alumni can remember visiting Dr. Johnson DDS, or getting their first pair of glasses from the Doctor down the hall, or the photographer who took many a senior class photo on that second floor. Although the third floor does not look the same, you can still see the high ceiling of the ballroom, where our community gathered for entertainment, dancing, and even roller-skating back in the day!

In June of 2010 the Fitzgerald Hotel opened its doors to the enthusiastic fans of the Texas Christian University, Horned Frogs. Brett Clure,



one of the investors was a 2002 TCU graduate. It became imperative to get the hotel ready in time for the College World Series and his alma mater's first trip to Rosenbladt Stadium. In just 30 minutes after posting the hotel's availability on a TCU alumni web site they had calls from 15 different states! Comments from the fans were favorable to the hotel as well as their visit to Plattsmouth. Completion of the lounge and café on the first floor in the store-fronts east of the lobby is expected this Spring. To view photos and more details about the hotel you can visit their web site at www.thefitzgeraldbuilding.com It appears that the failing economy and real estate market of 2009 has worked to the advantage of the Plattsmouth Community. We have a beautifully restored historic building and another quaint, comfortable place for our visitors to stay.

SPOTLIGHT ON DR. JENNIFER BENSON '95

Dr. Jennifer Benson is a 1995 Plattsmouth High School graduate. After high school she attended Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. She had a double major in Physics and Spanish graduating in 1999. She moved to Toledo, Ohio to attend graduate school at the University of Toledo. She received a Masters degree in Physics in 2003 and a Ph.D. in 2006. Her research projects in graduate school studied water ice clouds in the atmosphere of Mars using data from the Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft orbiting Mars. Mars has clouds that are similar to cirrus clouds on Earth. She studied how the clouds varied by season throughout the Martian year. After her doctoral program she remained at the University of Toledo doing research.

In February of 2009 she began working at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California as a Caltech (California Institute of Technology) Postdoctoral Scholar (JPL is affiliated with Caltech). She works with the Mars Climate Sounder (MCS) team, continuing to conduct research on Mars clouds and also dust in the atmosphere. MCS is an instrument on the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter spacecraft orbiting Mars since 2006. When asked why her research is important to us earthlings, Dr. Benson responded, "Water ice clouds play an important climatological role in the Martian atmosphere. It is important to understand the present climate on Mars to help contribute to the safe landing of missions to Mars such as the two current rovers Spirit and Opportunity, and future missions. We need to know what type of weather these spacecraft will encounter when they pass through the atmosphere to land on the surface and also what the weather is like at the landing site to ensure a successful mission. Understanding the climate and sources of water on Mars will also help to prepare for human exploration in the future."

As a planetary scientist Jennifer, is able to attend annual conferences to present her research. She had traveled to Cambridge England, Lake Louise Canada, Puerto Rico, and other less exotic locations. In 2009 she received the JPL Outstanding Postdoctoral Research Award for presenting her research at an annual Postdoctoral Research Day. Jennifer says, "It is a rewarding experience to be working at JPL among great scientists."

Her move to California has been professionally rewarding and personally exciting. Along the way of setting up a new life in California, she has visited the Grand Canyon, the Petrified Forest National Park, the meteor crater in Arizona, Disneyland, gone to pro baseball games, gone to Hollywood shows, and watched dolphins at the Santa Monica Pier. She has been able to continue one of her true passions held over from high school. She plays the flute in the Caltech Concert Band with other students, faculty, JPL staff, and alumni. She is looking forward to a trip to China in March of 2011 with the band.

Jennifer has the company of her pet cockatiel, Leo (teaching him how to whistle "Pop goes the Weasel" and "Charge" so far). She makes it home at least once a year to visit her Mom and brother Brad '93 in Omaha. She especially enjoys the weather of California, not at all missing the cold and snowy winters of Nebraska!



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Craig Wehrbein – '86

Kiley Parsons-Smith - '89

Kristina Calabro – '04

John Winters - '04

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The Plattsmouth Alumni Association is seeking Nominations for the 2011 ALUM OF THE YEAR.

Nominations will be accepted until April 1, 2011.

Please submit nominations to: Plattsmouth Alumni Association
Attn: Alum of the Year Committee P.O. Box 283 Plattsmouth, NE 68048

This award will be given annually in recognition of outstanding contributions that a PHS Alum has given to his or her community. The recipient will be selected based on the following.

- Individual must be a PHS ALUM
- Contributions the individual has made to the betterment of his/her community.

The nominator should submit a biographical statement of the nominee, to include a brief family history and accomplishments the individual has made during their life <u>since</u> graduation (please state year of graduation). The nominator must submit a brief statement explaining why they have nominated this individual.

Previous reciepents of this award include:

2006 ~ Sharon Ramage Smith – Class of 1957

2007 ~ Carl Glup – Class of 1966

2008 ~ Frank Bierl – Class of 1934

2009 ~ Dean Meisinger ~ Class of 1951

2010 ~ Mary Evers Skalak ~ Class of 1945

PHS Hall of Fame

Nomination Information

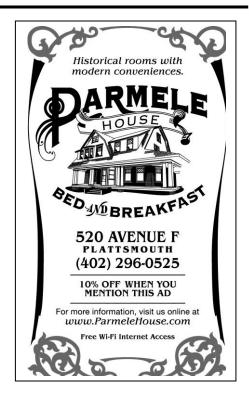
"Honoring the Past to Challenge the Future"

Eligibility Requirement: A prospective inductee will become eligible for admission 15 years after graduation. Administrators, coaches, and community members are eligible at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

We need:

- 1. Name and contact information of candidate
- 2. A narrative about why you think this person is a good candidate
- 3. Your name and contact information
- 4. We will contact the candidate, explaining that he/she has been nominated and will be considered for induction if he/she so wishes and provides us with necessary information.

Send information by April 1 2011 to: Hall of Fame, Sandra Allgeier, 1416 So 15th St., Plattsmouth, NE 68048, sallgeier@windstream.net



12th Annual Plattsmouth Alumni Association Celebration – May 28, 2011

Make plans to attend the 12th Annual Alumni Association All School Banquet. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit with old friends and make new ones. It is held at the new Plattsmouth High School located at 1916 East Hwy 34 at 6:00 P.M., on Saturday May 28, 2011. The cost is \$20.00 per person. Return the reservation form found in this newsletter on or before May 16, 2011. Don't forget, it is also that time of year to pay your dues! Make checks payable to: Plattsmouth Alumni Association and send them to P.O. Box 283 in Plattsmouth, NE 68048. Any questions regarding the 2011 Plattsmouth Alumni CELEBRATION may be directed to Sandy McKnight 298-8513 or mom14509@yahoo.com.

Banquet Details

5:30 – 6:00 P.M. – Social Time 6:00 P.M. – Dinner 7:00 P.M. – Honors Ceremony

Dinner will be served at 6:00 P.M. at the New High School, cost is \$20.00 per person.

DINNER RESERVATION

Number of Ouests attending	g. TOTAL \$
Names of those Attending: Name (Maiden Name)	Graduation year
Name (Maiden Name)	
Name (Maiden Name)	
Name (Maiden Name)	•
MEMBERSHIP Please help us keep our membership records current, provide us with your current address even if you do not plan to attend the annual banquet.	
Name (Maiden Name)	
Name (Maiden Name)	
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MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Plattsmouth Alumni Association P.O. Box 283 – Plattsmouth, Nebraska 68048

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$

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____ Bronze - \$500 to \$999

NEED A PLACE TO STAY MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND?

Parmele House Bed & Breakfast

520 Avenue F 402-296-0525 First 4 alumni reservations to use Code #PHS2011 will receive a \$25.00 discount

Banker's House Bed & Breakfast

414 Avenue B 402-296-6991

Fitzgerald Hotel

546 Main Street 402-298-4326 All Alumni Reservations during the banquet weekend will receive a \$10.00 per day discount



REMINDER

The following Classes will be honored with pins at the 2007 Celebration!

75 Years - Class of 1936

70 Years - Class of 1941

65 Years - Class of 1946

60 Years - Class of 1951

55 Years - Class of 1956

50 Years - Class of 1961

25 Years - Class of 1986

If you are a member of one of these classes please make plans to attend and receive your special recognition.

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E-MAIL

Would you like to receive the newsletter via e-mail? The newsletter is also available on the Plattsmouth Community Schools web site. We require your permission to use your e-mail address instead of just transferring your address to the new site.

We have set up a new e-mail site for just this purpose. If you would like to be a part of this new adventure, please send your e-mail address to: plattsmouthalum@yahoo.com

WEBSITE

All Alumni Newsletters are posted on the Plattsmouth Community Schools Website. In order to access the newsletters visit www.plattsmouthschools.org. On the main page click on "Foundation/Alumni" then click on "Alumni Newsletters", click on "Newsletters." A list of current and past Alumni Newsletters will be available for viewing.

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Steve Warga - '76

MEMORIAL BRICKS AT PHS

The Hall of Fame is financed by the sale of Memorial bricks in the entrances of the high school and by your generous donations.

For more information about how you might help contact Shaun Brothers, Athletic Director of PHS, 402-296-3322.

BENEFACTOR RECOGNITION

The Plattsmouth Alumni Association in conjunction with the POPS Foundation is pleased to introduce the BENEFACTORS CLUB. Through your charitable contributions both organizations are able to provide scholarship funds, educational programs and other activities for the Plattsmouth Community Schools.

The POPS Foundation an organization designed to "Provide Opportunities for Plattsmouth Schools" is recognized by the State of Nebraska as a 501c3 Corporation. This status allows all charitable donations to be fully tax deductible to the individual donor. It is through the relationship with the POPS Foundation that the donations given to the Plattsmouth Alumni Association are also tax deductible.

The Benefactors Club has been established to honor those of you who would like to make a charitable donation that would help improve the education process in Plattsmouth Community Schools. A permanent display for the Benefactors Club is currently in the design phase and will be introduced to you in a future newsletter.

Charitable donation in the following amounts will be recognized through the Benefactors Club:

Platinum Level - \$10,000 and above Gold Level - \$5,000 to \$9,999 Silver Level - \$1,000 to \$4,999 Bronze Level - \$500 to \$999

If you have any questions, please contact Sandy McKnight, Executive Director at 402-298-8513.



Platesmouth Alumni Association

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND MAKE RESERVATIONS TODAY FOR THE

12th Annual Plattsmouth Alumni Association Celebration – May 28, 2011

(DETAILS INSIDE)