

# Vermillion Promoting Fair Trade

BY SARAH WETZEL  
For the Plain Talk

While some artists have their hands full furthering their own careers, Angelica Gabriel of Vermillion works to assist other struggling artists in Haiti.

Gabriel is the main organizer for the Fair Trade Gifts event taking place Saturday from 10-2 at the First United Methodist Church in Vermillion which will include unique gifts from Haiti, a cookie corner and traditional Haitian lunch.

"My husband is Haitian and he's going to make a traditional meal of rice and beans with a red sauce and chicken," Gabriel said.

The event is free and open to the public though all the items are for purchase as well as a free will donation for the lunch which will go towards repairing homes in Haiti.

"I have been volunteering down there for the last five years," Gabriel said. "I bring back stuff that the artists make from Haiti and we also get some items from Sharing the Dream and I order some items online through SERVE which has products around the world that works with artists directly from different countries."

According to Gabriel the general sales of the event pays a fair trade wage to the artists and the profits help support her family's living expenses for their time in Haiti.

"Fair trade just means that the artists get a fair trade wage depending on where their country is," she said. "They get an honest living wherever they're at and they're getting paid adequately for the product they're producing."

Profits from Sharing the Dream helps various programs they have in Guatemala.

Also at the event will be the annual Cookie Corner, a bake sale where customers choose various goodies which are placed on a plate and then priced by weight rather than per item.

Proceeds from the cookie

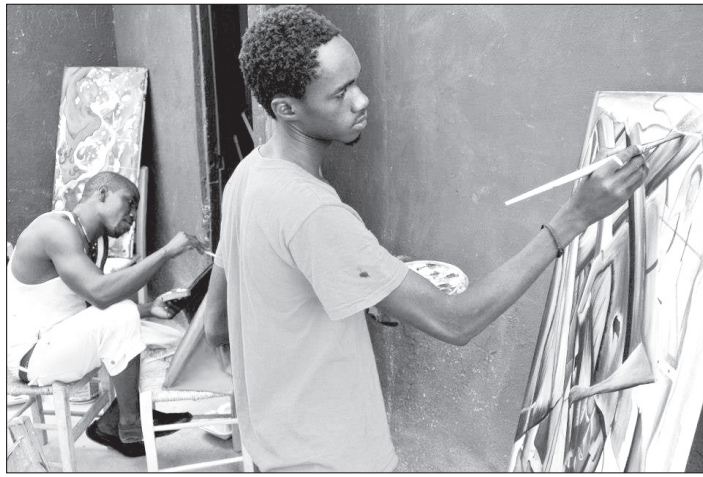


PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGELICA GABRIEL

**The Fair Trade Gifts event Saturday will feature work by Haitian artists like Astrel helping them support their families and earn an honest and fair wage.**

sales will be split three ways to benefit a local, state and international charity.

According to Gabriel, the donations last year went to Welcome Table school supplies for Vermillion, Children of the Harvest in South Dakota and a Kids club in Haiti for their Christmas party.

Having volunteered in Haiti for so long, Gabriel has seen the talent and spirit of these artists whose work she helps in selling.

"Nicole is a mother from Dade that works with 10 different artists to create these beautiful colorful baskets," she said. "I am sad to say that I have already sold the two suitcases of baskets I brought back from last year. But don't worry we will have more next year."

There will be items available from a talented Haitian painter named Astrel.

"He just recently started painting on T-shirts," Gabriel said. "There are many different colors and sizes to choose from. They are all different. He also helps me make beads from paper for my jewelry."

Along with helping Haitian artists, Gabriel also makes her own jewelry out of recycled materials to help support her family living in Haiti. These items will also be for sale at the event.

Some materials she uses include paper from church bulletins and practice Haitian Paintings from classes. Also plastic pop and water bottles, sea glass, and tree seed pods.

"There's another artist who is always trying to think of new ideas and he makes guitars and drums out of gourds," Gabriel said. "I just recently started working with him making wine glasses. One of the things I've done with artists down there is take what they're already doing and figure out what would be something else they can make that's more marketable in the international community or even within Haiti."

International sales are a big reason artists survive in Haiti according to Gabriel.

"There's some market within the country but they can't make a decent wage usually for their stuff," she said. "It's kind of devalued or not appreciated. People want a good deal. But there's plenty of international people that travel to Haiti to help and so the artists are able to make a living because they're selling their products to international people. That's my main focus when I go down there. I've done some work with the local elementary schools and my husband does some construction work."

Gabriel works independently but also with various programs such as Helping Hands for Haiti and Haitian Artisans for Peace International.

"I first went down with a project called the Solar Oven Partners," Gabriel said. "It's a project through the United Methodist Church. It's just a week-long mission trip. I saw the country and people and culture and knew I had to go back."

Gabriel and her family spend a good part of the year in Haiti, about five or six months out of the year.

"Before I got married it was about nine months out of the year I would be in Haiti and then three months back in the states," she said. "I would come back in the summers with different sales, craft sales and talk to different churches, trying to make a living to be able to go back down."

Gabriel hopes that people come away from the event with more than just a unique gift.

"I think it's just appreciation for art around the world," she said. "I know we have a lot of people that come back every year to find gifts for friends and family and it's neat because they're usually picking out a gift specifically for the reason to show camaraderie with international people. You always get a unique gift too. You're not going to find it at your local department store. That's what's so cool about shopping at Sharing the Dream. I'm always encouraging people to shop there because you're going to get something unique for somebody, not what they're expecting or what everyone else is getting them. Another thing that's cool is it's helping somebody live, pay for their schooling, pay for their meal, helping support an individual rather than a department store."

For more information on this event see the 'Fair Trade Gifts' facebook page or contact the First United Methodist Church at 16 N Dakota St in Vermillion or call (605) 624-2179.

## USD To Hold Winter Commencement

The University of South Dakota will grant degrees to about 560 graduates for the Fall 2015 term, most of whom will participate in the 40th annual Winter Commencement at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, in the DakotaDome.

Jeffrey Holcomb, president and CEO of Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls and a 1982 USD graduate, will give the keynote address. He grew up in Long Valley, South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and received a bachelor's degree in German and political science and a master's in public administration from USD.

Commencement details are available online and USD Athletics/goyotes.com will stream the ceremony live.

## Dean's Advisory Board Named For Beacom

The first dean's advisory board for the University of South Dakota Beacom School of Business includes governmental and business leaders who have a passion for economic development in the state and region.

The advisory board, formed this fall, will provide advice, insight, guidance and feedback to the dean and faculty on strategic initiatives, opportunities, challenges and various other issues.

Premier Bankcard President and CEO Miles Beacom, for whom the USD business school is named, will serve as chairperson of the dean's advisory board. Other members:

- Pat Costello, commissioner of the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development, who had more than 20 years of experience in private business prior to joining Gov. Dennis Daugaard's executive team;
- David Knudson, senior vice president and chief legal counsel of United National Corp., who previously practiced law for 35 years and focused on health care, banking and corporate transactions;
- JoAnn Kunkel, chief financial officer of Sanford Health, where she has held several positions since 1992 and prior to that worked in public accounting;
- Craig Lloyd, chief executive officer and co-owner of Lloyd Cos., a leader in property management, real estate, construction and development since 1972;
- Scott Sletten, president and chief executive officer of JDS Industries, the largest wholesaler of awards and recognition worldwide, with customers in more than 80 countries.

"In my prior experience, I have had the opportunity to work closely with several business leaders whose effective engagement has helped advance the business school, and I look forward to a similar engagement to distinguish the Beacom School of Business," said Venky Venkatachalam, dean of the school.

The inaugural meeting of the advisory board was Dec. 2 in Sioux Falls. The next meeting will be held in spring in Vermillion at the business school.

## Knutson

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heart trouble and passed away late Monday at age 89.

"Dr. Wayne Knutson was an amazing man, with many areas of interest and many talents," said Larry Schou, Dean of USD's College of Fine Arts. "He spent his career at USD helping build up the programs in theater, in English, at the Black Hills Playhouse (where USD students perform) and in the College of Fine Arts."

Many of his students and colleagues held Knutson in high esteem as he did them.

He earned the Best Teacher Award at USD in 1968, the first such award given by the student association.

"I think it came about when I was a college student and realized that to be a teacher was to be a student as well – that a person could want to be a teacher because he wanted to learn – and because he wanted to learn, to explore, to experiment, to understand his subject interest, younger students would willingly want to go with him on an adventure of human awareness and responsibility," Knutson wrote in an undated, typewritten article entitled 'Why I Teach.'

When Knutson first became part of the USD Fine Arts faculty, he helped build it basically from the ground up.

"We didn't start with very much," he said in an

interview with the Plain Talk earlier this year. "It started in the 30's but it was very poor. In '52 there were about 13 faculty. There was the dean, one in theater, one in art and the rest in music."

The college actually started out in the basement of Slagle Hall.

"Then we discovered an old Episcopal church that was not being used," Knutson said. "We poured tar on the roof so it didn't leak and we had theater there for about two years. We did Uncle Vanya there by Chekhov but we had no money so I had a student get all the black cloth they could downtown and I had an art student with yellow chalk draw in a set. Visitors said that was a brilliant thing."

Knutson held several leadership positions at the University in both the Fine Arts and English departments.

"I liked being a dean because you could represent a group of people that had a common bond," he said. "I liked to be chairman of English. But a vice president has all the responsibility but no authority really. I said it felt like I was a piece of meat in a sandwich. You got bit from the top and the bottom."

Knutson never really left the University even after retirement.

"He'd stop in and we'd have chats dean to dean over the years," Schou said. "He'd walk the hallways meeting students and faculty."

Knutson's outreach work was widely noticed and appreciated as well.

"His impact is years of work to bring the arts to the South Dakota community," Schou said. "While he was Dean, he told me at one point, they would shut down the college and take everyone in semis and take their shows out to high schools and communities in the SD area just to get the college of fine arts, music and theater out to the communities."

The Wayne S. Knutson Theater in the Fine Arts Center on the USD campus was given Knutson's name as part of the 25th anniversary of the Warren M. Lee Center for the Fine Arts.

"I was very humbled," Knutson said. "I don't know who had that screwy idea but apparently somebody did. I was very delighted because of all the things I've done, the dearest thing to me was directing a play. I suppose they thought of me because I was 'that pioneer'. Now when I go to the potlucks the chairman will introduce me and say here's where it all started."

Knutson seemed very satisfied with the life he led.

"It all becomes a big story," Knutson said. "Like any story, it has chapters. Grade school, high school, college, marriage, family, profession, and then you come to the

final chapter of life. That's where we're at. You still don't know how it's going to end, like a good book. You don't want to go to the last page to see how it ends, you'll wait for it. Time is more precious, spouses become more important than ever. Friends from way back become important. It's been a very good trip from the time I was a first grader in a one-room rural school. I happen to think I had a marvelous life."

To all those who knew him and even those who didn't, Wayne S. Knutson's story will never have an end. His influence remains with us even as he has moved on to his next chapter.

### Biography

Born the youngest of 11 children in 1926 on a Roberts County, South Dakota, farm, Knutson graduated from Sisseton High School in 1944. He served in the Merchant Marines in 1944-1946 and U.S. Army infantry in 1947-1948 before attending Augustana College, from which he graduated in 1950 with majors in English and theater. He received a master's degree in theater in 1951 from USD and a Ph.D. in English and theater from the University of Denver in 1956. In the summer of 1973, Knutson attended Harvard University as a member of

the Institute for Educational Management.

He married Esther Johnstad in 1950. They had three children, stayed in Vermillion after his retirement and remained active in the community.

Knutson, the first instructor to receive the title "university distinguished professor" by the South Dakota Board of Regents, arrived at USD in 1952 in the dual role of professor of speech and dramatic art and director of the university theater. He served from 1966 to 1971 as professor and chair of the Department of English. He was dean and professor of the College of Fine Arts from 1972 to 1980; vice president for Academic Affairs and professor of fine arts from 1980 to 1982; and professor of English and theater from 1982 until his retirement in 1987. The 450-seat theater in USD's Warren M. Lee Center for Fine

Arts, built under Knutson's leadership, bears his name. He continued to teach part-time and was a freelance theater director and writer.

Several plays Knutson wrote and produced became part of radio broadcasts. He received awards, memberships and offices in the field of fine arts and theatre including the Governor's Award for Distinction in Creative Achievement in 1986.

He directed 65 plays at USD, the Black Hills Playhouse, Pierre Players, Black Hills Community Theatre, and Lewis and Clark Playhouse, and supervised as many plays directed by graduate students. He adjudicated more than 500 plays and judged more than 10,000 high school students in theater and oral interpretation of literature in South Dakota and Minnesota.




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# Holiday Open House

There is no time more fitting to say thank you and to wish you a happy holiday season.

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