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Vermillion

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VHS Class of 2011 graduates

Graduates told to 'stay in the race'

By Travis Gulbrandson

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"Stay in the race."

That's the message Brook McBride, pastor of Vermillion United Methodist Church had for the Vermillion High School graduating class of 2011.

The graduation ceremony took place Sunday afternoon at the DakotaDome.

In his remarks for the seniors, McBride remembered that as a ninth-grader in Wagner, he was "on top of the world" as class president and one of the first five players on the school's basketball team.

Then, the summer between his freshman and sophomore years, his parents told him the family was moving to Rapid City.

"I was such a big fish in a little pond in Wagner, and then to go to Rapid City Central where there were 700 in my class just overwhelmed me," McBride remembered.

Although he tried out for it, he did not make the basketball team, opting instead for track.

"I thought I was going to be fast, so I went out with the sprinters," he said. "The sprint coach came up to me after that first practice and said, 'You better try distance.'"

After a week, the distance coach suggested McBride try "long distance."

"I remember the first race I was running. I'd never run a race before," McBride said. "I was so pumped up, I wanted to please everybody. I took off and I was in the lead for the first two laps."

After the third lap, the other runners began to pass him.

"About the sixth lap I heard some footsteps behind me," McBride said. "I thought, 'I'm beating somebody,' ... but all of a sudden I realized I wasn't beating



BROOK MCBRIDE



Brandon Watterson, Sheldon Watterson and their mother Candie McDonald take the podium at Sunday's graduation ceremony after the senior class presented Brandon - who has been diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma - with the leftover money from their class account.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

Class chips in to help classmate's family

By Travis Gulbrandson

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When Vermillion High School's class of 2011 was finished with all its activities for the year, more than \$500 was left over in the class fund.

There was only one thing they wanted to do with the money - donate it to the family of Brandon Watterson, whose older brother, Sheldon, was among Sunday's graduates.

Brandon, 15, recently was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"It's been really hard for my entire

family," Sheldon said from the podium toward the end of Sunday's graduation ceremony. "Luckily enough, the cure rate is about 96 percent. So far, we're doing good."

The boys' mother, Candie McDonald, and Brandon also came onstage to thank the class for the gift.

"I don't know how to say thank you enough for the support that you guys have given us," said McDonald, who cried throughout her short speech.

In particular she thanked the teachers and students who supported both her sons through the

continuing ordeal.

"Right now we're on a good path. Brandon finished radiation - which most of you know - the end of April," she said. "In the middle of June he's supposed to have scans, so we're just praying for remission so he can hopefully start the school year clean and free of cancer."

The response from everyone at the school was overwhelming, Sheldon said.

"It was overnight that the entire school found out that Brandon was diagnosed," he said. "It wasn't a week

later, a month later, it was the next day. I came back and everyone was asking me, 'Are you OK, how's it going, is Brandon OK?'"

The total amount donated is "just about \$530," he added.

"You have no idea how far that'll go," he said. "We go to and from Sioux Falls every day for months on end, and spend how much on gas. Everybody knows how high gas prices are right now ..."

"I just want to thank the entire senior class and everybody in the entire Vermillion High School," he said.

GRADS, Page 8

Rusch to step down from bench June 8 Vermillion prepares for Tour de Kota bikers

BY TRAVIS GULBRANDSON

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As presiding judge of the First Judicial Court, Arthur Rusch has a busier work week than most people.

On Mondays he works on opinions and correspondence. On Tuesday he has adult court in Yankton. Wednesdays are set aside for trials in both Yankton and Vermillion. Thursdays are devoted to juvenile court in Yankton. Rusch spends each Friday in Vermillion, with adult court in the morning and juvenile in the afternoon.

"There's rarely any time where you have any extra time," he said.

That will soon change for Rusch, as he has announced his retirement, effective June 8.

"I'm 65 and I've been doing this for 17 1/2 years now, so I just decided it was time to do something different," he said. "I'm going to take each day as it comes, I guess. All these years I've been saying, 'Well, if I just had more time I'd do these things.' I have lot of genealogy I want to work on, I have a stamp collection I want to work on. I'll just have to see where things lead me."

A Yankton native, Rusch attended the University of South Dakota, first as an accounting major, before he turned his attention to law.

There is no event or experience to which he can attribute his interest in the subject.



Arthur Rusch has served as presiding judge of the First Judicial Circuit for more than 17 years. His retirement will take effect June 8, after which time he will focus his energy on historical research, among other things.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

"It just seemed to be the thing to do," he said.

Rusch graduated from the USD School of Law in 1971. Later he was elected as state's attorney in Vermillion, ultimately serving 12 years in the position.

In 1985 he went into private practice, where he stayed until 1993, when he was appointed to the circuit court by then-Gov. Walter Dale Miller.

He has been presiding judge of the

RUSCH, Page 8

BY DAVID LIAS

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The University of South Dakota campus will serve as a fitting last overnight stop next month for bicyclists taking part in the 2011 Argus Leader Tour de Kota.

The theme of the 2011 event is "The College Campus Cruise."

The Tour de Kota will be held June 5-10, with the route beginning and ending in Sioux Falls and overnight stays at South Dakota college and university campuses along the way.

The six-day tour will cover 430 miles and includes overnight stays at Augustana College, South Dakota State University, Dakota State University, Mitchell, Freeman as well as the University of South Dakota and the University of Sioux Falls.

This year the Tour de Kota travels the back roads and byways in southeastern South Dakota on what has become one of the best cycling tours in the Midwest. Besides the college and university visits, riders will also enjoy the hospitality of more than 30 small towns and cities.

Vermillion already has a bit of



Tour de Kota" experience under its belt, serving as a stopping point for the event in 2007.

"This year, we are an overnight community, so they (the bikers) will be spending a lot more time in Vermillion," said Maureen Cashin, visitor and tourism coordinator of the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce and Development Company. "The community will receive more exposure from the bikers as they come here next month. 'We're excited about it,' she said. "There's a lot of work involved, but it's a great opportunity for us."

This year's tour begins at Augustana College in Sioux Falls on Sunday, June 5. The final destination will be at University of Sioux Falls

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