

Olson honored with Community Health Service Award

BY DAVID LIAS

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Sanford Vermillion Hospital CEO Tim Tracy notes that throughout the history of the Great Plains, people have always depended on a reliable country doctor – a character similar to “Doc” of the television show “Gunsmoke,” to provide a wide variety of medical services.

Vermillion is fortunate, he said, to be served by such a dedicated physician.

“Mary Jo (Olson) is our modern version of the country doctor,” Tracy said, shortly before presenting Olson with the 2011 Community Health Service Award at the Dakota Hospital Foundation Community Leadership Dinner, held May 18 in the Muenster University Center on the University of South Dakota campus.

“She is always available, she has an infectious smile, she has a compassion that just runs deep,” he said, “and she’s completely dedicated to her patients.”

Tracy said Olson was instrumental in re-establishing Sanford Vermillion Medical Center as a regional presence – “a place where people look when they are in a time of need. She, like many of the other physicians, works very long and hard, wearing hours that are really needed when

you provide primary care in a rural setting.”

Primary medical care, he said, is Olson’s calling. “Sanford Vermillion truly is her place. Mary Jo started with us in August of 2000, and prior to that we were delivering less than 60 newborns a year here in Vermillion. In 2010, that number has nearly doubled, and it continues to rise because of Mary Jo and her partners.

“They continue to raise the level of expectations,” Tracy said. “Mary Jo has been instrumental in creating a family birthing experience, all the way from conception through and beyond the birthing process. She welcomes those she serves and provides individual attention to each and every family.”

Olson creates an environment, Tracy said, where excellence is expected.

“She inspires those around her through her personal accountability and her demonstrated performance,” he said. “Mary Jo is our country doctor; there’s no question about that in my mind. She does all that’s necessary to insure health care access to everyone in need.”

Tracy projected a video of on the screens of the MUC banquet hall, in which the Vermillion physician simply talks to the camera, explaining to the audience why she loves her work.

“I think the most rewarding part of my

practice is helping people, trying to make them feel better, finding a diagnosis or illness, giving them treatment,” she said. “It’s also very satisfactory for me to deliver babies and bring new life into the world.

“My patient philosophy is to always listen to the patient, and involve them in their care,” Olson said.

Olson grew up on a farm near Gary. Mary Jo’s father, Kenneth, worked as a farmer and construction worker. Her mother, Avis, was the business manager at Gary School District.

Olson completed her undergraduate studies at the South Dakota State University. She received her medical degree from the University of South Dakota School of Medicine and completed her residency through the Sioux Falls Family Practice Residency program. She serves as a clinical associate professor for the University of South Dakota School of Medicine and Physician Assistant Program and is a preceptor for students.

She began her practice at Sanford Clinic Vermillion in 2000.

Olson is a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church in Vermillion and serves on the Trinity Health Cabinet Ministry. She is a member of the Hand Bell Choir at United Church of Christ Congregational, and also a member of



Sanford Vermillion Hospital CEO Tim Tracy joins the banquet crowd in applauding Dr. Mary Jo Olson, the recipient of the 2011 Community Health Service Award.

(Photo by David Lias)

PEO, Chapter E in Vermillion.

Olson has served on a number of medical staff and clinical committees in her time at Sanford Vermillion as well as holding the position of chief of staff for one term. She is currently clinic medical director and hospice medical director.

Olson serves on the Sanford School of Medicine Alumni Relations Council and

is a member of the USD Alumni Foundation. She also serves on the Sanford Health Board of Governors.

Olson’s husband Dennis, of 35 years, is a self-employed carpenter. They have two grown daughters. When not making rounds or seeing patients, Olson enjoys growing flowers, camping, skiing, and riding her Harley.

OBITUARIES



McNULTY



Elaine McNulty

Elaine M. McNulty, 87, of Vermillion, passed away on May 20, 2011 at Life Care Center in Cheyenne, WY after a five-month illness.

Born Oct. 25, 1923, in Vermillion, Elaine grew up in rural Vermillion, and graduated from Vermillion High School

in 1941. During World War II she served as a corporal in the Army Air Force – Women’s Army Corps, Long Beach, CA.

Throughout most of her adult life Elaine worked in various retail stores in Vermillion. She was a life-time member of St. Agnes Catholic Church, and a member of the VFW-Women’s Auxiliary.

Elaine was preceded in death by two husbands, Willis D. (Bill)

Sims, whom she married in 1946 and died in 1961, and John H. McNulty, whom she married in 1973 and died in 1993; two infant daughters; parents, Florent and Mary (Glass) Chaussee; and brother Deltas Chaussee.

Elaine will be remembered for her infectious smile. She was very proud of her family and her military service, and was an enthusiastic fan of USD athletics.

She is survived by daughter, Denise Sims Duysen and husband Herb of Broomfield, CO; son, Barry Sims and wife Robin of Cheyenne, WY; grandchildren, Jill Grober (Centennial, CO), Matthew Chaffee (Conifer, CO), Ryan Sims (Castle Rock, CO), Kevin Sims (New York City, NY), and Erin Sims (Cheyenne, WY); three great-grandchildren; and sister, Madonna Plummer.

A prayer service was at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 25 at the St. Agnes Catholic Church in Vermillion, with visitation starting at 6 p.m. Funeral Mass was 11 a.m. Thursday, May 26 at St. Agnes Catholic Church with burial following in Calvary Cemetery in Vermillion. Online condolences and obituary: hansenfuneralhome.com.

James Kinney

James “Jim” Richard Kinney was born April 5, 1941 to Mathias and Florence (Pollock) Kinney and passed away at his home in rural Vermillion, on Friday, May 20, 2011 after a courageous two-and-a-half year battle with prostate cancer.

Funeral service was on Wednesday, May 25, 2011 at 10 a.m. at Dalesburg Lutheran Church in rural Vermillion with Pastor Robert Chapman and Todd Axtell officiating. Visitation will resume one hour prior to the service on Wednesday. Burial will



KINNEY

follow the service at Dalesburg Lutheran Cemetery in rural Vermillion. Visitation was held on Tuesday, May 24, 2011 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion, with a prayer service to begin at 7 p.m. Jim grew up on his father’s farm near Elma, IA and graduated

from high school in Elma in 1959. He attended Marquette University in Milwaukee for a year, graduated from Iowa State University in Ames, IA in 1965, and did graduate work in education at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. In 1965, he started his teaching career in Wabasso, MN and continued in schools at Cascade, IA and Polo.

In 1973, he moved to Vermillion to manage the Vermillion Airport and, with his wife, started Vermillion Flying Service which they owned and operated until 1997. During this time he received an Airline

Transport Pilot Certificate, flight instructor certificates for single and multi-engine land with instrument endorsements and an Airframe and Powerplant license, including Inspection Authorization for aircraft maintenance. He flew charter, taught many students to fly, did all the mechanical work on his airplanes, and employed many individuals during this time.

In 1997, he moved to his farm 5 miles north of Vermillion where he farmed, continued flying as an aerial applicator, and worked on his airplanes and farm machinery until he retired due to ill health.

He served six years on the Vermillion School Board. Throughout his life he remained a teacher – guiding and sharing his expertise in education, flying and farming. It was the farm life that he loved most of all.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Joan; sons, Matthew (Karie) of Spearfish, and Christopher (Christina) of Beresford; grandchildren, A.J., Max, Ava, Jordyn and Jesse; mother, Florence Kinney of Elma, IA; sisters, Carol (Square) Pritchett of Rogers, AR, Mary Lou (Harlan Hansen) of Goodland, MN, June (Jim Spady) Kinney of

Philadelphia, PA, Patty (John)Wilson of Iowa City, IA, Linda (Dave) Menees of LaClair, IA; brothers-in-law, John Schwab and Dan (Shirlene) Schwab; sisters-in-law, Eileen Doom and Rosie (Roger) Ruhr; and many nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his father, Mathias Kinney; sister-in-law, Marian Schwab; and brother-in-law and good friend, Ron Doom.

Condolences may be posted online at www.koberfuneralhome.com.

John Kingfisher

John “Spud” Bryce Kingfisher, 3, of Vermillion, passed peacefully on May 20, 2011 in his home with his family.

A remembrance service was held Monday, May 23, 2011 at Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion at 3:30 p.m., with a visitation held from 2 to 3:30 p.m., followed by a meal at the Native American Cultural Center on the USD campus. A funeral and interment followed on Thursday, May 26, 2011 at Worley-Luginbuel Funeral Home in Jay, OK at 11 a.m., with a visitation to be held from 10 to 11 a.m. Burial will follow the service at the Euha Indian Cemetery in Jay, OK.



KINGFISHER

Spud was born Aug. 15, 2007 in Sioux Falls. He was diagnosed with Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, “half a heart”, which affected, but did not define his life. Spud endured three open heart surgeries, frequent hospitalizations and innumerable medical procedures, and although

it seemed his body was constantly battered, he still managed to live a full life. In his 3 (and a half!) years, Spud did many things every boy his age does. He loved riding his green tractor and red tricycle up and down the sidewalk, chasing his cats and going to the zoo. He enjoyed the outdoors and animals, especially dogs. He also enjoyed playing with his sisters and his favorite toys were his train set and cars. Other pastime activities included watching his cartoons, Tom and Jerry being one of his favorites, and reading with his parents. Spud enjoyed music from the drum at a wacipi (powwow), to the theme song of his favorite programs, to dancing

and playing instruments at the library story time.

Spud was very compassionate and loving for his age, often pointing out something his sisters Anna and Josie would like or sharing what he had with them saying – “here, let’s share this.” He was charming and charismatic, regularly working a room and constantly winning people over. He had a beguiling smile with an exuberant laugh, and despite sometimes feeling poorly, he was able to find and share joy with those around him every day of his life. In his short time with us, Spud touched countless lives. He had a strength which amazed people and which allowed him to

stay with us long enough to create memories we will always cherish. To say he will be missed cannot begin to express our sadness at his loss, but we can all take comfort knowing his heart and body are whole and he is at peace.

He is survived by his parents, Billie and Megan; and sisters, Anna, 6, and Josie, 15 months, of Vermillion; grandparents, Todd and Marilyn Taylor of Forsyth, MT; Aunt Jennifer (Avolt) Baumbach; cousins, Bailey and Beau, of Bismarck, ND and Becky Taylor of Jamestown, ND; Uncle Wade Kingfisher and his family of Rapid City; Great Uncle Terry “Pete” (Rachel) Kingfisher and his family of Camas, WA; Great Aunt

Mary (Hershel) Kaulity of Bakersfield, CA; Great Grandma Mary Lois McAtee of Greenview, IL; and many other extended family members.

Spud is preceded in death by his paternal grandparents Billie “Bo” Kingfisher Sr. and Lavonne Condon.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorials be made to the Ronald McDonald House of Sioux Falls at 808 East 24th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 or The Children’s Miracle Network of Sioux Falls at 1305 West 18th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57105.

Condolences may be posted online at www.koberfuneralhome.com.

Thelma Nelson-Dolan

Thelma L. Nelson-Dolan, 86, of Brookings, died Sunday, May 22, 2011 at Stoney Brook Suites in Brookings. Memorial services were 10:30 a.m. Thursday, May 26, 2011 at Ascension Lutheran Church, Brookings. Graveside services were at 3 p.m. Thursday, May 26, 2011 at Dalesburg Lutheran Cemetery, Dalesburg. Memorial visitation was from 9 a.m. until the time of the service at Ascension Lutheran Church, Brookings. Rude’s Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness.” (Mt 25:23). Thelma was a follower of Jesus Christ; a good and faithful servant. She now enjoys the joy of the Lord.

Thelma Nelson-Dolan lived most of her life in Brookings County, on the farm, in the classroom, and on main street. Her life spanned the Great Depression, World War II, the advent of rural electricity and microwaves, mini-vans, and emails.

Thelma was born on August 14, 1924 in Potter County, SD to Henry and Agnes Vandersluis. The family moved to Brookings County when she was 4 years old.



NELSON-DOLAN

Thelma lived on farms south of Brookings and then east of town. She graduated from Brookings High School in 1942, and attended General Beadle State Teachers College in Madison, receiving a teaching certificate. Thelma taught rural school east of Brookings until 1950 when she married Fred Nelson of Clay County. She moved to the Nelson farm east of Wakonda where they farmed until Fred’s death in 1968. Thelma and Fred Nelson had three children: Valerie Lois

(Strandell), Mary Kay (Spearman), and Van Peter.

Thelma returned to Brookings in 1969, along with her children of 15, 13, and 8 years old. Thelma worked as a teacher’s aide in the Brookings middle school for several years, and later worked in retail stores on Main Street for many years. All three children graduated from Brookings High School and went on to graduate from college.

In 1993 Thelma married Norbert Dolan of Flandreau. Thelma and Norbert lived in Brookings for many years, eventually living in Brookhaven. After Norbert’s passing in December 2009, Thelma moved to StoneyBrook Suites.

Thelma is preceded in death by her parents; husbands, Fred and Norbert; her sister, Phyllis (Johnson)Tweedell; brothers,

Rolland and John Henry; dear niece, Jan (Harshfield) Wilson and many friends.

She is survived by daughters, Valerie and Mary; son, Peter; sister, Trudy (Harshfield) Thompson; as well as grandchildren, Angela (Strandell) Edwards, Kathryn Strandell, Sara Spearman, David Spearman, Eli Nelson and Ellen Nelson and many whose lives she has touched.

Thelma’s God-given gifts included teaching, encouragement, hospitality, discernment and knowledge. She made the world a better place for her family and those around her.

She was dearly loved and appreciated. She taught us well; she loved us well.

Condolences may be sent to

the family through www.rudesfuneralhome.com

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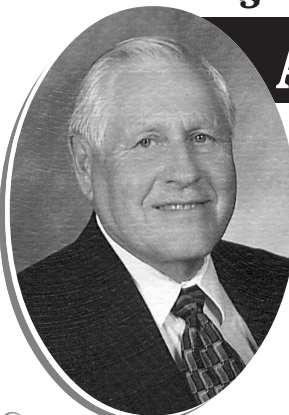
ALTON “AL” L. SIECKE

Memorial Day,

Monday, May 30th • 8:30am

Kober Funeral Home in Vermillion

Al, who passed away on his 76th birthday on August 9, 2010, was a long time member of the Vermillion community. The Kober Funeral Home and members of the Eastern Star invite all members of the community to attend.



Born: August 9, 1934
Died: August 9, 2010

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