



OUR OPINION

Rotary efforts helping to rid world of polio

Rotary International and the Gates Foundation have been major nongovernmental players in bringing the benefits of polio vaccines to the world, including many areas where poverty means limited health options.

Prior to the development of the Sabin and Salk serums, polio was a dreaded disease. Contracting polio could mean paralysis and/or death. The cost of the disease was immense in human suffering, health care dollars and lost productivity. The threat of polio changed life activities. Polio vaccines have truly been a miracle drug for this country and around the world.

The goal to eradicate polio is amazingly close to completion. At this time there are less than 10 reported cases of polio worldwide and only three countries where wild polio virus may still circulate: Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria. While often dangerous areas, those seeking to eliminate polio must go there because that is where the disease still survives. You have to get rid of the virus everywhere or it can come back and infect places where it had been eliminated.

Rotary became a partner in the effort to control polio in the late 1970s and in 1988 spearheaded the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative with the World Health Organization, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and

UNICEF. Since 2002 Rotary has raised millions of dollars for the effort to eliminate polio matched by dollars from the Gates Foundation, which in recent years has been on a 2-1 basis.

Most recently Rotary's goal is to contribute \$50 million, which the Gates Foundation will match up to \$300 million. In addition, funds continue to come from countries around the world.

Big issues in the world can be better managed by a partnership of governmental and private entities. To garner large funds from private sources requires commitments from organizations like the Rotary Clubs in our city and throughout Nebraska. Through continued commitment on raising funds for polio eradication, they have demonstrated that they care about people and their health needs throughout the world.

To witness this effort that goes on without regard to religious identity, cultural values or political ideology should inspire all of us and encourage us to support such efforts. It is an example of how all of us can work together to make our world a better place.

UNICEF is associated with Halloween as well as raising funds for polio eradication. This Halloween is a good time to add your dollars to those of your local Rotary organizations and help rid the world of the scourge of polio.



Mo. Valley native honored as 121st Aksarben king

MICHAEL KELLY
 BH NEWS SERVICE

OMAHA — Long before his 30-year stint as the leader of Children's Hospital & Medical Center, Gary Perkins was admitted as a patient himself.

When he was 9, doctors at Children's treated a kidney problem over three days. He still has the bill — \$93.

Growing up strong north of Omaha in Missouri Valley he baled hay as a teenager, went to college and grew to 6-feet-5. In the decades since, he has stood tall in numerous civic and charitable leadership roles, many involving children.

For his accomplishments and for his dedication to youth and to the future of the community and the region, Perkins was crowned Saturday night as the 121st king of Aksarben.

"I've never been a real high-profile person in the community," he said, "so I was shocked when I was asked. I was more than blown away."

Perkins was invited last spring to accept the honor, and did so after checking with his wife, Carol. The names of new royalty in the mythical kingdom of Quivira are kept secret until revealed at the annual fundraiser for scholarships, the Aksarben coronation ball.

Carol Perkins shares her husband's dedication to serving youth. A former elementary school



Courtesy Julia Nagy/BH News Service

The 2017 Aksarben King Gary Perkins walks with his wife Carol during the Aksarben Ball on Saturday at Baxter Arena in Omaha.

music teacher, she long has served as a lay biblical discipleship counselor, and this year again counseled young people in her eighth trip to Africa.

"We both believe that every person has a lot of value," she said, "and no one person is better than another."

Carol grew up in Beatrice, Nebraska, and met Gary when both attended Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Nebraska, now called Midland University.

She saw right away, she said, that he was a leader — bright and decisive, with a big heart. They married in November 1971, while she was still in college.

Gary had graduated in 1970 and signed up for the Army Reserve. A son of a flower shop and greenhouse owner, he planned a career as a certified public accountant.

He first worked in accounting at Children's Hospital in 1975, and then

became a hospital administrator in Harlan, Iowa, at age 29. He returned to Children's as a vice president and rose to president and CEO at 37.

Under his 1985-2015 leadership, patient volumes quadrupled. And Children's moved from the north tower of Methodist Hospital to its free-standing location across the street at 84th Street and West Dodge Road.

That corner is now iconic, especially at night, because of the five bronzed figures of children and 24 colorful, lighted umbrellas visible in a glass-enclosed stairwell.

The hospital, with running water in the lobby and lots of exterior light, soft colors and curved walls, is said to have a calming effect — good for kids and their families.

A sense of calmness, and engaging as many people as possible in plans, also have marked Perkins'

leadership style. Upon his retirement, he received praise for raising the status of Children's to that of an academic medical center.

If he's not a household name, Perkins nonetheless is widely known in the non-profit community.

He has served as board chair or president of the Nebraska Hospital Association, Midland University, Cooper Village, the Nebraska chapter of the National Safety Council, the Nebraska Kidney Association and Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs.


He was a driving force in the creation of Project Harmony, a community collaboration against child abuse and neglect. He also served as board chair.

Gary and Carol have served as honorary co-chairs for numerous charity fundraisers, including for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the Salvation Army, JDRF (juvenile diabetes) and the Child Saving Institute.

In retirement, he continues to volunteer on civic boards, and she continues her mission work in Botswana and South Africa on behalf of the non-profit, nondenominational Fresh Start for All Nations.

The couple, who worship at Steadfast Bible Fellowship, have lived for 25 years in an area called The Farm, southwest of 222nd Street and West Center Road. They raised two children there and often see wildlife in the backyard.

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On behalf of the Crete Chamber of Commerce, I want to personally express my gratitude for the Crete and Doane communities support for our community's, Crete's Great Pumpkin Festival. The success of this event was due to all the hard work of many people who volunteered their time and talents. Truly, we could not have done this festival without you! Our committee is humbled by the community's and Chamber businesses' involvement through volunteerism, sponsorships, event participation and attendance. Because of our great community, you are the reason why our festival has received regional and national recognition! With only being an established festival for less than 3 years, our community can proudly claim Crete as Nebraska's Pumpkin Festival - acclaimed by The Food Network Magazine.

Many thanks you are deserved and we want to make special recognition to the following individuals and businesses for their contribution to this year's festival: our top Harvest Sponsors and all festival sponsors, Crete Public Schools and the organizations of Crete FBLA, Crete High Art Club and Crete After School Programs, Greek Life sorority and fraternities of Doane University: Gamma Phi Iota, Omega Psi Theta, Alpha Pi Epsilon, Delta Kappa Pi and Sigma Phi Theta, Doane University's RHA, Roots & Shoots/WACO and Women's Basketball Team, the various departments of Doane University including: Alumni Services, Strategic Communication and Advancement, Crete Backpack Program, The Brew House, Crete News, Heath Sports & Tees, Pro-Tech Electronics, Crete Rotary Club, Jerald Kubicek, Larry Eberspacher, Loren Henning, Don Riensche, Jay Preston of Jay's Oil and Propane, Tom Sorensen and the team of Edward Jones Investment, Sam Barley and the set-up crew from Pinnacle Bank, Casey's General Stores - Crete and Milford and all the many additional community organizations, vendors, individuals and businesses who helped to make the Crete's Great Pumpkin Festival possible. The Crete Chamber would like to give a special thank you to the City of Crete and its many departments who donated resources and personnel to make the festival possible. Thank you!

Lastly, the Chamber truly appreciates all those who donated and purchased vouchers for the "Great Pumpkin Giveaway". Over 200 pumpkin vouchers were disbursed between the Crete Elementary and Intermediate After - School Programs and St. James Elementary School.

Special thanks to the steering committee who put all the time and effort to develop this festival:

Pumpkin Festival Steering Committee:
 Russ Sears - Pumpkin Patch Superintendent
 Jenn Lampila - Publication Graphic Designer
 Dan Dunaway - Contest Coordinator
 Jack Cochnar - Food Court Coordinator
 Alyssa Cochnar - Website Designer / Entertainment Coordinator
 Scott Skala - Festival Committee Member / Resource Coordinator
 Kayleigh Schadwinkel - Festival Steering Coordinator and Executive Director of Crete Chamber of Commerce

As seen, many individuals and organizations contributed to this event and the Chamber is very grateful for all the assistance it received to make this event possible! Thank you for joining our commitment to make Crete a better place to live and do business! We look forward to hosting you at next year's 2018 Crete's Great Pumpkin Festival!

With much gratitude,
 Kayleigh Schadwinkel
 Crete Chamber of Commerce
 Executive Director

