



James Norton

May 7, 1930–January 22, 2018



GREEN VALLEY, Ariz.

James Neal Norton of Green Valley, Arizona, died peacefully on Jan. 22, 2018, surrounded by his loving family and the tranquility of the Arizona desert. He was 87.

James "Jim" Norton was born to William Wendell Norton and Catherine Hayden Norton on May 7, 1930, in Osceola. Jim and his brother William Hayden Norton would fondly recall their childhood over the

years and their adoration for their parents, whom they nicknamed Honey and Pop. Weekends were spent at the family cabin in Ericson.

Jim met his high school sweetheart Elaine Ann Grossnicklaus while attending Osceola High School. The pair were married on Aug. 7, 1954, while Jim was attending his last year of law school at The University of Nebraska College of Law in Lincoln. The couple then moved to the Washington D.C. area where Jim worked as an attorney for the National Security Agency.

A few years later Jim took a legal counsel position with Minneapolis-Honeywell in St. Petersburg, Florida. In 1961, the pair returned to Nebraska where Jim, like his father and brother before him, opened his own law practice in David City. In the late 1970s, Jim relocated his office to the historic Boston Studio building.

Having a charitable nature, Jim was a co-founder and president of the David City Foundation, which provided financial support for area civic and cultural needs. He was also president of the David City School Board as well as the David City Rotary Club. He was a member of the David City Chamber of Commerce, The David

City Library Board, The Nebraska Committee For The Humanities Foundation, The Educational Service Unit Board #7 and Lay Leader and Chairman of the Board for the St. Luke's United Methodist Church. Jim also served as president of the Fifth Judicial Bar Association, where he was a member of the board for the Nebraska Bar Association. Additionally, Jim was a member of the American Bar Association as well as a 32nd Degree Mason.

After retiring in 1991, Jim and his wife split their years between Ericson, (where Jim was co-founder of the Ericson Lake Association) and Green Valley, Arizona. Having wet their feet with bike rides across Nebraska, Jim and his wife, whom he referred to as his best friend, cycled through Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and New Zealand.

Jim's ancestors immigrated to the United States from G vle, Sweden, and founded the Swede Plain Church in Polk. Jim's Grandfather was John Nathaniel Norton, who was a member of the Nebraska House of Representatives and co-introduced the Nebraska Unicameral System along with Senator George W. Norris. He later served as a United States Congressman. Jim's aunt was Evelyn Lincoln Norton, who was John F. Kennedy's personal secretary when he was a senator as well as when he was President of the United States.

Jim will be buried at the Osceola Cemetery in Osceola overlooking his boyhood home on the ridge. He will be remembered for his keen intelligence, dry wit and for the support and love he gave to his family.

He is survived by his wife Elaine of Green Valley, Arizona, his two sons Miles Nathaniel Norton of New York City, New York, and Todd Lincoln Norton of Carefree, Arizona, Todd's wife Rebecca Gonzales Norton, their two children Nicolette Ann Norton and Travis Lincoln Norton all of Carefree, Arizona, and a daughter Kimberly Norton Blanchard of Hebron.



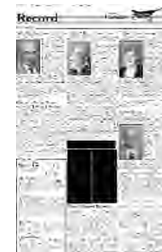
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THE RED OAK Express

You Make Me Feel Like Dancing...

The Red Oak Rotary Club held their 8th annual Daddy/Daughter Dance at the White Fair Building on Saturday, Feb. 3. The event brought together girls of all ages and their adult male role models for a full night of fun. When they weren't on the dance floor, participants were able to take a break and relax with craft projects and enjoy drinks and snacks provided by the Rotary Club. Pictured right are Mo and Gracie Roberts showing off their fancy footwork on the dance floor. More pictures from the Daddy/Daughter Dance can be found on Page 5B and redoakexpress.com. (Nick Johansen/The Red Oak Express)





Rotary Club schedules Potato Bake luncheon

Wayne Rotary Club's Potato Bake and Dessert Bar luncheon is quickly approaching. It will be held at the Wayne City Auditorium on Sunday, Feb. 11 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Tickets are available in advance from Rotary members and will also be available to purchase at the door. The menu includes baked potatoes with various toppings, along with a wide selection of homemade pies and other desserts. Hot dogs will be available for children.

This event is the major fund raising activity by the Wayne Rotary Club to use towards community service. Most of the proceeds go toward youth-related educational projects.

A \$1,000 scholarship is awarded each year to a Wayne High School senior for studies at Wayne State College.

"Your contribution can make the difference in helping a local graduating senior pursue a local higher education degree," said Anne Nolte, a member of the Wayne Rotary Club and one of the organizers of the event.

A \$500 annual scholarship is

awarded to a Wayne State College student who participates in Rotaract, which is a college affiliate of the Rotary International organization. The selection criteria for this scholarship include leadership potential and community service.

More than 3,000 dictionaries have been distributed to third graders in area schools by the Wayne Rotary Club since the project started in 2007. Schools include the following schools: Wayne, Wayne St. Mary's, Winside, Wisner-Pilger, Pender, Emerson-Hubbard, Wakefield, Allen, Walthill, Winnebago, the Omaha Nation, and Laurel-Concord-Coleridge. The goal of this project is to assist students in completing the school year as good writers, active readers, and creative thinkers by having their own personal dictionary.

The Wayne Rotary club gives annual financial support to the Wayne TeamMates program. A number of Rotary members serve as mentors in this program as well.

St. Mary's bake sale will have a variety of foods available for purchase.



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Letter to the Editor

Thanks and sorry to Seward Rotary

Dennis Richters Utica

On Jan. 24, the Seward Rotary Club had a luncheon meeting and had Gov. Pete Ricketts as their guest speaker. The meeting was held downstairs at Jones Bank, and it was very well-attended. The Rotarians were welcoming and, even though I didn't have an official invitation, they were very gracious. The food and the fellowship were excellent.

I had searched my computer to learn more about the Rotary Club. (I've learned that computers don't just hate me, they hate practically everyone.) Members of the Rotary Club can be proud of their accomplishments as they support so many projects with their funding and their service. Very impressive. The information about the Rotarians lists six bullet points of their concerns and

efforts. The last two bullet points relate to their concerns and efforts about education and local economies.

We in the Fair Nebraska movement have similar goals. Fair Nebraska has accurately told the public what is happening to our public schools because of Gov. Ricketts and the Unicameral. We have also described, ahead of time, many of our present problems and the results to the taxpayers as the funding to public education will deteriorate in times of falling ag land values.

For example, the value of ag land in the Cozad school district probably will go down 7 percent in this year. So, how does Cozad fund the cost of educating their students? To receive the same amount of funding (with zero increase in a time of inflating costs) they will have to have a vote by their

constituents to override the state-mandated levy limit. Good luck getting that done.

Ask Josh Fields, Seward schools superintendent, with increasing enrollment and higher costs every year; if he can do a sufficient job of educating our youth under that scenario. Ask Mike Lucas and York schools how many teachers and how many programs will need to be eliminated. In the case at York, a 7-percent reduction in land value would lower the funding nearly a million dollars. In Seward's case, the reduction would amount to nearly three-quarters of a million.

Seward and York schools are rural, and their state aid has diminished. In a three-year period, around the time of annexation by Omaha, Elkhorn's state aid went from \$706,838 per year to \$18,603,564. That tells me that, instead of having two

elephants (agriculture and education) in the room, we have now added an 800-pound gorilla to the room—that being Omaha.

As far as local economic development, if the state lived up to its responsibility to help fund our schools, our rural towns, cities and counties could have economic development that would amaze everybody. As it is, Gov. Ricketts and the Unicameral are throwing all of rural Nebraska under the bus.

I also want to renew my pledge to run in opposition of Gov. Ricketts, to ensure a debate on these issues. I promise to vote against me if I do run. If I offended anyone at the Rotary Club, I sincerely apologize. The governor has refused to meet with Fair Nebraska, which leaves us with few alternatives to have a meaningful discussion.



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Ricketts talks taxes, jobs at Rotary

by Emily Hemphill

emily@sewardindependent.com

Nebraska's unemployment rate is at 2.7 percent—the lowest it's been since the late 1990s.

Gov. Pete Ricketts thinks that is, in part, because of the state's efforts to bring in new corporations.

"Companies are recognizing that we are a great place," Ricketts said Jan. 24 as he addressed the Seward Rotary Club at its noon meeting at Jones National Bank.

Ricketts recapped his recent State of the State address, which focused on employment, taxes, trade and government spending.

He said his administration is committed to cutting government spending and supporting economic growth throughout Nebraska, adding that the state now has more than one million non-farming jobs helping Nebraskans thrive.

An international trade mission to Denmark recent-

ly brought one new company, Novozymes, to Blair, and Kawasaki in Lincoln is adding an aerospace division, Ricketts said, which means more jobs are available to Nebraskans.

Additionally, Facebook added a new data center campus in Papillion last year, marking the company's sixth facility in the U.S. and its ninth worldwide.

"Ninety-five percent of our world's consumers are outside our borders, and we have to go out there and get them," Ricketts said.

As part of his plan to reduce government spending, Ricketts said \$100 million in reductions were made this fiscal year (ending June 30) and an additional \$123 million in cuts are planned for next year, based on what the state's income forecasting board anticipates.

He said government agencies have reduced the number of necessary employees by 500 people and have taken 1,500 state jobs that were not filled within

90 days off the books.

In other areas, the state has spent \$35 million this year on public assistance and the child welfare program. Ricketts said 485 kids are currently in the system, and one in three of those situations is related to methamphetamine abuse.

"We've got to take care of our kids," he said.

An additional \$15 million has been invested in Medicaid programming.

Ricketts said the agricultural economy has still not fully rebounded from its 2013 recession, and property taxes are high on the legislature's priority list.

He said ag land values have increased 252 percent over the last 10 years, which means taxes have jumped, too.

His tax plan, the Nebraska Property Tax Cuts and Opportunities Act, offers a tax rebate starting at 10 percent for ag landowners and going up to 10 percent for homeowners.

The goal is to get the ag

land rebate up to 30 percent to offer more tax relief for farmers in the future.

Out-of-state residents who own land in Nebraska would not be eligible for the rebate.

"We can deliver more relief by focusing on Nebraskans," Ricketts said.

The plan is part of a package deal that needs 33 votes from senators in order to pass.

"If it doesn't get 33 votes, it's not getting to my desk," he said.

The mix of rural and urban senators poses a challenge for the legislature, Ricketts said, especially when ag land is involved.

"We have to build a broad coalition to get anything done this session, and it's absolutely critical we get something done this session. We can't let another year go by," he said.

The current legislative session is a 60-day session scheduled to end April 18.



EMILY HEMPHILL/SCI

Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts speaks to the Seward Rotary Club Jan. 24 at Jones National Bank. Ricketts recapped his State of the State address, which focused on employment, taxes, trade and government spending. The Rotary Club presented Ricketts with Seward Sesquicentennial wine and autographed copies of Ted Kooser books for the Nebraska Authors room at the Governor's Mansion in Lincoln.



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