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# News-Times

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York, Nebraska

www.yorknewstimes.com

YORK

## Michelle Ronne: Realtor, volunteer, advocate

Business,  
community leader  
remembered

By Melanie Wilkinson

MANAGING EDITOR

YORK – The York community, which reaches far beyond these city limits, is remembering the life and legacy of Michelle Ronne -- longtime volunteer, business person and advocate for many.

Ronne, 49, passed away

on Wednesday, Nov. 15, leaving many in mourning and also in gratitude for all she did and all she stood for.

The wife of Ross Ronne and the mother of three children – Breanne, Evan and Morann – was also referred to as a force of nature in the business world as well as in the arena of being a promoter of York

and worthy causes.

She was the co-owner of Green Realty and Auction in York . . . a family company she ran with her sister, Kristi Bukaske; husband; her oldest daughter; and many longtime associates.

This proactive and dynamic company was started by her father, the famed Norm Green. Ronne and

Bukaske (the Green girls) grew up in the auction and realty business.

"I remember us kids, having to sit around and prep all those sale bills for distribution," Ronne said, laughing, in an interview with the York News-Times in 2012. "Thousands upon thousands of them. Oh, how I hated that job."

When they got to be

SEE **RONNE** PAGE 8A



Michelle Ronne

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## RONNE: Services planned for Wednesday, Nov. 22 at 10:02 a.m.

teenagers, her then-boy-friend and now husband, Ross, joined the group to work at auctions. "He was so interested in the auction business and he worked a lot for my dad as he grew up. He's been a part of my family since we were 16 years old," she said in that earlier interview.

Ronne said, back in 2012, that she never had any early intention of officially joining the family business – but in 1990, she earned her realty license, followed by her broker license in 1993.

Bukaske was licensed in 1998 and joined the company.

A family business, in every sense of the term.

In 2003, Ronne and Bukaske were faced with their father's sudden death. Besides their personal pain, they also had to face the fact that the business was already in motion and had to be dealt with.

"We all worked so

hard," Ronne said in that interview, as she remembered the tough transition. "I remember how Mary (Thomas, longtime employee) worked her butt off. Everyone stepped up. We just did what we had to do. We just kept going."

Ross joined the team full time as auctioneer.

"I remember thinking that if we could just get two years under our belts, we'd be fine," Ronne said. "Then two years came and went . . . and no one doubted that we could do it and carry on."

Carry on they certainly did.

While they changed some things with how the company runs . . . by embracing forward-thinking marketing strategies and

technology . . . they still held true with the traditional auction time set by their father, which was one minute after the hour. They just tweaked it a little . . . to two minutes after the hour, which has become their trademark.

And the company is still very much about family.

In 2014, Ronne and Bukaske were recognized by the York Area Chamber of Commerce when they were given the Women-owned Business Award. At the time, Ronne reflected on the tight bond between the two, saying, "We are so close, we are more than sisters. We are a perfect combination."

Many remember Ronne's dedication and business skill. That includes Kathy Larson, former advertising director for the York News-Times. "Working with Michelle Ronne through the York News-Times advertising department for 23 years gave me insight into the professional, hard working woman she was. She built her business from the ground up, always staying on the cutting edge of the real estate profession while also building relationships and friendships along the way. I am proud to have considered myself Michelle's friend and colleague, and know that she will be greatly missed by myself and many others."

The sentiment was

shared by Carrie Colburn, publisher of the York News-Times.

"The York News-Times and Green Realty have for years been partners – supporting each other, contributing to the positive success of one another and best of all being friends, working together through it all," Colburn said. "Michelle was a great lady. This great loss hurts. The entire heart of the YNT aches. Her impact on us, the community she loved and the countless families she touched is beyond words. In our thoughts and prayers we send our love to her family, friends and the Green Team – today, tomorrow and years to come, you have our love and support."

Despite her busy professional life while also raising a family, Ronne still found time to be a very active volunteer in many organizations. The list is long: York Chamber Ambassadors, chairman of Yorkfest, York Rotary Club, CASA, York County Development Corporation and the Blue River Board of Realtors.

"When I was executive director of the York Area Chamber of Commerce, Michelle was the chairman of the Chamber Ambassador program," remembers Todd Kirshenbaum. "I got to work with her on many projects. She was always eager to do what was best

for the community and for the chamber. She was professional but always had a smile and took genuine interest in whoever she met."

"Michelle and I go as far back as the late 80s when we were cocktail waitresses at Chances R. We used to talk a lot about our hopes and dreams for the future," said York Area Chamber Director Madonna Mogul. "Along with her sister, they carried on their father's business which allowed her to impact so many families here in York. Michelle was a chair and co-chair of the Chamber's Ambassador Club, served on several committees and provided leadership for the staff here at the Chamber. I looked forward to when Michelle would come to the office to share ideas for her business, the Chamber and the York community. Michelle will be missed by so many in York. My thoughts and prayers are with Michelle's family during this difficult time."

Dave Sjuts, a fellow Chamber Ambassador, agreed that Ronne was a go-to person for the York community, saying, "Michelle was one of those people you could count on to take charge and do it right."

Carol Knieriem, executive director of CASA, said she is extremely grateful for Ronne's work with the organization, which provides court-appointed

advocates to be voices for abused and neglected children in the court system.

"Michelle was an active and passionate member of the board of directors' for CASA for York County from June 2008 to February 2010," Knieriem said. "During that time, she held the position of board treasurer. Michelle continued to financially support CASA for York County after her term on the board. She was very supportive of the work of our volunteers and board members throughout the years. Our hearts go out to Michelle's family. We will all miss Michelle."

York County Development Corporation Executive Director Lisa Hurley added that, "I was so saddened to hear of Michelle's passing. From the minute I met her, she went out of the way to connect me around the community and provided valuable insight on York County. I consider her a friend and will miss her. She leaves a true legacy in the York area, and her loss will be felt in the community for years to come."

Funeral services for Ronne will be held Wednesday, Nov. 22, at the Emmanuel Lutheran Church in York.

The commemoration of her life will begin at 10:02 . . . two minutes after the hour.



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# Planting with a purpose

## Rotary Club plants trees in honor of two women

By GRACE PETERSEN

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Two new trees can be found at Skyview Park.

These trees — an oak and a sycamore — have special meaning. They were planted by the Norfolk Rotary Club in memory of two women — Micki Hespe and Abby Uecker — who played a role in the club's annual Music in the Park. The trees are planted near the Skyview stage.

**THE OAK TREE** is in honor of Hespe, a lifelong Norfolkian who died in 2011. She is the daughter of longtime businessman John Hespe, owner of Hespe Construction Company.

Sherri Prim, president of the Norfolk Rotary Club, said Hespe directed a part of her estate to be earmarked for parks and recreation. At that point in time, Music in the Park was just getting started, as were the discussions about needing a permanent stage at

Skyview Park.

Prim said Nucor Steel and Vulcraft were interested in building the stage so "it was a perfect opportunity for Stan (Christensen) as public representative of her estate to direct her generous donation toward the Skyview stage," Prim said. "Micki's family and friends also honored her with memorial gifts. The money in Micki's Memorial Fund, along with a donation from the Norfolk Rotary Club, will be used for a tree planted in her honor, near the Skyview stage."

Christensen, also a Rotarian, is the current treasurer of the club, and former president. Christensen said he personally wanted to choose an oak tree for Hespe.

"It was a great way to honor her. The leaves stay on the tree all winter along. The leaves are the size of a brick. It's neat to have leaves stay on all winter long," Christensen said. "It fit Micki very well."

**FOR UECKER**, who performed under the stage name of Abby Nicole, a sycamore tree was planted. Uecker performed at Music in the Park for a special performance in July 2016, as well as in July 2017, just a couple of weeks before she died as a result of an accident at the Thayer County Fair in Deshler.

Several members of her family made a donation to Music in the Park in Uecker's honor. This money, along with a donation from the Norfolk Rotary Club, was used for a tree planted in her honor near the Skyview stage, Prim said.

"For Abby, I wanted something unique. I visited Earl May and decided on a sycamore," Christensen said. "It fit what we were trying to do for her. There's only one other sycamore in the whole park. They (the trees) are going to be unique trees to the area."

**PLANTING TREES** to honor these two women also coincides with Rotary International's worldwide tree planting initiative for 2017.

Rotary International president-elect Ian H.S. Riseley has challenged every Rotary Club to make a difference by planting a tree for each of its members between the start of the Rotary year on July 1, 2017, and Earth Day on April 22, 2018.

"The Rotary also has a worldwide initiative. There are 1.2 millions Rotarians around the world. Every year, we have a theme. The theme this year is to plant trees," Christensen said. "It seemed like it's fit ... to be in honor of people who helped with Music in the Park. Our club was wanting to do something like this for the initiative. It seemed appropriate then to plant trees (in honor of those who contributed) to music in the park greatly. It seemed like it all made sense."



COURTESY PHOTOS

**IN THE PHOTO AT LEFT**, Earl May employees plant a sycamore tree at Skyview Park in Norfolk. **In the photo above**, a tree spade is used to plant an oak tree at Skyview Park. Both trees are located near the Skyview stage used during Music in the Park.

“For Abby, I wanted something unique. I visited Earl May and decided on a sycamore. It fit what we were trying to do for her. There’s only one other sycamore in the whole park. They (the trees) are going to be unique trees to the area.”

**STAN CHRISTENSEN**

NORFOLK ROTARY CLUB TREASURER



COURTESY PHOTOS

**TOWARD THE** end of October, the Norfolk Rotary Club planted two trees in Skyview Park. **Above** is the sycamore tree planted in honor of Abby Uecker, who performed under the stage name of Abby Nicole. **In the photo at top** is the oak tree planted for lifelong Norfolkian Micki Hespe, who died in 2011.

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## community CALENDAR THIS WEEKEND

- **Holiday Bake Sale** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 650 N. 63rd St. Homemade Greek pastries, cookies and breads — including baklava, kourbethes, and warm spanikopita.
- **Under way:** Handmade Harvest Lincoln opened Friday, continues 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at Unitarian Universalist Church of Lincoln, 6300 A St. Over 30 makers, crafters and artists selling everything from wood-turned bowls to crocheted blankets, ceramics to sewn items, paintings to recycled crafts. Food for sale by the Unitarian Church Youth in Action program, and raffle with items donated by vendors. Proceeds support Fresh Start, a homeless shelter for women and Handmade Harvest Lincoln. Drawing at the end of day Saturday.
- **Under way:** New exhibition, "Collection Critters" opened last weekend at the Great Plains Art Museum, 1155 Q St., runs through Feb. 16, 2018.
- **Free Saturday event** 2 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday at Vine Congregational Church, 1800 Twin Ridge Road. See article in this issue.
- **Last weekend:** "Ethan Claymore" opened last weekend in the Studio Theatre at Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th St. Remaining shows Nov. 18-19. Tickets may be reserved at lincolnpayhouse.com or call the box office weekdays 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets (general admission) \$25 for adults, \$15 for students.
- **Last weekend:** The 2017-2018 Nebraska Repertory Theatre production of "The Serpent" ends this weekend with shows at 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday at 12th and R streets. Admission: \$24 (\$12 for students and OLLI members). Tickets at Lied Center Box Office weekdays 11:30 a.m. — 5:30 p.m. and at liedcenter.org
- **Last weekend:** Brian Friel's "Dancing at Lughnasa" opened last week in Miller Theatre, 51st & Huntington, on the Nebraska Wesleyan University campus. Remaining shows 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. Admission \$10 for adults, \$7.50 for seniors and students. Buy tickets at theatre.nebrwesleyan.edu or reserve them at (402) 465-2384.
- **Fun Day activities** 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday at Fraternal Order of Eagles — Lincoln Auxiliary 147, 500 West Industrial Lake Drive. Shuffleboard, pool, breakfast and lunch, crafts, silent auction. All sales benefit National Eagle Charities.
- **"You are Loved: A Parent's Journey"** theme of 10 a.m. Sunday service at Unitarian Church of Lincoln, 6300 A St., hosted by the LGBTQA Welcoming Committee in recognition of the international

Transgender Day of Remembrance. Worship leader — LGBTQA Welcoming Committee, worship associate — Sandra Washington, music by the UCL Adult Choir. All-church potluck follows service. Vegetarian and meat entrees provided;

bring salads, sides or desserts.

- **Nebraska men's basketball team** plays host to North Dakota 1 p.m. Sunday at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

- **University of Nebraska State Museum's monthly Sunday** with a Scientist program 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday at Morrill Hall, 645 N. 14th St. Children and families to explore Nebraska throughout time and look at how scientists understand the world around them. Hands-on stations to help children learn about ecosystems and the impacts of weather throughout Nebraska's history.

- **Widowed Persons Service (WPS) Friendship Group** meets 2 to 4 p.m. every Sunday at Calvert Recreation Center, 4500 Stockwell St. (Fall session takes effect Sept. 10.)

- **Lincoln-Lancaster County Genealogical Society (LLCGS)** offers free assistance with genealogy and family history from 2-4 p.m. most Sundays at Walt Library, 6701 S. 14th St. For information on Sunday topics, see [www.llcgs.info](http://www.llcgs.info) or call Bob McQuistan, (402) 483-6158. Open to anyone interested in genealogy.

- **Lincoln Lutheran Choir** presents Reformation-focused music 3 p.m. Sunday at Grace Lutheran Church, 2225 Washington St. (All-City Girls Chorus and soloists to join the choir. Concert commemorates 500 years since Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses.)

- **TCB Saxophone Quartet** presents featured recital at 3:30 p.m. Sunday in Westbrook Recital Hall on the UNL campus. Free to the public.

- **KZUM (89.3 FM) third season of Soup & Songs:** Live at the Ferguson House, 700 S. 16th St., begins Sunday from 5 to 7 p.m. with music by The Lightning Bugs. Tickets (\$10) available online at [kzum.org](http://kzum.org) and at the door pending availability.

- **Elizabethan Feast** starts 6 p.m. Sunday at Saint Paul United Methodist Church, 1144 M St. Four-course meal served with entertainment by the Chamber Singers, Recorder Consort, Herald Trumpets, and the Theatre Players from Nebraska Wesleyan University. Tickets (\$25) must be purchased in advance on Saint Paul UMC's website at <http://www.saintpaulumc.org/> or by contacting the church at (402) 477-6951. All proceeds to the Saint Paul Youth Group.

- **TADA Productions, Inc.** hosts open auditions for "Into The Woods" 6:30 to 9 p.m. Sunday and 7 to 10 p.m. Monday at TADA Theatre, Seventh and P streets. Those wanting to audition should schedule an appointment and send a photo and list of stage experience to [casting@tadaproductions.info](mailto:casting@tadaproductions.info).
- **Nebraska women's basketball team** plays host to Creighton 7 p.m. Sunday at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

### ■ MONDAY

- **Sunrise Toastmasters Club** weekly meeting begins at 6:30 a.m. Gianna's Java and Gelato, 2241 O St. For information, 402-416-4342.

- **Nebraska Community Blood Bank** visit 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 333 S. 13th St. Info.: 1-877-486-9414.

- **Fallbrook Kiwanis Club** meets noon to 1 p.m. at the Concordia University location at 570 Fallbrook Blvd., Suite 203. Bring your own lunch.

- **Due to Thanksgiving week,** no Executive Club of Lincoln weekly noon luncheon meeting Nov. 20.

- **CPR for Family and Friends** 6 to 9 p.m. at Bryan West Campus, West Medical Plaza, Conference Center B, 2300 S. 16th St. \$20. Register at [bryanhealth.org/calendar](http://bryanhealth.org/calendar) or call (402) 481-5646.

- **Lincoln Torch Club** monthly dinner meeting 6:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Club, 20th floor, US Bank Building, 13th and M streets; optional social time at 6 p.m. Presentation: "Scratch That One Off the List," by Jim Johnson.

- **Monday Night Big Band** 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Cottonwood Café Bistro & Bar, 440 S. 11th St. \$5 general admission, \$3 for musicians sitting in with the Monday Night Big Band.

- **Everett Neighborhood Association** monthly meeting 7 p.m. at Calvary United Methodist Church, South 11th and Garfield streets.

- **West A Neighborhood Association** monthly meeting 7 p.m. at Roper Elementary School, 2323 S. Coddington Ave.

- **Large Brass Ensembles** at Glenn Korff School of Music present fall concert, "Brasstastic" at 7:30 p.m. in Kimball Recital Hall, 11th and R streets. General admission, \$5; students and seniors, \$3.

### ■ TUESDAY

- **Due to Kiwanis Farm-City Breakfast** at Cotner Center, no Lincoln Sunrise Kiwanis Club meeting Nov. 21. Meeting schedule resumes at 6:30 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 28 in the Flanagan Room at

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, 5401 South St.

- **First United Methodist seniors'** monthly breakfast 8:30 a.m. at Northside Cafe, 2701 N. 48th St.

- **Lincoln Rotary Club #14** weekly noon luncheon meeting at The Nebraska Club, 20th floor of US Bank, 12th and M streets. Program: The Rotary (International) Foundation Million Dollar Challenge, by Dave Livingston and Joe Roberts.

- **Southeast Lincoln Kiwanis Club** noon luncheon meeting at the Egg & I Clocktower location, 70th & A streets.

- **Capital City Kiwanis Club** weekly dinner meeting 6 p.m. at the Cotner Center, 1540 N. Cotner Blvd.

- **Free give-away** 6 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday at Calvary United Methodist Church, South 11th and Garfield streets. Free clothing (all sizes) and household items. No income eligibility requirements.

- **Cosmopolitan International Club** meets 6-7 p.m. at Panera Bread, 201 N. 66th St. Info.: call Julie Brezenski, (308) 850-8013.

- **Madonna Adaptive Sports & Recreation** Bowling Night for anyone with a disability 6 to 8 p.m. at Parkway Lanes, 2555 S. 48th St. \$5 to bowl, \$3 for shoe rental, call Rick Haith at (402) 413-

3722 to register.

- **LIPS storytelling group** meets at 7 p.m. at Ortner Center on Union College campus, South 48th & Prescott Avenue. Free to the public. Info.: Mary Reeves, (402) 464-1803 or [reevesmary34@gmail.com](mailto:reevesmary34@gmail.com)

- **Lincoln Camera Club** monthly meeting 7 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, South Street & Sheridan Boulevard. Public invited.

- **Jam session** 7 to 10 p.m. at Fraternal Order of Eagles — Lincoln Auxiliary 147, 500 West Industrial Lake Drive. \$4. Food served 5:30 to 7 p.m. (Mexican and club menu).

- **Dance to the music of the C.J. Honnor Quartet**, 7 to 9 p.m. at Auld Pavilion in Antelope Park, 3140 Sumner St. Ballroom and other varieties of dance.

- **Lincoln Continentals men's** a cappella chorus weekly rehearsal, 7 to 9 p.m. at Northeast United Church of Christ Social Hall, 6200 Adams St. New singers, guests welcome.

- **Lincolnaire Chorus** weekly rehearsal, 7 to 9 p.m. at Vine Congregational UCC, 1800 Twin Ridge Rd.

### ■ WEDNESDAY

- **Thanksgiving break** begins in Lincoln Public Schools. No classes Wednesday

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through Friday.

- Lincoln Sunrise Optimist Club breakfast meeting 7 a.m. at Perkins, 48th & O streets.
- Lincoln Gateway Sertoma Club breakfast meeting 7:30 a.m. at Tabitha, 48th and J streets.
- Lincoln Northeast Kiwanis Club weekly noon luncheon meeting at Golden Corral, 3940 N. 27th St. Program: Baby shower for Stork Nest.
- SouthPointe Kiwanis Club noon luncheon meeting at Williamsburg Hy-Vee, 40th & Duxhall Dr.
- Thanksgiving break: No Lincoln East Rotary Club noon luncheon meeting Nov. 22 at Valentino's Grand Italian Buffet, 70th & Van Dorn. Weekly meetings resume Nov. 29 with a presentation by club member Dr. Charles Erickson.
- Nebraska Community Blood Bank visit 3 to 6 p.m. at Sam's Club South, 8480 Andermatt. Info.: call 1-877-486-9414 or visit NCBB.ORG
- South Gate United Methodist Church, 3500 Pioneers Blvd., hosts special worship service on Wednesdays at 5:30

p.m. Come as you are from work and participate in a short, meaningful service with Rev. Stephanie Ahlschwede. A midweek opportunity for a brief quiet time All are welcome. More info: (402) 489-1641.

- An ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve celebration co-sponsored by First-Plymouth Congregational Church (UCC) and Saint Paul United Methodist Church, 7 p.m. at First-Plymouth Church, 20th and D streets. Public invited.

### ■ THURSDAY

- Happy Thanksgiving!

### ■ FRIDAY

- "Bridges: Sharing Our Past to Enrich the Future," sesquicentennial traveling photo exhibit, opens at the Durham Museum at Union Station, 801 S. 10th St., Omaha, continues through Jan. 7, 2018. Endorsed by the Nebraska 150 Commission as a signature event, sponsored by Hildegard Center for the Arts — Lincoln in collaboration with

the Nebraska Tourism Commission and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

- Lincoln Center Kiwanis Club weekly noon luncheon meeting on 20th floor of U.S. Bank, 13th and M streets.
- Lincoln South Rotary Club weekly noon luncheon at The Venue Restaurant, 70th & Pioneers Blvd.
- FirstTier Toastmasters Club meets noon to 1 p.m. at Saint Paul United Methodist Church, 12th and M streets. For more information, visit <http://5949.toastmastersclubs.org>

### ■ NEXT WEEKEND

- "Lights of Love" ceremony 6 p.m. Sunday (Nov. 26) in the lower-level lobby of CHI Health St. Elizabeth, 555 S. 70th St. Guest speaker — Bobbi Hawk, MD, neonatologist at St. Elizabeth; vocalist — Denise Tewes, followed by lighting of outdoor Christmas trees, and a complimentary light meal hosted by the St. Elizabeth Auxiliary. Donations to Lights of Love support the Angel Eye Camera System fund at St. Elizabeth

Foundation. To donate: [www.chihealth-stelizabeth.com/lightsoflove](http://www.chihealth-stelizabeth.com/lightsoflove).

### ■ COMING SOON

- English language volunteer tutor orientation, 1:30 or 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 28, at Lincoln Literacy, 745 S. Ninth St. Tutors needed for English Language Learners and native speakers of English working on increasing their literacy skills. Register at [www.lincolnliteracy.org](http://www.lincolnliteracy.org). Info.: contact Victoria Welles at [vwelles@lincolnliteracy.org](mailto:vwelles@lincolnliteracy.org) or 402-476-7323. Norden Club of Lincoln's annual Holiday Smorgasbord dinner, program, and silent auction Monday evening, Dec. 11 at Hillcrest Country Club, 9401 O St. \$35 for members; \$40 for non-members; \$15 for ages 5-15; under age 5 free. Advance reservations only; deadline Nov. 27. Mail check and names of those attending to: Norden Club, 5621 Bison Ct., Lincoln, NE 68516. Info.: call (402) 421-7142.



## hometown QUIZ

Hometown Quiz appears each week on our puzzle page.

### This week's questions:

**Q:** What milestone will the Nebraska Community Blood Bank celebrate next year?

**Q:** Who is this month's recipient of the Teacher of the Month award presented by the Lincoln East Rotary Club and U.S. Bank?

**Q:** Who is the newest member of the Gateway Sertoma Club?

**Q:** When was Capitol City Footprinters Chapter #44 formed?

Answers to the questions above will appear in next week's Hometown Quiz column and on our website — [www.NeighborhoodExtra.com](http://www.NeighborhoodExtra.com)

### Last week's questions and answers:

#### Answers to last week's questions:

**Q:** Which public middle school in Lincoln has the highest enrollment?

**A:** Scott Middle School, 2200 Pine Lake Road, with 1,144 students.

**Q:** What milestone is Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S. 33rd St., celebrating this year?

**A:** Its 100th anniversary as a congregation.

**Q:** What pharmacy preceded Kohll's Pharmacy & Homecare at 27th & Vine streets?

**A:** Wagey Drug. The street corner has been the home of a pharmacy since 1924.

**Q:** Who was the first chair of the Nebraska Community Foundation?

**A:** Maxine Moul.

**Q:** Who is the final regular-season opponent for the Husker women's volleyball team?

**A:** The Husker women play host to the University of Iowa next Saturday, Nov. 25.



# Dworaks recognized for giving

Local couple named winners of annual philanthropy award

**JULIE BLUM**

jblum@columbustelegram.com

COLUMBUS — Don and Judy Dworak live their lives by a simple lesson.

"We were taught to share if you can share," Don said.

The couple have been doing just that in numerous ways, impacting both the community and state.

For their contributions, the Dworaks were selected as the 2017 Distinguished Philanthropist Award winners. They will receive the award during a Columbus Area Philanthropy Council program at The Broken Mug at 1C Church, 2200 28th Ave.

The honor is appreciated, but not something the two were expecting.

"They stretched," Don said. "When I look at the previous recipients, I think we are not in that league."

That humility covers more than 60 years of giving to the community.

The two are originally from David City and moved to Columbus in 1969. Don said it was instilled in both of them early to perform charitable acts.

"I think we feel that way because we had pretty good guidance from our parents and grandparents. They helped people," the 83-year-old said.

Don was a teacher for two years, then worked for an insurance agency before the couple opened their own insurance business. When they

weren't working, the two were active in supporting many nonprofit organizations, especially in the area of education.

Recently, Don served on the board for the Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha, which provides tuition assistance for low-income families to send their children to private or parochial schools. The Dworaks have been active supporters of Scotus Central Catholic, as well as St. Bonaventure and St. Isidore Catholic churches.

The two believe education is important and served as honorary chairs during the effort to build a new library/cultural arts center.

"There's a real need for it," Judy, 75, said of the project that got turned down by local residents during an April bond vote.

They also started the Judy and Don Dworak Endowment for the Columbus Community Hospital Foundation. That endowment assists patients who need help paying hospital bills.

Don has supported more than a dozen other groups as a member or by serving on the board, including the Boy Scouts, Rotary, Eagles, American Red Cross, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Nebraska Wildlife Federation and Nebraska Farm Bureau

Federation.

He was able to explore his lifelong interest in politics by being elected as a senator to the Nebraska Legislature for two terms starting in 1974.

"That was one of the greatest experiences in my life to be able to help people," he said.

A piece of legislation he is particularly proud to have introduced is the habitat stamp program passed in 1977. The program has raised millions of dollars used to purchase thousands of acres of land for public hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation.

He also headed up an effort to purchase and renovate the Nebraska State Museum building and served as a delegate to Republican National Conventions in 1976 and 1980.

Even with a long history of giving back, the two feel like what they have done isn't that special.

"We've probably taken more than we've given, if you want to be honest about it. All of us are in that position," Don said.

The Dworaks won't be the only ones recognized at the Nov. 27 event.

Richard Otterpohl will be honored with the Legacy Award, which is given posthumously to an individual who left a lasting legacy through philan-

thropic giving after death.

Otterpohl, who passed away in 2014, left the majority of his estate to the Columbus Community Hospital Foundation and Columbus Christian School Foundation.

The hospital named Lake Esther, a pond just east of CCH, after Otterpohl's mother, Esther Otterpohl Campbell.

Youth Philanthropy Contest participants will also have their projects on display at the event scheduled for 5-6:30 p.m. at 1C Church.

Please see **DWORAKS**, Page A2

## Dworaks

From A1

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COURTESY PHOTO

Judy and Don Dworak were named the 2017 Distinguished Philanthropist Award winners for their contributions to the community and state.