

1992 Iowa Master Farm Homemakers Guild Inductees

In 1928, a Minnesota magazine called *The Farmer's Wife* selected the first Master Farm Homemakers, receiving more applications from Iowa than any other state. These women represented the highest values of rural life: love for family, dedication to community, and empathy for people in all parts of the world.

Although electricity, adequate road systems, advanced communication, and running water were yet to come, early farm women were the glue that held the family unit together. Nearly every waking hour was spent cooking, cleaning, and caring for their family.

But there was a strong network for women. They shared joys, sorrows, and frustrations at threshing dinners, quilting meetings, and church gatherings. This support system helped them through many difficult times. In 1931, *The Farmer's Wife* ceased to function. Yet the 20 women who made up the Iowa Masters Farm Homemakers Guild (IMFH) were determined to see the program continue. They contacted Wallace Farmer to sponsor the program in 1940, which the magazine agreed to do. Zoe Murphy, the home editor, was put in charge of working with the guild and helping to find a way to sponsor future recognitions. The depression and World War II postponed their intentions, however, so the first program sponsored by Wallace Farmer didn't take place until 1947. So although the IMFH began in 1928, the 50th class of new members will be honored this year.

Farm life has changed dramatically from those earlier years, but the basic ideals of farm homemakers have remained the same. They still put their family and faith first. They still reach out to their communities and people in other parts of the world. They have modern conveniences to decrease physical labor, but transportation and communication have increased their scope in influence.

The Iowa Guild has always had an international perspective. The Pennies for Friendship Program was first mentioned in 1947 and is an example of their desire to reach out to Women worldwide.

In the 1940's, they paid the dues of the German Countrywomen's Women of the World since they were not allowed to send money out of Germany. Similarly, this year the Iowa group helped finance women from an Eastern Bloc country to attend the international conference in the Netherlands.

The same love and nurturing that makes the family unit strong is expanding to others through the IMFH. They give of their time and talents and never stop believing they can make a difference. Wallace Farmer is proud to honor the women of the following pages who are receiving the 1992 Iowa Master Farm Homemaker award, and all those who preceded.

To commemorate their 50th program, a video was produced to capture the essence of the women who are members of this important and valuable group. Through conversations with new class members, guild leaders, and former honorees, "Celebrating Farm Homemaking" examines the spirit of love, friendship, responsibility, and compassion that emanates from these women. As they recall experiences with their mothers and grandmothers, a constant thread weaves the story of dedication carried from one generation to the next. And from one nation to the next.

Patricia Carney - IMFH Class of 1992

Guthrie County

Pat Carney likes people. This is obvious by the number of groups in which she's so actively involved, and by the interest she shows in other people's lives. It's obvious in her off-farm job as a travel agent, by helping people have memorable, trouble-free

vacations. It's most evident through her positive, outgoing attitude and the way she automatically puts people at ease.

The definition of an extrovert is a person more interested in the world about her than her inner self. This woman gives freely to her family, community, and many organizations.

Pat resides on the family farm outside of Adair, in Guthrie County. Although her husband passed away in December 1990, Pat remains active and does the bookkeeping for the family partnership, which consists of more than 1,600 acres, a cattle feeding enterprise, and a hog confinement operation.

Her sons, Sam and Clifford, handle the day-to-day responsibilities, but Pat is involved in the decision making and helps by running errands and filling in when they need an extra hand.

Although she doesn't spend as much time on the tractor now, she always worked alongside her husband, Calvin.

"The kids had a 160-acre playground," jokes Pat. She'd set the children at the end of the field while she made the rounds. They were satisfied with "playing farm," knowing, "Mom will be back sometime." Perhaps that is how both sons developed a love for livestock and the land, and are involved in farming today.

Pat's interests are varied, and she doesn't let much grass grow under her feet. She is active in Farm Bureau, serving as district chairperson for six years. She is also chairperson of the women's organization at the First Presbyterian Church in Adair. This group has three major fund-raising events, a fall dinner, a hunter's breakfast, and an ice cream social.

"Our ice cream social is especially fun," bubbles Pat. "We use a tractor with a narrow pulley to run the 50-year-old, 10-gallon ice cream churner from the old creamery."

The ice cream recipe has remained the same as long as anyone can remember, and the crowd that attends the social each year attests to its quality.

For recreation, Pat enjoys attending her grandchildren's sporting events and other school activities. She also likes to cycle, but not just down to the corner and back. She has participated in RAGBRAI five times, and relishes meeting new people. She has been to Germany, Switzerland, and Mexico, among others.

While her husband fought his battle with cancer, Pat cut back on many of her activities to spend time with Calvin. She feels especially fortunate for the chance they had to go to Germany and visit some of the places he had stayed during World War II.

Despite the loss of her husband, Pat is thankful for their wonderful times together, and for the support of friends and family. Her positive attitude carries her through and her enthusiasm and good nature encourage others to do their best.

Esther Frandsen - IMFH Class of 1992

Story County

Esther Frandsen, Roland, Iowa, is one of those energetic souls who you rarely see in the foreground. Yet she is always there, leading by example. Those who know her say she has the "gracefulness of true humility," high praise for this soft-spoken, attractive woman.

Esther and her husband, Wally, have a 650-acre row-crop operation and feed cattle on their Story County farm. They live next to the house in which Wally was raised, just southwest of Roland.

Their three daughters, Diane, Sonja, and Julie live fairly close by so they are able to come home often, when their schedules permit. Diane is the Story County Clerk of Court, Sonja has a family of three young boys, and Julie is a student at Iowa State University. The times they can spend together are treasured.

Esther's faith is no secret, and has been an anchor throughout her life. She and Wally are involved in the Bergen Lutheran Church in Roland, having served in almost all leadership capacities. People in the community are especially proud of their Scandinavian heritage and the church sponsors a large tea in the fall called "Heritage Holidays." Esther helps organize this tea, featuring food from around the world.

She is also very active in the Wa-Tan-Ye Group. The words are a derivative of the Indian word meaning "service foremost." The group's main project is running the concession stand at the ball games, with proceeds going to needy causes, but it also sponsors the Cub Scouts and other community activities.

The Bethany Manor nursing home, in nearby Story City, has benefitted from Esther's generosity. She visits the manor on a regular basis and her 4-H club had an adoptive grandparent program through the manor.

Each year one of the special activities in Story City is Scandinavian Days. Esther and local 4-Hers bring the residents from Bethany Manor out to enjoy the festivities. They also look forward to the day each year when Esther's 4-H club brings them homemade ice cream.

"These things help make up for the many hours they spend by themselves. Some of the residents don't have family nearby and rarely have visitors," explains Esther. "They enjoy the outings very much."

No doubt they also appreciate her gracious company and caring nature. When she is not volunteering time to others, Esther likes to sew, garden, and make crafts. She is a talented seamstress, and obviously passed this on to her youngest daughter, Julie-she placed second in the senior division of the National Make It With Wool Contest last year.

Gardening gives Esther lots of enjoyment. She tries to plant at least one new plant in the garden every year. "We've had lima beans, celery, broccoli, sweet potatoes, even peanuts and cotton!" she says. The standbys are always in abundance, like tomatoes, green beans, sweet corn, and strawberries.

Esther looks at gardening in somewhat of a philosophical light. "A garden is a lot like life-it has some weeds along the way, but they give us strength and help us feel compassion," she explains.

Esther's own childhood prior to adoption was not easy. But she overcame early difficulties, and vowed to be a devoted wife and mother. In the eyes of family and friends, Esther Frandsen has definitely become one of the best.

Shirley Pennington - IMFH Class of 1992

Floyd County

Fresh strawberry pie made from her own berries, vegetable salad, and a tasty entree featuring 3 ounces of lean, cooked beef over lettuce with a tangy dressing.

Shirley Pennington's table tells a lot about what she considers important. This Floyd County homemaker is a solid supporter of the beef industry and has served in many leadership positions with the Iowa CattleWomen's organization.

She believes in fresh, healthy food and maintains a large garden. Jams and jellies are somewhat of a specialty and Shirley has the blue ribbons to prove it.

She and her husband, Bruce, reside near Rudd, Iowa, and have a cattle-feeding operation in addition to farming about 900 acres in a family corporation. Even with the busy schedule inherent in an operation of this size. Shirley says they have changed their eating habits to fit a healthy lifestyle. "We're using less sugar and salt than we use to," she admits.

When this busy woman is not preparing delicious meals or freezing vegetables, she is using her business and accounting degree. Shirley keeps all the corporation accounts, legal records, tax information, and balances the corporation books. She also keeps track of future/options positions on grain in storage.

Education has always been important to Shirley and she stresses a well-rounded approach. Their daughters were involved in extracurricular clubs, sports, and college prep classes. Daughter Julie graduated from Iowa State University with a B.S. degree, then received two Masters degrees in international management and agricultural economics. Currently she is program coordinator for international agricultural programs at ISU.

Their daughter, Cindy, received a B.S. degree in agriculture education and is a computer trainer for Pioneer Hi-Bred International and owns a "Duds and Suds" franchise in Mason City.

Shirley and Bruce's eldest daughter, Debra Ann, was planning a medical career when she had a sudden cardiac arrhythmia at the age of 18. Her untimely death caused the Penningtons to draw upon an inner strength and make an extra effort to spend time with Julie and Cindy.

The family has been very involved in extension programs through the years. Susan McDonnell, Floyd County extension home economist says, "The Penningtons have the ability to see the broad picture and recognize the value of extension programs serving 4-H, families, agriculture, communities, and global education. For this reason, their opinions are often sought at program planning meetings."

Perhaps their broad view is expanded by the many trips the Penningtons have taken. They have traveled abroad extensively, and visited over 40 states before their daughters graduated from high school. The family hosted visitors from all over the world, and welcomed them all equally.

Shirley's dedication to the cattle industry earned her the highest award bestowed by Iowa CattleWomen. She has served on many committees and held numerous leadership positions, including the office of president. She is not only highly respected by her peers within the industry, but gives freely of her time, talents, and knowledge with other organizations, the community, and her church. Shirley Pennington does not seek recognition but quietly works towards her goals for the betterment of others.

Norma Hager - IMFH Class of 1992
Black Hawk County

Being a superlative farm homemaker runs in Norma Hager's family. Thirty years ago, this LaPorte City woman's mother, Ella Bakker, received the Iowa Master Farm Homemaker award. Many of the qualifications that determined the winners then are still

important today—a strong commitment to family, devotion to church, and numerous contributions to the community.

Norma and her husband, C. Lloyd, raised six children on a 480-acre grain and livestock farm in Black Hawk County. All of their children—Cynthia, Randall, Cathleen, Cheryl, Ronald and Richard—went on to a college education after high school, and their abilities have carried them a long way.

For example, their oldest son, Randy, was a Peace Corps volunteer in Botswana, Africa. Norma wrote him a letter nearly every Monday night while he was there. Rather than write each of the children with similar information, she'd copy the letter to Randy, then write personalized notes to each of them. He is now an agricultural economist for the Foreign Ag Service, USDA.

Much of Norma's time was divided between the interests of her children when they were growing up. Each of them played a musical instrument and several were involved in the theatrical presentations. All were involved in 4-H and FFA, including state and national leadership conferences for both organizations. Church activities were high on the list and continue to be a strong influence in their lives.

Norma and Lloyd are still devoted to the St. Paul United Methodist Church and spend many hours contributing their time and talents. Norma is president of the women's group this year and has been a Sunday school and Bible school teacher for more than 20 years.

She enjoys baking and puts these talents to work for others. For instance, on Father's Day she baked individual loaves of bread for each father in the church. Norma is involved in many fund-raising events at the church as well.

This unselfish, hard-working woman received the Black Hawk County 4-H Alumni Award in 1984, and was home improvement superintendent at the Black Hawk County Fair for over 15 years. Although modest and unassuming, Norma was aggressively involved in helping the 4-H program grow and thrive.

Her experience on the county level helped when she became assistant superintendent of the National Cattle Congress, a position she presently holds.

Norma is a talented seamstress, making many of her own clothes and even her daughter's wedding dress. She willingly sews for others, too. This year, she made 26 school kits for missions through a church project.

With her quiet countenance, some people might overlook the talents and contributions that Norma has shared with others. But those who know her understand the influence she's had in her community and in the lives of her children. She gives tirelessly to organizations, making 100 percent commitment.

It is no accident that Norma Hager is following in her mother's footsteps as an Iowa Master Farm Homemaker. She is dedicated and dependable in all her responsibilities and has gained the admiration and respect of her peers.

