

## 1993 Iowa Master Farm Homemakers Guild Inductees

The Iowa Master Farm Homemaker program has been in existence for 65 years, although winners were not chosen every year. Due to two world wars and the Depression, the program lapsed for 15 years. But the spirit and commitment lived on, and it was reinstated in 1947. The Wallace Farmer Iowa Master Farm Homemaker recognition program has been held every year since that time.

What does it take to be a Master Farm Homemaker? Those who have received the award almost always answer modestly. "I don't consider myself a Master Farm Homemaker." Over the years of their marriages, through tragedies and triumphs, they just try to do the things that seem right for their families.

Yet, to others, their accomplishments are overwhelming. They are respected and admired by many, and their families are often extended into far off countries through visitors and exchange students.

Upon entering the home of a master farm homemaker, one feels instantly comfortable and relaxed. It is not uncommon for visitors to leave with some memento, like a handmade article, a poem or the start of a plant.

Their bright, friendly eyes look into yours with honesty and integrity. They gracefully share their innermost feelings. Master Farm Homemakers appreciate the little things, like a beautiful flower or an early morning sunrise. But the "little things" they appreciate and see most often, are their grandchildren. Nothing matches the twinkle in their eyes and the warm hugs they so willingly share.

Although they come in many different shapes and sizes, a common denominator with master farm homemakers are their hands. They are not the hands of women of leisure. They are clean, strong and a firm handshake exudes confidence. These hands are as comfortable kneading dough as they are in control of a \$100,000 combine, or firmly holding a gate to direct unruly pigs into a pen.

Their hands are sometimes wrinkled or freckled from long hours in the sun, working beside husbands in the fields-or from hours in dishwater after fixing countless delicious, satisfying meals. Although these hands are able to accomplish a great deal in a short amount of time, they are calm and restful, having spent much time folded in prayer, or gently thumbing through a Bible. They are competent, capable hands-able to bring a bright-eyed, glossy newborn calf into the world as easily as they yank weeds out of the garden or deftly braid a young daughter's pigtales.

They are comforting hands-nurturing young lives to grow straight and tall. They've brushed away countless tears as loved ones were drawn close. And they've welcomed grandchildren into the world with tenderness, yet strength. Wallace Farmer pays tribute to this year's honorees.

### Joyce Bentley - IMFH Class of 1993

Monona County

Onawa is a lucky town. Near the town's western edge lives one of its busiest citizens. When she's not tending to her family needs or helping with the farm operation, Joyce Bentley heads the short distance to Onawa to help wherever she's needed.

She volunteers her time in many aspects of community life. Joyce is a tireless worker, donating many hours to the youth and elderly in Onawa. She serves as a patient liaison at the local nursing home. She has been a 4-H leader and judge on the county and state levels. During the years her girls were in school, Joyce helped frequently with booster organizations.

Her community involvement has been a lifelong passion. Joyce grew up in nearby Blencoe, the daughter of Lettie and Bernie Thrift, an extension home economist and a teacher. Her parents' efforts for their community helped to form Joyce's first memories. It's only natural that one of her interests is helping others.

Joyce farms with her husband, Charley, on their grain and livestock farm west of Onawa. Although she's no longer called upon to drive the tractors, she does the bookkeeping for the farming operation.

Joyce and Charley have two daughters, Wenda and Carla. Both are graduates of the University of Iowa and live in Iowa City. Wenda is a pharmacist and is married to Allan Ostrem. They have a son, Nicholas, who is two years old. Carla is a hotel manager and is married to Darrin Carpenter.

Music has always been an important part of Joyce's life. She sings in Sweet Adelines and her church choir. She is also talented with the accordion and often entertains civic groups with her music and humor.

"I do a weekly sing-along at the local nursing home and once each month at the Whiting nursing home. The patients say they can't wait for me to come and that's rewarding," says Joyce, smiling as she thinks of the patients' happy singing.

Joyce is a member of the Monona County Board of Health, and the county advisory committee for home care. Her work with local nursing home patients is greatly appreciated by Marylis VandenHull, Monona County Public Health nursing administrator.

"Joyce has been a dedicated, knowledgeable and valued member of community health programs for many years. She has helped make it possible for many persons to remain at home as long as possible before nursing home placement. She helped to initiate new programs for young persons and babies, known as the Maternal and Well-Child Programs, and the Immunization Program," says VandenHull.

"Joyce has also been an active chairperson for the Monona County Assessment of Need Committee and the Low-Rent Housing Board. She dedicates herself to the boards she is on by giving her time, intelligence and wit. She is always looking for productive change. She has a lot of heart," adds VandenHull.

In her church work, Joyce serves as circle chairperson, works with children's music and church choir and has been a Sunday school teacher and superintendent.

Joyce is well-known for her culinary skills. She assists with church funeral lunches and the county fair food stand. She also bakes each year for nursing home fundraisers, recently whipping up 25 freshly-baked and 25 frozen pies. "I love to bake pies. If I could get up every morning and bake a pie, I'd be happy all day," says Joyce.

When she isn't devoting her time to others, Joyce enjoys herb gardening, and making cornhusk dolls, baskets and other crafts from native materials.

It's incredible that Joyce appears to easily juggle family, home and farm with all her community service projects. Her volunteering helps to enrich the lives of so many others, her hometown is truly blessed, too.

Evelyn Cook - IMFH Class of 1993

Hardin County

If you need something done, call Evelyn Cook.

This Hardin County woman is a recognized leader in New Providence, where she and her husband, Ken, reside. Evelyn and Ken truly work as a team and feel a unique calling to make life more comfortable for others.

One of Evelyn's special interests is the Stephens Ministry through her church, the Honey Creek-New Providence Friends. This ministry is a program designed to train lay people to be competent in giving care to people who have experienced trauma, illness, death of loved ones or other crises in their lives.

Evelyn is very involved in this ministry, and gives 50 hours of instructional time per group of volunteers to help others become Stephen Ministers. Evelyn continues as a Stephen Minister herself. She is assigned a care-receiver to whom she gives supportive friendship and attention on a regular basis.

Another important interest in Evelyn's life is Camp Quaker Heights at Pine Lake, near Eldora, Iowa. She was chairman of the board for six years and was instrumental in the purchase of additional land. Evelyn had a vision to see it developed and worked to realize her dream. The camp gives her a chance to enjoy one of her favorite hobbies - taking pictures.

"I fill up a photo album that holds 500 pictures about every six months!" she says. "I love to take pictures at church camp and community events, and share them with friends."

Evelyn feels she "caught" this hobby from her mother-in-law, Fem. "People still talk about the pictures she used to send them," she recalls. Evelyn's ability to combine talent with humility and responsibility with diplomacy have made her a sought after member and leader of many groups. She served as secretary of the Hardin County Extension Council and as a state extension advisory committee member. She is also a member of Farm Bureau Women.

Evelyn's first responsibility is family. When her four daughters were young, she was a 4-H leader and chaperoned many field trips. Family vacations took them all to many parts of the United States, and foreign exchange students broadened their knowledge of life in other countries.

Their children learned the value of education by example. Both Evelyn and Ken graduated from Iowa State University and they encouraged all their daughters to become college graduates. Through scholarships and individual assistance, Evelyn and Ken have also helped many other students attend college.

In addition to their own children, the Cooks have been foster parents to two young people. Another young man lived with the family for one year to finish his senior year in the New Providence school district.

Evelyn feels especially blessed to have all her family residing close to home. Their eldest, Linda Diane (Diane), and her husband, Dan Nelson, farm near New Providence. Their children are Brooks, Alex and Spencer. Diane and Dan's oldest son, Brett, died at 23 mos. following an accident.

Andrea and her husband, Paul Brown, also farm in the area. She has an accounting and tax practice in their home, and they have a son, Derek.

Pat's husband, Todd Gourley, is the livestock manager for Cooks Farms. Pat is director of the After-School Arts program at the New Providence ArtCenter and is the full-time mother to Hannah and Zachary.

The Cooks' youngest daughter, Sheryl, is a technology research specialist for the Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, Iowa.

Evelyn makes a lasting impression on almost everyone she comes in contact with. A friend and associate in the Stephen Ministry, Michelle Herman, speaks highly of her, "Evelyn has a caring and giving spirit, and truly sees herself as an instrument of God's heaven on earth." There can be no higher compliment.

### Mary McNutt - IMFH Class of 1993

#### Johnson County

Master Farm Homemakers are known for being gracious hostesses and putting people at ease. Mary McNutt from Johnson County is no exception.

Mary is interested and concerned about people. She and her husband, Paul, have hosted and entertained people from all over the world, including exchange students and workers. Mary has been active in the American Field Service. Through various programs, Elmira Farms (the McNutt family farm corporation) has had foreign exchange workers from Japan, France and Germany. Mary and Paul have been able to visit many of these people in their homes.

Every place Mary goes, she finds a "special rock" and brings it home to a designated spot surrounding a large rock found on their farm. It helps her remember the wonderful experiences and people from each trip.

The couple has also traveled extensively through Rotary International. Paul was president of the Iowa City Rotary club and served as district governor.

Mary once coordinated a fund-raising activity which included part of the construction and raffle of a quilt representing every rotary club in District 6000. The raffle raised more than \$10,000 for the Health, Hunger and Humanity Program of Rotary International.

Mary has been greatly involved in the pork industry as well. The McNutts have a farrow-to-finish operation and farm almost 900 acres near Iowa City. Mary was vice president of the Iowa Porkettes and was a director of the National Livestock and Meat Board for six years, serving on the nutrition research committee. She has been active in many other church and community groups. Mary also served on the Water, Air and Waste Management Commission for five years.

"Mary brings out the best in young adults," says Mary Ellen Wall, a family friend for more than 30 years. "She has a special way of helping young people believe in themselves and what they can accomplish. She cared and took the time to support them."

"Some just need a little mothering," says Mary. Mary lives one mile from the farm where she was born and raised, so family roots run deep. Her grandfather moved to this country from Czechoslovakia.

The McNutts have three children. Their oldest son, James Edward, is a veterinarian at the West Branch Animal Clinic. He and his wife, Roxann, have two children, Alana and Ashton. Their daughter, Martha Jean McNutt is a high school counselor. She and husband Dale are parents to Raquel, Paul and Scott. Their youngest son, John Paul, is president of The Heartland School, in addition to managing the family corporation. He and his wife, Ilene, also have three children, Allen, Michael, and Ellison.

Mary is a true partner with Paul. Family and farm decisions are made on an equal basis.

Mary often brings rural and urban people together for good food and fellowship. Her hostessing skills are known far and wide. Under Mary's tutelage, Paul and their children have become accomplished cooks in their own right.

There is more to being a homemaker than a clean house and good food, believes Mary. "You need to think about the feelings of the people involved in your household. It needs to be liveable," she says insightfully. "And although everyone needs goals, people need to be able to compromise."

All who know Mary speak highly of her, as a wife, mother, grandmother, friend and associate. "The caring side of Mary McNutt sets her apart," says Linda Muston, vice president of marketing and planning for Mercy Hospital in Iowa City. "Her concern and compassion extend far and wide as she graciously shares herself, her home, and her talents."

### Cindee Schnekloth - IMFH Class of 1993

#### Scott County

The new Iowa Master Farm Homemaker from Scott County is ahead of her time, but that distinction seems to be the norm in her family. Cindee's mother-in-law, Mildred Schnekloth, was an Iowa Master Farm Homemaker at 35, and Cindee's mother, Thelma Johnson, Became an Iowa Master Farm Homemaker at a young age, as well, when Cindee was just seven. Now, her youngest son will be seven when she receives this prestigious award.

Cynthia Jane (Cindee to all who know her), her husband, John, and their three children live just outside of Eldridge, Iowa. Their lovely farm has been in the Schnekloth family for six generations.

Few people can fit the description of a "natural born leader." Although Cindee would never describe herself in this way, she certainly possesses unique skills in working with people. She uses her abilities in personal and professional situations with successful results.

Cindee has served in numerous capacities within the Scott County Farm Bureau. She was membership chairperson, resolution chairperson and treasurer. She is currently president of the group, and the first woman in the county to hold this office.

John has also served as a Scott County Farm Bureau president.

Teaching has always been important to Cindee, and she enjoys working with young people. Although her schedule is hectic, she still substitute teaches on occasion in a number of school districts. She also taught a class through Eastern Iowa Community College in literacy. Those she works with say she combines competence with gentleness as a teacher of adults.

When Hans, their youngest son, was in pre-school at their church, St. Paul Lutheran in Davenport, Iowa, Cindee helped develop the curriculum for the program. She has also worked with many of the other youth groups in church.

One of Cindee's special projects involved the design and implementation of a writing center in Alan Shepard Elementary School in Long Grove, Iowa. Cindee's idea was to provide an area that would encourage students to use their creative talents to write and illustrate original compositions.

"As a volunteer at the Writing Center, I saw first hand Cindee's patience, creativity and inventive ideas that are necessary to stimulate children's interest and imagination," notes Karen Collins, a friend and co-worker. "She was the motivation factor to all the students and volunteers who worked with her."

There are now similar programs in all five elementary schools in the North Scott School District.

Cindee and John are committed to their faith, and feel their religious belief is an important strength in their lives. They are able to feel compassion for others, yet remain firm in their values.

"Even though we live in a self-centered world, we don't look at life that way," points out Cindee. "Our parents set good examples for us in that regard."

They also feel a strong commitment to each other, and stand together solidly on family matters.

"The kids know where they stand-they know what's acceptable and what's not," adds John.

Obviously, their approach has been successful so far. Their oldest son, Clint, was valedictorian of his senior class in 1991 and will be a junior at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Valerie was an honor student and National Merit Scholar in high school, and just completed her freshman year at the University of Northern Iowa. Hans will be in second grade this fall.

Cindee attributes much of her success to her family. "I've had some very outstanding women as role models-my mom, my mother-in-law and Sally Ewoldt (Iowa Master Farm Homemaker)," she says. "And John has been very supportive in all my activities."

No doubt he realizes with Cindee's positive attitude and leadership skills, she has a great deal to offer.

