

1996 Iowa Master Farm Homemakers Guild Inductees

They seem to be able to "do it all," these farm homemakers. But when this statement is suggested to them, they modestly deny being "any different from anyone else." Upon getting to know these ladies, one finds out they truly are special.

Their care and concern for others stand out as a common denominator. Family priorities always come first, but then they find time for neighbors, friends and community groups. They often volunteer to help in schools, libraries and hospitals. They take produce from their gardens and share it generously with others. They are among the first to visit a friend in time of need. They open their homes for foreign visitors, sometimes for extended periods.

Whether it's the upbringing of a child, church participation or volunteer work these outstanding farm homemakers make it a habit to give 100 percent.

Why do they have this commitment and devotion to doing a job well? Usually, special people in their lives-mothers, grandmothers, neighbors or friends-have an impact, and they've learned by example.

They also know that an investment in the life of a child pays huge dividends. Nearly all these unique women are involved in 4-H, FFA, Scouts, Campfire Girls or other groups, helping youth see there are no boundaries if they work hard and do their best. They have broadened horizons and shown new opportunities to countless young people. They touch the lives of many.

Wallaces Farmer is proud to sponsor the Iowa Master Farm Homemaker program and offers congratulations to the 1996 honorees: Pauline Flamme Wilma Hartman, Vernadine Kaisand and Donna Robinson. We pay tribute to all the Iowa farm women who deserve the title of Master Farm Homemaker, whether or not you have been formally recognized. You are the backbone of our rural communities and bring renewed meaning to the word "volunteer." No doubt you are setting the sterling example for many future generations of farm women.

Pauline Flamme - IMFH Class of 1996

Tama County

Pauline Flamme, the 1996 Iowa Master Farm Homemaker from Gladbrook, Iowa, is one busy lady. Between church, school, 4-H, Campfire Girls, the Gladbrook Com Carnival committee, she is rarely idle. But that doesn't bother Pauline--she seems to take it all in stride.

Pauline and her husband, Loren, had a grain and livestock farm in rural Gladbrook before moving to town several years ago. Now the farm is operated by their son, Mark but Loren still enjoys going to cattle sales and helping out on the farm.

Meanwhile, Pauline is busy with her own activities. Earlier this summer, she helped coordinate a "Pies for Phyllis" fundraiser. A friend needed some extra help after having a liver transplant and Pauline was among those who came to the rescue. She and another friend asked for donations of homemade pies, and they came up with a total of 91 pies. All proceeds went to help their friend Phyllis with her medical expenses.

This energetic lady especially enjoys working with young people. That may explain why she became a teacher and still substitute teaches for area schools.

Pauline has also been involved in 4-H work for 18 years as head leader of the Gladbrook Gals and Guys 4-H club in Tama County. Through her leadership and direction, the club has won numerous awards. They have contributed to the Iowa State Fair renovation, the 4-H 400 state foundation and the local Tama County fair grounds

renovation. Pauline helps organize the style show for the county fair every year and judges record books for county or state awards. She also plans club trips so the youngsters can see new and exciting places. Club members have gone to Kansas City, Minneapolis, Veishea at Iowa State University and have taken a ski trip.

Pauline has also provided leadership for the older girls in the Girl Scout program and younger girls in Campfire. She was a Girl Scout leader for 13 years, serving for a time on the board of directors for the Conestoga Council. Troop trips were taken to New York, Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha and California.

Pauline has a special place in heart for kids who may be disadvantaged, or whose parents are especially busy. They all need guidance, she explains, and she tries to give the basic skills that will help them in life. "It's rewarding to see these young people go on to have successes in their lives," says Pauline.

The Flammes have certainly seen their own children become successful, largely due to their interest and involvement. Lora, 32, is an ISU graduate in apparel design and pattern-making. She has her own clothing company in California. Donna, 30, graduated from Stanford University with a degree in electrical engineering. She is married to Jeff McDonald.

Mark, 29, operates the Flamme farm. He received degrees in livestock from Kirkwood and mechanics at Hawkeye Tech community colleges. Mark and his wife, Lisa, have two children. Nicholas, 3 1/2 and Taylor 1 1/2.

David, 28, graduated from ISU with an ag engineering degree. He works for Case IH near Chicago, Illinois. Youngest daughter, Ann, 24, also graduated from ISU with an industrial engineering degree. She is employed by Motorola in Libertyville, Illinois.

Even though Pauline is involved in many groups and activities, family concerns always come first. Miles may separate them., but the family tries to get together as much as possible, and the Flammes keep in close contact through letters and phone calls.

As if her involvement with youth were not enough, Pauline has been a supportive member of the Gladbrook Women's Club for 28 years, serving as president this year. She is past chairperson of the committee which plans the Easter sunrise service followed by a community breakfast.

Pauline's faith is important to her, and she is very active in the Gladbrook United Methodist Church. She has served in many leadership positions, including Sunday school teacher, church board, trustee, and UMW president and circle leader. She is chairperson of the "Election Night Soup Supper" that serves between 500 and 600 people.

Wilma Hartman - IMFH Class of 1996

Fayette County

Wilma Hartman, a 1996 Iowa Master Farm Homemaker from Sumner, Iowa, has an impressive record in community service. It is unlikely, however, that this modest, quiet lady from Fayette County would share personal achievements. Fortunately, others are aware of Wilma's contributions and are eager to see her accomplishments recognized.

Wilma was an active 4-H member as a young girl. She appeared in the Iowa State Fair Style Revue and was on a demonstration team. She was vice president of the county 4-H group and was named outstanding 4-H girl of the year in Chickasaw County in 1953.

Coincidentally, her husband, James, held similar leadership positions in the same county a few years before Wilma. They grew up just two miles apart and were in 4-H

and high school together. They were married for 40 years, but sadly, Jim passed away a year and a half ago of a heart attack.

Although the transition has been difficult for Wilma, she is learning to cope. She stays busy in community activities and spends time with family and friends.

Wilma's family is a great source of strength. Eldest son, Jack, has taken over the family farm, which is right on the Bremer-Fayette county line. He and his wife, Deb, have three children, Katie, 16; Sam, 13; and Kellie, 7.

Son Ron is a teacher in Sumner, where he also coaches junior high track and junior varsity football. He has three children: Will, 13; Jane, 11; and Camille, 9.

Wilma's daughter, Mary Jo, is a professor of environmental sciences and biology at Waldorf College in Forest City.

All three children were active in 4-H, just like their parents. Wilma was a 4-H leader and served on the Bremer County Extension Council.

Before moving to their present location 20 years ago, the Hartman's tenant-farmed a 500-acre dairy, hog and beef farm near their current operation. It was a typical diversified farm of the 1960s and 1970s, says Wilma, with 45 cows, 40 to 50 sows, sheep, and chickens.

"Ours was an operation where you jumped in and helped with everything," she notes. "The children made fun out of working--they never complained too much."

Summers were filled with 4-H presentations, demonstrations and the county fair, always a highlight for youngsters. Both Jack and Ron were active in FFA, serving as president of the Sumner FFA chapter.

In addition, all three children were involved in school sports. Jack played football and ran track, advancing to state competition. Ron was involved in football, track and wrestling, and Mary Jo made three trips to state tournaments in softball, basketball and track.

The Hartmans had a seed corn business for 25 years and Wilma assisted with mailing, seed delivery and test plot shows. Every fall, they hosted a big picnic for seed com customers, and Wilma made all the arrangements for food. During seed days in the winter, she prepared "lots of cookies and donuts." The seed dealership and associated activities with the National Com Growers Association and Farm Bureau, allowed Wilma and Jim to make many international trips, including visits to Mexico and Europe.

Wilma's faith has been a tremendous source of strength during this difficult time. "I don't know what I'd do without it," she says quietly. She is an active member of St. John's ELCA Church in Sumner, serving as altar guild, church secretary, choir member, Sunday school teacher, deacon and member of the church council. She was also the council representative to the Prairie Grace Conference of 19 area ELCA churches. Wilma regularly bakes the bread used for communion worship.

Community health has long been a high priority for this active lady. She is a board member for Sumner's Community Memorial Hospital and served on the Hillcrest Nursing Home board.

Another important aspect of Wilma's life is her involvement with the Sumner Women's Club, of which she's been a member for over 25 years. This service club supports projects to meet local needs of the schools, parks, library and hospital.

There is no doubt Wilma Hartman will continue to stay busy. Between community commitments and family gatherings, her days will be filled as she shares her care and compassion for others.

Vernadine Kaisand - IMFH Class of 1996

Jasper County

"The true worth of a person is measured by how much they help others." If this anonymous quote is true, then 1996 Iowa Master Farm Homemaker Vernadine Kaisand is indeed worthy. This lady from Kellogg, Iowa, in Jasper County, has given countless hours to charity. A plaque on the wall in the Kaisand home gives credit for 750 hours of volunteer time in the Grinnell Regional Medical Center, and that was in 1994. It's well over 1,000 hours now, says Vernadine, as she helps out in the gift shop and at the main information desk.

Vernadine also volunteers with Second Mile, an organization in Grinnell that helps the needy. A thrift shop offers inexpensive clothing, books, toys and household items. During the holidays, a special activity called Christmas Share takes place. New items are collected throughout the year, then in early December, needy children come in to shop for their brothers, sisters, and parents.

Although Vernadine's husband, Emery, is still part of the family farm corporation, the day-to-day operation is handled by two of their four children, David and Don. They operate about 1,700 acres, have 75 stock cows and feed out about 2,000 feeder pigs. Emery and Vernadine lived on the home farm for 32 years, then built a home a short distance away, where they have resided for 17 years.

Emery still helps out on the farm and so does Vernadine, in her own way. She cooks the noon meal for a constantly changing number of people. "It ranges from two to eight--anyone who needs a meal is welcome," says Vernadine.

She gathers many of the vegetables from her large and well-tended garden. Canned goods and preserves along with blooms from her bountiful perennials are generously shared with friends and neighbors, especially those without gardens.

When David and Don returned to the farm, that left Vernadine free to pursue other interests and she admits to being a "people person."

Ag in the classroom, through Farm Bureau Women, was one of her favorite activities she says. Don's wife, Carol, is a teacher, so Vernadine began visiting the school to tell young people about agriculture.

"They called me 'Grandma,' and even two or three years later they would see me and say, 'There's Grandma!'" recalls Vernadine. She wrote a letter to the class every month, explaining farm activities during that time. The children would write about the things they learned and put it in a booklet for Vernadine. Every year, the program concluded with a field trip to area farms, a highlight for the youngsters.

The Kaisand home is always open to visitors, near and far. They estimate there have over 30 visitors from all over the world, including Kenya, Mexico, China, France, Cypress, Venezuela and many others. A man from the Philippines has corresponded with the Kaisands for more than 30 years.

Although Vernadine gives her time and effort to countless causes, her faith and her family are most important. The Kaisands are members of the Newburg United Church of Christ where Vernadine is a deaconess. She is also responsible for the altar flowers every week.

Grandchildren are a special joy to the Kaisands, and they can be found at a ballgame nearly every night during the season. Don and his wife, Carol, have two children, Nickole, 25 and Angela, 22. Dennis Kaisand, a maintenance planner for Maytag, has two children, Scott, 24 and Timothy, 22; and stepchildren Tammy and Chad. Carol Birkenholtz, his fiancée and her children Nikki, Carrie and grandson, Tyler, are extended family.

Daughter Dorothy is house supervisor of Goshen General Hospital in Goshen, Ind. She is married to Roger Mertz and they have two children, Benjamin, 13 and Wayne, 12.

David Kaisand is married to Denise and they have four children: Darla, 17; Danielle, 15; DeAnn, 13; and Darrin, 10.

Donna Robinson - IMFH Class of 1996

Jones County

Donna Robinson didn't set out to be a leader in 4-H and community activities, but by taking an active role in her children's interests, it certainly turned out that way. This 1996 Master Farm Homemaker from Mechanicsville, Iowa, has contributed countless hours to "making the best better."

Donna and her husband, Wayne, have a diversified crop and livestock farm in Jones County. They operate about 840 acres and buy feeder cattle to finish for market. Involvement in the cattle business has created many opportunities for the Robinsons and their two children, Randy and Kim.

"I can't even begin to count the miles we've traveled with the four of us in the front of the truck, going to cattle shows," says Donna. "We've exhibited all over the Midwest."

Randy, now 21, had to stand on a five-gallon bucket to brush his steer when he was a beginning 4-Her. Kim, who is 25, showed a steer at 22 different shows one summer!

Getting ready for a show was a family affair, explains Dona. The kids had to clean out and wash the pickup and trailer, and load it up with the necessary feed and equipment. They took the responsibility in stride. "All Wayne had to do was back the truck up to the trailer and take off," she says.

Donna's parental support led to many leadership positions. She was active in the American, Iowa and Jones County Cattle Women organizations, serving as county president, historian, serving as county president, historian and treasurer, Donna and Wayne participated in a very successful beef promotion campaign. They traveled to Detroit, Mich., where they served Iowa beef to the Detroit Lions football team. "Those guys would eat two or three huge steaks-it was amazing!" adds Wayne.

Donna was also involved with the 4-H program starting out as a 4-H leader for Kim's club. When Kim retired from 4-H, Donna helped Wayne with Randy's club. She was also active on the county 4-H Extension Council, serving nine years. Extension was experiencing many changes during this time, and Donna's steadfast, calm guidance facilitated a smooth transition.

"The Extension personnel became more specialized and spent more time in the field," note Donna. "We were more fortunate than some counties because we kept our 4-H and youth director, two specialists and a full support staff."

One summer there was an opening for an interim youth director, so son Randy filled in, gaining good experience. "He really enjoyed it," recalls Donna. She adds with a smile, "and he learned why it was important to get those forms turned in on time!"

This energetic lady was also a strong supporter for a new livestock pavilion at the Great Jones County Fair. Since Donna was the council representative to the fair board, she helped see the new building through to completion. "The old livestock barn needed major work. The next thing I knew, Wayne and I were in Wisconsin looking at livestock barns."

The new 70 foot by 160 foot barn was up and ready by the following August, thanks to successful fundraising efforts and community support. The Robinsons say it is one of the nicest fair barns in the Midwest, and few would argue. "We overwired it, but we've never been sorry," explains Donna. "With fans, blowers, clippers, milking machines and other electrical appliances, we didn't want to worry about blowing fuses all the time."

Donna helps with all the aspects of the farming operation, from crop production to livestock chores to bookkeeping duties, and she especially enjoys yard work. But she is happiest when having family get-togethers or socializing with friends. Daughter Kim lives in Philo, Illinois, with her husband, Ed, and 2-year-old son, Nicholas. Randy works for 21st Century Genetics out of Owatonna, Minnesota.

"My family is very important to me," says Donna. "Randy is four hours away and Kim is five hours in the other direction, but we spend a lot of time on the phone and visit as often as we can. Family is forever."