

2007 Iowa Master Farm Homemakers Guild Inductees

Judy Maubach - IMFH Class of 2007

Hamilton County

Balancing is the word to describe Judy Maubach's approach to family, work and community activities. She doesn't claim to be an expert at any one thing. "But I contribute where I can and do my best at everything I get involved with," says the Hamilton County farmwife and mother.

Judy and husband Mike met when they were students at Iowa State University. They were married 29 years ago and have farmed east of Webster City ever since.

They both agree the farm is a wonderful place to raise a family.

Judy's degree in business is valuable as she does the recordkeeping for the farm and participates in grain marketing decisions. She brings meals, seed and other supplies to fields during spring. In the fall, she also chops stalks.

After working for a tax service in Webster City for 11 years, Judy bought the business three years ago when the owner retired. "It's the perfect business for an active farmwife and mother because my busy season is opposite the busiest times on the farm," she says. Judy credits Mike for being the more involved parent during tax time and appreciates being able to balance her tax business with the farm's demands.

Now in her fourth year on the Webster City School Board, Judy's decision to run for the board stemmed from her interest in issues facing the district and in the academic and extra-curricular opportunities the schools offer. She researches school issues, listens to concerns raised by others and asks necessary questions to become more informed. "When our kids first attended school, I volunteered, helped with field trips and got involved," she recalls. "Webster City schools have been good to us. Serving on the school board is a way to give something back."

Judy has served as a secretary of the High School Vocal Boosters Club, has been a member of several parents advisory boards and is an active volunteer at church. "My time on the board of the Hamilton County branch of the ISU Alumni Association was also fulfilling," she says. "But most gratifying is being involved in the same things our children are in.

Whether it's helping with 4-H or attending our children's sports events, concerts or competitions, being with the kids is rewarding. They grow up too fast."

Those who know her best describe Judy as an outgoing, sensible, intelligent, soft-spoken organizer and leader with many talents who relates well to others. "As member of St. Mary's Church in Williams, we know her family's contributions to our parish in a variety of ways as leaders, participants and willing workers," says Ray and Joan Moore, in a letter supporting Judy's nomination for the Master Farm Homemaker Award.

The Maubach's eldest daughter, Jenna, graduated from ISU as an ag business major in May and now attends Drake University Law school. Jenna was state FFA president in 2004-2005.

Their daughter Michelle is currently a junior at ISU majoring in health and human performance.

Their daughter Lisa is a freshman and a business major at ISU.

Their son, John, is their youngest and is in sixth grade at St. Thomas Aquinas School in Webster City.

The children have been involved in music, sports, church and leadership activities. "Judy made sure our children took piano lessons in grade school, and she encouraged and helped with 4-H and FFA activities," says Mike. She helped the girls participate in theatre, gymnastics and dance. She also made certain the children helped with chores around the house and farm."

Her favorite family activity includes ISU basketball games, get-togethers with friends, family reunions and travel. Judy says her parents and in-laws were the best role models for parenting.

"My mom and Mike's mom probably deserve this award more than I do," says Judy. "They both taught me a lot about life, commitment and raising a family."

JoAnn Harrington - IMFH Class of 2007

Clinton County

For 50 years, JoAnn Harrington has read the articles in Wallace's Farmer about women who have been named Iowa Master Farm Homemakers. She never thought she would be one of them. "I've admired their accomplishments," she says. "They are special people and I am humbled."

Before JoAnn married Clinton County farmer Charles Harrington 51 years ago, she taught in a one-room school in Muscatine County, near where she grew up on a farm. Teaching kindergarten through eighth grade. "I did that for six years and taught three different one-room schools," she recalls. "Teaching in a one-room school was hard work but I loved it. We were like a big family."

Taking care of her own family while also serving others is JoAnn's hallmark. She and Charles farmed for many years on the edge of DeWitt, living in the same house where Charles was born. In 2001, they built a new house next door and are retired but very active. Their youngest daughter, Cheryl, and her husband Brian Kinney, and family live in the original house; and farm the land. Charles helps his son-in-law farm.

JoAnn and Charles have two other daughters. Ann is married to Chris McPartland and lives in Minneapolis with their family. Beth Harrington Scheckel and family live in Pella. The three daughters are teachers or have worked within a school system.

"Our home environment was grounded in living a life in which it is important to give time, talent and resources to others," says daughter Cheryl.

Reading and music were fundamental and continue with the grandchildren. The daughters were supported in opportunities to travel abroad and to attend college. JoAnn and Charles were 4-H leaders and JoAnn served on the Clinton County Extension' Council.

JoAnn gives of her time in many ways. When there is a church meal, she helps. She sings in the choir and organizes a blood drive at church twice yearly. She's been teaching Sunday school class for adults for many years.

JoAnn does quietly things without expecting recognition or thanks. She often remarks, "A day is not complete without doing one good deed for someone."

She is a member of the DeWitt Charity Board that provides for basic needs of those for whom there is no other avenue of assistance. She is a member of the board of directors of United Manor, a senior housing complex that was created by Churches United.

"I have often watched JoAnn quietly reach out to help people in need and distress, sometimes with financial assistance," says James Kledis, her former pastor. Active in the United Methodist Church of DeWitt, JoAnn heads the prayer group.

Attuned to world affairs and an avid reader, JoAnn takes pen in hand and writes to legislators to do her part to help achieve peace in the world. She is involved each year in the annual Crop Walk to help alleviate hunger at home and abroad. Not only does she work on the committee, she also laces up her shoes and walks with her grandkids.

In addition to the wonderful things she does for others, JoAnn is first and foremost a wife, mother, and grandmother. "By her own example, she taught her three daughters and grandchildren to be compassionate and generous with their time. She has an endless storehouse of love and devotion she spreads to others," says Mary Rueter, editor of the DeWitt Observer newspaper.

Charles sums up JoAnn: "When helping hands are needed, she is there."

Vicki Robbins - IMFH Class of 2007

Greene County

In spring 1979, Tim and Vickie Robbins had the opportunity to farm near Scranton, on the farm where Tim grew up. "We left our city jobs and moved back to the family farm," she says. "Tim's parents purchased the farm in 1952, so it meant a lot to us."

Vickie was from Mississippi; not from a farm. "She had no idea what she was getting into when we began farming," says Tim. The first few years were OK, but then came the farm financial crisis in the 1980s. "During that time I saw our faith and trust in God come together in our lives," says Tim. "When our sons were born, Vickie and I agreed we would do without things so we could stay home and work the farm and not have to put our sons in day care."

By the mid-80s, they were able to farm more land and raise more hogs, but saw things get worse financially due to high interest rates and low prices. "Rather than leave farming, we sharpened our management skills and got involved in helping promote agriculture and our product," Vickie says.

In 1995, Vickie was elected to the Greene County Farm Bureau, and in 1996 chaired the county's "Ag in the Classroom" program. She decided the only way kids could really learn about farming was to visit the farm.

"I could see each generation of school children becoming more removed from farming, even though they lived in rural Iowa," she notes. "Instead of me going to the classroom, I wanted to bring the classroom to our farm. I approached a fourth-grade teacher and a principal who offered to help."

During the past 11 years, Vickie has shown 1,600 to 1,700 school children where their food comes from. This is the last year the Robbins' will host the program: and Vickie will miss it. "We usually had eight to 10 stations on the farm, with knowledgeable speakers to talk to the students," she says. The kids were in small groups with 15 minutes at each stop. Topics included cattle, hogs, sheep, crops, farm safety, soil conservation and more." These learning experiences were hands-on and interesting, she says. For example, water quality was a topic. "An agronomist from our co-op tested water samples the kids brought from their homes, ponds or streams," says Vickie. "The agronomist explained to the students why they test soil and water, and why it's important to keep nitrate levels in the recommended range."

FFA and other groups helped, too. "We held it in the morning, fed the kids lunch, and they returned to their schools," she says. "They took home a message: In some way, everyday, your life is touched by a farmer."

In 1997, Vickie was selected as the only woman of 20 people from Iowa to attend the Farm Bureau leadership conference in Washington, D.C. In 2000, she was the first woman elected president of Greene County Farm Bureau and served through 2004.

During her 12 years on the board, she was involved with policy development and legislative trips to Des Moines. She's been on missions representing Farm Bureau in Belgium, Italy and Argentina. In 2004, she and Tim hosted a Japanese family. "Vicki can pretty much do it all," says Tim. "Planting, combining, hauling and marketing-we've always worked together."

Today they grow crops and have a cow-calf herd. In addition to farming, both have off-farm jobs. Tim is a rural mail carrier. Vickie is a chiropractic assistant. They have two grown sons and three grandchildren.

Son Justin and wife Lacie own Farm Boy Fencing. Son Aaron has a carpentry business, Robbins Builders LLC.

A Sunday school teacher for many years, Vickie enjoys working with children in church. She served as president of the women's group at church. "Our faith is the most important thing to us," she says. "God is first, then family, then the farm."

Jean Schinckel - IMFH Class of 2007

Scott County

Having farmed their entire married life, Georgine "Jean" Schinckel and husband Jack raised crops, hogs, cattle and four daughters on the family farm north of Walcott in Scott County. Recently retired, the couple now rent the cropland to a couple of young farmers.

Jean and her daughters, who are now grown and have families of their own, took care of keeping the farmstead neat and clean, Jean says. She also helped with fieldwork and recordkeeping. She didn't have to help much with the livestock because Jack farmed in partnership with his brother John. John and wife Marge live on an adjoining farm.

The children all worked on the farm, helping care for livestock. "The girls helped Jack with the pigs on Saturdays and drove a tractor and helped when needed," says Jean. "Each had chores."

Daughter Debra is married to William Brinkley, has three children and is a part-time nurse. She and her husband own Happy Joe's Pizza in Burlington. Daughter Donna is married to Todd Goodell, has three children and is a special education teacher in Marion. Daughter Denise works in lending at a bank, is married to John Vastine and lives in Eldridge with their children. Daughter Dawn, widowed last year, has a 2-year-old daughter and is a school band instructor at Durant.

Jean and Jack have eight grandchildren and two step-grandchildren. Jean instilled in her daughters a love of books and music as she has with her grandchildren, too. Music has always been a part of Jean's life. She's given piano lessons in her home for 37 years. She sings in the choir at church. The Schinckels also sing in the chorus of the local German club, the American Schleswig/Holstein Heritage Society based in Walcott. They dress in traditional German attire and perform for many local events.

The club helps preserve the culture and heritage of Schleswig/Holstein, a northern province of Germany where Jack's ancestors are from. His mother and father were immigrants to the U.S. Jean is of Norwegian descent.

The choir sings in High German, Low German and English. The Schinckels helped arrange seven trips to Germany and other European countries, taking groups there to visit farms and relatives. In their farm home at Walcott, the Schinckels have hosted many families from foreign countries, especially Germany. They've also traveled to

other countries, including Thailand where they visited a family that had stayed with them years ago in Walcott.

Over the years, Jean and Jack assisted with pork and beef promotion activities, serving on county pork producer boards and cattlemen's groups. Jean served on the Scott County Planning and Zoning Commission. She volunteered for school and church committees, and her girls' 4-H activities.

Jean has been generous with her time and talent with various projects and programs and has been a very active member of Scott County Farm Bureau the past 40 years. Although her children were still young, she served on the Scott County Farm Bureau Women's committee starting in 1971 and as chair from 1997-2001. In 1998, Jean was elected to the IFB State Women's Committee and served until 2004.

For many years Jean has helped with Scott County Farm Bureau's Ag in The Classroom program. She was on the state resolution committee in 2004 and has been a delegate to seven national Farm Bureau conventions.