

2010 Iowa Master Farm Homemakers Guild Inductees

Master Farmer Homemakers know what needs to be done-in the home, around the farm and in the community. They are well-grounded and well-rounded. That's why Wallaces Farmer is proud once again to recognize four outstanding Iowa farm women with the Iowa Master Farm Homemaker award.

For 70 years, Wallaces Farmer has helped sponsor these awards, which recognize farm women for their work and success in caring for family, the farm and home, and devoting time to the local community.

These women represent the highest values in rural life. Since the Master Farm Homemaker program began in 1928 as a national organization, the Iowa Chapter has had 324 members and four honorary members.

The Iowa Chapter belongs to the national organization, which is made up of winners from many states. Recipients for 2010 are Linda Lane, Preston; Myra_Steinkamp, Wall Lake; Phyllis Vander Linden, Ashton; and Patricia Yungclas, Webster City.

All of these women embody the term "master homemaker." They have kept the "home fires burning," nurtured their children into successful adults, helped manage the farm with their husbands and still found time to volunteer.

Judges for this year's awards were Wanda Cornelius, president, Iowa Master Farm Homemakers Guild; Joyce Greving, assistant coordinator for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program and Family Nutrition Program at Iowa State University Extension and Frank Holdmeyer, Wallaces Farmer executive editor with Farm Progress Companies. Guild officers are Wanda Cornelius, president, Bellevue; Pat Camey, vice president, Adair; Jeanine Peiffer, secretary, Sigourney; Ruth Beck, treasurer, Buckingham; and Esther Frandsen, historian, Roland.

Myra Steinkamp - IMFH Class of 2010

Sac County

From farrowing to harvesting and barn quilts to 4-H, Myra Steinkamp has committed her time and talents to her family and her community. Myra and her husband of 43 years, Orlin, farm near Wall Lake in Sac County in western Iowa. The couple has a diversified crop and livestock farm with a 50-head cow-calf operation and small feedlot. They raise popcorn, soybeans and corn on 590 acres. The couple recently retired from raising hogs. Son Doug and his wife, Julie, and their five children have moved to the farmstead. Myra and Orlin now live in Wall Lake in a home they designed and built.

One of the highlights of her life has been living on the farm. "I was raised on a farm, and I was with our kids all the time on our farm," she says. After she married Orlin, she never had an off-farm job. She says if something would have happened to Orlin, she could have taken over with the help of her children.

She worked in the farrowing house and the field with her husband and was actively involved in the farm and financial decisions.

Raised near Roselle, Myra graduated from Kuemper Catholic High School in Carroll County. She met Orlin at a wedding; they married and raised their four children, Brenda, Kurt, Doug and Steve, on the family farm.

Myra's life is centered around her family, faith and community. "I hope to have as much of a positive impact on my community and my children, as my mother has had on my siblings, myself and the local community," says daughter Brenda Siefken in a letter to the Iowa Master Farm Homemaker selection committee. Brenda says her mom and dad

encouraged the kids to get a college education. Each of the children earned ag-related degrees from Iowa State University.

Myra says the family was strengthened as the result of two fires. The first fire happened in the 1980s and damaged the house and barn. The other fire took the family's hay barn.

"We learned to roll with it," Myra says. "It made our family pull together." It also pulled their neighbors and community closer to them.

Besides raising four children and being a major part of the family farm, Myra has been involved in Farm Bureau, Sac County Barn Quilt Committee, Sac County 4-H as a club leader, Sac County Pork Producers, FFA, music and athletic events, St. Joseph's Church choir, and a volunteer for many committees, such as the Wall Lake Welcome Committee and as a co-chair for the Wall Lake Farm Festival kids' games.

One of Myra's biggest commitments has been to the Sac County Farm Bureau, who nominated her for the Master Farm Homemaker award. Myra was a member of the county Farm Bureau board and served as secretary, treasurer and public relations committee chairwoman for nine years.

"She was always willing and able to organize and complete any event set before her and always gave 110% to make that event or program a complete success," says the nomination letter. Myra was a representative on the Sac County Barn Quilt Committee and organized bus tours of the quilt locations to "show off Sac County and agriculture."

Though busy with the farm and her children's activities, Myra says she simply "made time for it all."

"She is a Master Farm Homemaker already; presenting her with this award simply makes it official," says Sue Peyton, a member of the Sac County Barn Quilt Committee.

When Myra isn't spending time helping her husband at home or on the farm, she's visiting with her children and nine grandchildren, sewing outfits for the grandkids, gardening or riding her bike on the nearest trails. "She and her husband and family are 'pillars' in the Wall Lake area, always there to lend a helping hand," says Rita Ann Venner, a 1988 Master Farm Homemaker.

Phyllis Vander Linden - IMFH Class of 2010

Osceola County

The array of beautiful flowers, the large garden and an attractively landscaped yard are symbolic of Phyllis Vander Linden. She enjoys growing things and helping make her home and community a better place.

Farming in Iowa's northwest corner with her husband, Paul, for more than 40 years, Phyllis recalls how they started out on a small rented farm. They worked hard and saved enough to buy their own place and have lived on it north of Ashton ever since. They raised hogs, cattle and crops over the years. Today, the hogs and cattle are gone, but the Vander Lindens continue growing corn and soybeans on 360 acres.

Phyllis has always been a full partner in the family farm. She does the book work, drives tractors, hauls grain during harvest. She helped with the farrow-to-finish hog operation and sorted cattle.

Not everyone has the opportunity to work full time with their spouse, and Phyllis is thankful she's been able to do that on the farm. The knowledge she gained early in

farming came in handy about 20 years ago when Paul had a heart attack. Phyllis and their two daughters took care of the livestock and other chores until Paul recovered.

Phyllis shares the beauty of the flowers she grows. She takes flowers to church and nursing homes. She has opened her farmstead for garden tours to raise money for the local library, the Ashton Grocery Store Museum and Village Northwest Unlimited, a residential facility for handicapped adults.

Caring about the community, Phyllis and Paul are active volunteers. The only woman to serve as president of Osceola County Farm Bureau, Phyllis began by chairing the women's committee, was elected. county Farm Bureau vice president and then president was a voting delegate to the state convention, and served on the state advisory committee.

Phyllis served on an advisory committee for Sibley-Ocheyedan Elementary School and on the ISU Extension Home Economics committee. She was president of Inspiration Hills Auxiliary, supporting a camp in western Iowa for the Reformed Church of America. Active in the First Reformed Church in Sibley, she taught Sunday school and catechism and currently leads a women's Bible study group. At church events, Phyllis often works in the kitchen and has served as president of the RCA Women's Organization. "Phyllis has served a number of years on our local library board and has given us many helpful ideas and hours of service," Alfreda Verdoorn, director of the Ashton Public Library.

Phyllis and Paul enjoy maintaining their farm home, where their grandchildren love to visit. Her craft skills are shown in her ceramic mosaic create The Vander Lindens have a vegetable garden and preserve the produce.

The Vander Lindens have two daughters. Peggi is married to Don Thies, and they farm nearby at Melvin and have four children, Paige, Amelia, Emma and Dillon. Polly Vander Linden Sanson is a senior sales account manager at Blue Bunny in LeMars and has two children, Trevor and Madeline.

Patricia Yungclas - IMFH Class of 2010

Hamilton County

Iowa Master Farm Homemaker award recipients have a lot to be proud of. Patricia Yungclas of Webster City is no exception. Her dedication to her community, family, church and to agriculture is noted in the 14 letters the MFH committee received supporting her nomination.

Patty was born at Ledyard, moved to a farm south of Ellsworth, graduated from Ellsworth High School and spent two years at Iowa State University. She was active in 4-H (becoming an accomplished seamstress) and school vocal groups, but she still helped around the farm - outside and inside. Cooking alongside her mother and grandmother, Patty gained skills, which she has shared through her meal preparations for her family, foreign visitors, and church and civic gatherings. Working with her father, she learned animal husbandry and farm equipment operation.

The 1947 National Plowing Match was held at the Ralph A. Olsen farm (Patty's home, also known as NoRest Farm) where Patty met an ISU graduate and recent World War II prisoner of war, Bruce Yungclas. They married a year later and moved to Bruce's grandparents' Wayside Farm, west of Webster City, where they started a family. Their children are Bruce Alan Jr., Leah Patricia, Rolf David and Gary John. Gary died in a tractor accident in 1970. Alan (never known as Bruce Jr.) continues to live on the farm.

Patty's father passed away in 1982, leaving management of NoRest Farm to her and her brother, Neil. It included a farrow-to-finish hog operation and 1,100 acres of crops. Daughter Leah and her husband, Robert Maass Sr., began farming NoRest Farm

in the late 1980s. "It's been such a joy to have Leah and her family on the farm," Patty says. "When you can turn a farm over to the family, it's so much better." Leah and Bob have been good stewards of the land, and that's important to her. "I have feelings about the land. We're never going to get any more of this good black dirt, so we've got to preserve what we can," Patty says.

"Mrs. Yungclas took over the responsibility for preserving the family farm during one of farming's worst economic times. She not only preserved the family's estate but brought another generation into farming," says Craig Hughes, a district director for USDA's Farm Service Agency and a family friend.

Patty's activities have included Hamilton County Farm Bureau Women, Women Involved in Farm Economics, Webster City PTA, Des Moines University Board, Hamilton County 4-H Foundation, Hamilton County S.E.E.D, PEO, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Webster City Community Theatre, Ellsworth Community Club and ISU Memorial Union Board. She also built a business.

While in Ellsworth at the co-op elevator one day in 1987, Patty looked across the street and noticed an abandoned building with two large marble pillars. She remembered the businesses that had once flourished there and went to the Hamilton County courthouse and put in a \$5 bid to buy the deteriorating building. Working alongside local contractors, she gutted the building and created four office spaces, a party room and coffee shop, a gift shop, and four two-bedroom apartments upstairs.

"We spent our summer vacations knocking out walls," says Leah. The summers of '87 and '88 were allocated to Aunt Blanche's Attic, as it was later named after Patty's aunt who was postmistress in Ellsworth for 40 years.

Aunt Blanche's Attic became the focal point of downtown Ellsworth, serving coffee in the afternoons; and hosting birthday parties, bridal and baby showers; Wednesday Night Live in the summers; and occasional special dinners, which Patty prepared and Leah and her daughters served. Leah's children grew up working in the shop on weekends. "It's been a fun adventure for my life," says Patty.

"Patty's positive outlook on life, infectious smile and bubbly laughter are qualities I aspire to emulate," says Janet Secor of the Community Health Center in a letter supporting Patty's nomination. "Patty's knowledge of the community, its interests and its people made her an ideal member of our group and a valuable member of the county," says Catherine Bergman of Hamilton County S.E.E.D. "She is most worthy of the Iowa Master Farm Homemaker title."

Linda Lane - IMFH Class of 2010

Jackson County

Besides working beside her husband, Charles, on their farm, Linda Lane has spent many years lending a helping hand to the youth in the community of Preston and beyond.

"I have known Linda for more than 20 years," wrote Skott Gent in his nominating letter. "I first knew her as a 4-H leader for a neighboring club when I was in 4-H as a teenager," he continues. "She always was, and continues to be, very active in assisting young 4-Hers with crafty projects for local and state fairs."

Linda's three children were active Jackson County 4-Hers, and now she has several grandchildren active in 4-H. "I've always enjoyed seeing the kids blossom as they grow up and achieve," she says.

Linda and her family have been involved in Jackson County Extension 4-H since she was a member herself. "She even met Charles through a 4-H exchange trip," says Amber Matthiesen, Jackson County Families and 4-H youth development specialist.

Through their years of involvement, Linda and her family have received many awards and honors, such as the Charles Butterworth Leader of the Year Award, Alumni 4-H member, and Betty Sieverding Family of the Year. They also were nominated for the Jackson County Fair 4-H Family of the Year. "These awards are only given to the best volunteers and supporters," says Matthiesen.

But Linda's list of deeds certainly doesn't stop there. She is an active supporter of their church - Preston United Methodist - serving on many committees and as a Sunday school teacher. These days she provides flowers from her many gardens on a weekly basis. She also sews seasonal banners to decorate the church.

As volunteers at the Jackson County Historical Society, Linda and Charles have been helping restore the Clinton Engine site to the beautiful park it once was. They mulch around the memorial trees and provide lawn service. In addition, Linda is in charge of an important fundraiser: Holiday Basket Auction and Soup Supper. She organizes the supper, prepares much of the food and finds time to bake two of her famous homemade pies, which she presents in her hand-woven baskets.

Charles, who vows to leave their farm better than when they bought it in 1965, was a Jackson Soil and Water District commissioner for 20 years. And Linda was an important volunteer for all those years as well. They were instrumental in starting a tree sale program and are still advocates and customers of the tree sale program. Funds raised are used to promote conservation education programs in the county.

While Charles was on the board, Linda played an important role in the educational efforts by helping with poster judging and promotion of the scholarship program, as well as distributing stewardship materials to churches.

Linda served on an elected committee through the Jackson County Farm Service Agency. "They needed a minority representation, and I filled that role for several years," notes Linda.

Another fulfilling activity for Linda is serving on the local Food Resource Bank committee, which works to eliminate world hunger through local growing projects, which bring together farmers, churches and agribusiness to grow a crop and send the proceeds to FRB. "Corn for FRB is grown locally on donated or rented land," says Linda. "Some inputs are donated as well. When the crop is sold this year, the money will be sent to Kitui, Kenya."

Finally, when Linda isn't lending a helping hand in her community, she enjoys gardening. What fruits and vegetables she doesn't give to family and friends is canned to be enjoyed during the year.