

■ HONOREES

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also impacted their educational and career choices."

Allen is a '71 Animal Science graduate of SDSU. Both of their children are also alumni. Steven graduated with a degree in Agriculture Engineering and is a Senior Test Engineer for Gehl. Kristi is a pharmacist and works as a Pharmacy Manager for Thrifty White Pharmacy. "4-H helped us give our kids wings to fly," says Walth. Today the Walths have four grandchildren.

Prior to children, Walth, 61, supplemented the ranch income teaching Home Economics and Science in Pollock, Glenham and Mobridge school districts. She then took time off until her children entered school and returned to the workforce, spending more than a decade working for the State of South Dakota as a Regional Nutritionist and as a Child Protection and Adult Services Social Worker.

All the while, Walth made time to aid Allen in running the family ranch. "This operation is us. It's not a partnership and we aren't part of an extended family operation - so we don't have outside help," she explains. "We all worked together on the ranch and made time for our kids' activities. There were many nights when we ate supper at 10 o'clock."

About the time her children were heading off to college, she and Allen decided it was time for her to return to the ranch full-time. "We really are a team. We make all decisions together. It hasn't always been easy-sometimes we did things the hard way - but we never blamed each other and we learned from our mistakes," Walth explains. "Allen is my best friend. We take the philosophy that each day is a new adventure and here on the ranch, no two days are ever alike."

An empty nester and full-time farmer/rancher, Walth decided to put her "farm-to-fork" knowledge to use and give back to the industry she and Allen gained so much from. "I have a valuable background which gives me a clear understanding of the industry - from the time the calf drops here on the ranch to when it hits consumers' plates," Walth says.

"Besides," Walth goes on to say, "it was time to give back. There are a lot of things happening in this day and age that impact those of us in production agriculture. Whatever the issue, at the end of the day, we depend upon advocacy and research to help us succeed."

"When I get involved, I jump in feet first," Walth explains. "I'm passionate about production agriculture. I enjoy watching God's creation

and I love the land. We mean it when we describe our ranch as "God's Country."

Ida Slocum, 2015 Eminent Homemaker, Brookings County



To celebrate her eightieth birthday this year, Ida Slocum went zip lining in Hawaii. The long time Brookings County resident attributes her health and energy to keeping busy.

Slocum stays busy sharing her enthusiasm for life by donating her time and talents.

"I like to help people if I can. So much has been done for me and my family that I feel it's my turn to give back," modestly explains the 2015 Eminent Homemaker.

Slocum didn't wait until retirement to volunteer. She became actively involved in Extension Homemakers and taught 4-H sewing as a young mother and busy career woman; throughout her 40-year career, Slocum worked for the County Treasurer's Office, worked as secretary for Brookings High School, and spent more than 20 years working in the Brookings County Abstract Office. She was elected to serve as the Brookings County Register of Deeds in 1994. She retired at 72 after serving three terms as Register of Deeds.

"I have always been fascinated by numbers and legal descriptions, and enjoyed my work - but also the people I got to work with," Slocum says.

She attributes her passion for sewing and flower gardening to her mother, Catherine Matheis. "My mother gardened and taught me how to sew when I was in 4-H. It was the 1940s. I learned on her treadle sewing machine, making things out of feed sacks."

Although both talents were put to practical use as a mother and farm wife, Slocum says at the end of a work day they became much more. "Sewing and gardening refresh and relax me," she explains. "I love the creativity of it - sure I use patterns, but I can change them and use whatever fabrics I like - and I enjoy watching things

grow."

She made her first quilt when she was expecting her son, Mike, and has since lost count of how many she has created. A founding member of the Brookings Area Quilt Guild since 1995, Slocum helps organize the Blooming Quilt Party and Brookings Area Quilt Guild Show, and donates quilts to several causes including Quilts of Valor, which are given to Brookings County soldiers who have served in combat and to the children of fallen soldiers.

In 2009 Slocum became a Master Gardener - a culmination of a lifetime of gardening. Her farm flower garden boasts blooms all season long on the Aurora farm where she and late husband, Chuck, built their life and family together. The couple has two children, Mike and Sherri.

"I'm always dividing and sharing things. People have shared plants with me over the years. I still have plants that were given to me 45 years ago - in fact, I have peonies that my parents gave me when we were married. They came from my grandmother's farm in Iowa."

Throughout the Brookings community she is known for sharing her blooms as table centerpieces and raffle prizes, as well as donating perennials to the annual Brookings Area Master Gardeners Plant Sale. Along with maintaining her own garden, she spends hours each growing season working in McCrory Gardens - specifically the Cottage House where she replants flowers, refurbishes the cottage and helps maintain its fence. Every Halloween, Slocum can be found dressed in costume leading families through the Trick or Tree trail during the McCrory Gardens Children's Halloween Party.

As a fundraiser for McCrory Gardens Education and Visitors Center, Slocum designed a quilt using collected McCrory Gardens t-shirts and flower print fabrics which feature blossoms grown in the garden.

Helen Sweeter, 2015 Eminent Homemaker, Lincoln County



Since she was 13, Helen (Hanson) Sweeter, 77, has played the organ for West Prairie Lutheran Church.

Through every stage of her life - as an Augustana College nursing student; a newlywed and mother; as a career woman; and finally in retirement - the 2015 Eminent Homemaker has shared music with the congregation, neighbors, friends and vocal groups.

Sweeter inherited her love of music from her parents, Margaret and Helmer Hanson, who met playing in a country orchestra. The couple made sure their young daughter had an opportunity to not only learn how to play the piano, but also to see professionals play. She clearly remembers as a young child her parents purchasing tickets and taking her to Canton to attend a concert series.

"My sister and I learned to appreciate and love all different kinds of music through that concert series. Our parents also paid for us to attend Augustana Academy, which had a great music program. I sang in the a cappella choir and studied piano and vocal music," recalls Sweeter, who is a member of the South Dakota Organ Guild and an alumnus of Joy Quartet.

Sweeter and three other Extension Club friends started Joy Quartet in the early 70s after singing in a Lincoln County Extension Club musical together. The women sang together for seven years until the tragic loss of one of the quartet members.

Growing up on a farm outside of Lennox, she says her parents also instilled in her a strong sense of community.

"I truly enjoy rural life. I think it's a very good place to raise children," says Sweeter, who along with her husband, Don, raised three children: Jeffrey Sweeter, Lynne White and Jon Sweeter, on their farm

south of Worthing. "On the farm there is an opportunity to build a strong work ethic and experience life and death at a young age."

The great-granddaughter of the first Eminent Farmer in 1927, Andrew J. Wimple, and a 4-H alumnus, Sweeter says community involvement was a part of everyday life in her family. She tagged along with her mother to meetings of the Progress Community and Family Extension Leaders, the extension club her great aunt, Dilla Wimple, helped establish in 1921; today it is among the longest running extension clubs in South Dakota.

A member for more than 50 years, Sweeter helped start an Open Class Division at the Lincoln County Achievement Days. "We needed to provide this opportunity for adults, many of whom were 4-H graduates, to remain involved in the fair and have another place to share their talents," says Sweeter, who has served as an officer on the local, county, area 6 and state levels.

Rosemaling is a talent Sweeter exhibits. She was introduced to the Norwegian decorative painting technique through an article she read and then took lessons from a neighbor. In the early 1970s she and a group of friends began taking lessons together and today, as Treasurer of the South Dakota Rosemaling Association, Sweeter and other enthusiasts hire an instructor annually for a three- to five-day course.

"I think it's important to carry on the legacy of this art form," says Sweeter, who sometimes brings granddaughters to classes with her. Sweeter also enjoys getting together with friends to practice the artistry of bead stitching. She has been able to incorporate some heirloom antique beads into Christmas ornaments for family members.

Sweeter has also made time to give back to her church through teaching Sunday School and involvement in Women of the ELCA at local and conference levels.

From music teacher to public health nurse

With her aptitude for music, Sweeter surprised many in her community when she decided to pursue a degree in nursing instead of music. "I truly thought God had gifted my hands not only with the ability to play music but also to care for others," she explains.

While in nurses training, she became interested in public health and enjoyed educating patients so they could play an active role in their own health. Following graduation, Sweeter married Worthing farmer, Don Sweeter, and put her nursing career on hold to raise her family and work as a cashier for the family auction business, Sweeter Auction Service.

"I wasn't involved in the labor side of farming, but I sure made a lot of hearty meals to feed those working in the field," she explains.

Today her son, Jeff, takes care of the farming operation while her son, Jon, continues the auction business. Sweeter's daughter, Lynne White, works as an interior designer for Commercial Interior Décor. The couple has seven grandkids.

About the time her children all left home, her mother became ill. In caring for Margaret, Sweeter was moved to put her education to work full-time.

"I had been helping to care for my mother, so after my mother's death there was a void. Also, I had always wanted to be a nurse and use my education," she explains.

Sweeter took a refresher course and spent the next 13 years working in public and home health nursing. "Circumstances lead you to things and if it's right for you, you do it." ■IGrow

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Thursday, September 3
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personal property for sale at ABSOLUTE auction located at
548 S. Poplar Ave. Freeman, SD on:

**TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8TH
4:00 P.M.**

LEGAL: Lot 7 and the North 2' of Lot 8, Block 6, John Gross 1st-6th Addition city of Freeman, Hutchinson County, South Dakota.

- 1952 Ranch Style 2 bedroom home with 776 sq ft on the main floor. Full unfinished dry basement, attached 16 X 22 garage, move in ready condition.
- 52 X 142 lot with mature trees, Shingles installed in 2010, vinyl siding, NG furnace with central air, birch cabinetry, extremely clean and neat.
- Annual Taxes \$623.72 and the current Assessed Value is \$30,450.00.
- Pictures, room sizes, and property disclosure available in the buyers packet.

TO INSPECT THE HOME: You may contact the auctioneers at 800-251-3111 to set-up a private showing or you may visit www.wiemanauction.com for pictures and a buyers packet or call auctioneers and packets can be mailed out.

TERMS: Cash sale with 15% (non-refundable) down payment auction day with the balance on or before October 8th, 2015. Warranty deed to be granted with the cost of title insurance split 50-50 between buyer and seller. Taxes to be prorated to the date of possession. Come check out a very clean, move in ready home that sells at ABSOLUTE auction.

92 BUICK REGAL - SNOWBLOWER - MOWER

1992 Buick Regal 58K miles 1-owner, 3800 V-6, tan exterior tan cloth interior super clean; Ariens ST824 snowblower like new; Lawn Boy self propelled mower; Toro snowblower; ladders; Hand & Garden Tools; hose; lawn chairs; gas cans; weed sprayer fishing poles, rod holder;

APPLIANCES - FURNITURE - ANTIQUES - HOUSEHOLD

GE Stackable washer & dryer; upright freezer; Maytag ringer washer; dryer; Drop Leaf Table 4-chairs; Dining table 6-chairs; Contemporary 3-pc. Bedroom set with full size bed; 2-pc bedroom set with full size bed; cedar chest; octagon end tables; Recliner; Couch; Panasonic & Kirby upright vacuums; Philco TV; Microwave; Microwave cart; usual kitchen appliances; Tupperware; Corning & Correllware; lamps; Mission style rocker; Round Back Chairs; 5-6 & 12 gal. Redwing Crock; Sausage Press; Meat Grinder; Antique dresser; enamel top table; old utensils; fruit jars; Rinse Tubs; Commode; Laterns; trunks; Signer Sewing Machine; Cornado radio; Bedding; Old games; Towels;

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