

Vern and Doris Hansen
May 2004
Presented by Marcia Hansen

Both Verna and Doris Hansen are native North Dakotans. Vern was born in Flasher, but his grandparents had immigrated to America from Denmark, which makes him “hele dansk” (completely Danish). Doris was born in Breien and raised in Mandan. Her parents had immigrated to America from Norway, which makes her “hele norsk” (completely Norwegian) and first generation born in America.



While working at Douglas Aircraft in California in 1941, Vern was drafted into the U S Navy. Doris worked for Northwest Bell Telephone and was the one who said “number please”. Doris and Vern were married in 1943 and moved to Bismarck in 1946 where they raised their family of two sons and three daughters. All five children became college graduates and are now scattered from Detroit to Hilo, Hawaii.

In 1946, Vern and Doris bought the Hansen Insurance Agency, where Vern worked as an insurance broker for several years. He was also the District Insurance Representative for Sons of Norway during the time S/N organized numerous trips to Norway at excellent rates. When people wanted to take advantage of the good travel rates, Vern explained that they must be S/N members in order to do so. As a result he signed up over 80 new members to S/N.

Later Vern became a lighting consultant selling commercial lighting for Dura Test Company, the first company to provide “natural” light. He retired from there in 1982. During this timeframe Doris was kept busy raising a family, a very active household with 5 children. When the youngest child was in the 4th grade, Doris obtained a Library Science minor from Dickinson State College by attending classes at night and taking some extension courses. She was a school librarian for 22 years at Will-More, Wachter and Jeannette Myhre schools. She retired in 1983.

While working as librarian at Jeannette Myhre School, Doris was on the first committee to look into the possibility of establishing the S/N Park that we have today. The Park got the go ahead in September 1979 and was dedicated in September 1982.

Vern and Doris have been devoted active members of the S/N Sverdrup Lodge for 31 years, having joined in 1973. They served as co-chairmen of the annual Lutefisk Dinner in 1985 and 1986. Since 1987 Vern has organized the entertainment for those waiting to be served at the lutefisk dinners. Doris has been on “butter detail” for the dinner for many years. Both have belonged to the lodge Book Study group since it was organized in May 1999.

Because Doris had been a professional librarian for many years, she became the keeper and organizer of the books. As the library grew, the club decided to share the books with the lodge for member usage, so Doris and Vern set up the book and video display at every S/N dinner meeting so the lodge members have access to them and can benefit from them.

Vern is well known for his creative woodwork. He is involved in classes for wood turning and wood carving and often displays his wood projects at various functions. He even received a blue ribbon at District Convention for one of his carvings. His woodwork creations exemplify his love for the art.

Another activity within the lodge that Vern took care of was to be at the stabbur Sunday afternoons when it was open to the public.

Besides their many involvements in S/N activities, Doris and Vern have also been active in numerous community organizations for many years including BMHGS, ND State Historical Society, Missouri Valley Historical Society at Buckstop Junction, and at First Lutheran Church where Doris has taught Sunday School for 25 years, is the librarian and serves on the church council. Vern has also helped deliver Meals on wheels for the past 10 years and has been in charge of lining up Bell Ringers for the Salvation Army for the past 15 years. He was a Cub and Boy Scout leader while his sons were growing up and supervised Round Table discussions in the city for Cub Scout leaders for several years. Also he was President of the Will-Moore PTA for 2 years. Doris was nominated by the church women of First Lutheran as a candidate for Mother of the Year in 1980 and was named a "Merit Mother" for that year. Their family has expanded to include five grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Doris and Vern have made trips to Norway and truly have the Norwegian people, culture and heritage in their hearts. They continue to set an excellent example of caring, sharing, respect, and willing service to others. They are truly an asset to our community and the S/N Sverdrup Lodge. We are privileged to have them in our midst.