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HOLDREGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Giving Back to Education

HHS Alumni Recognition Feature

Dear HHS Alumni and HPS Foundation Supporters,

Holdrege High School is fortunate to have many very successful graduates. We are excited to share the stories of some of those HHS Alums. Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990, has joined our efforts with her journalistic talents to bring you this month's feature.

Many classes will be having reunions in 2013. Class organizers are encouraged to contact us - we can assist with communication by sending messages to classmates through Constant Contact. We welcome your suggestions and comments.

Sincerely,

Mike Waller, Chairman - HPS Foundation Committee

Harry Dahlstrom - Class of 1935

Leadership, community service a priority for 1935 Holdrege Grad Harry Dahlstrom

By Kristine Jacobson

At age 93, Harry Dahlstrom is one of the oldest living graduates of Holdrege High School.

Although he graduated from school 77 years ago, that didn't stop his learning. He has continued to gain knowledge and serve his community his entire life.

"I'm pretty much a student at heart, and at life," Harry said.

Harry was senior class president of the Holdrege High School class of 1935. He has lived in Phelps County most of his life and has continued to serve as a leader, working most of his career as a financial advisor.

He has worked tirelessly for the good of the community, serving on so many committees that his wife, Evelyn (now deceased), once called him "Harry 'Meeting' Dahlstrom."



*Photo courtesy of
Christensen Photography*

Jane Dahlstrom-Quinn, Harry's only child, said her dad gave her some great advice that he lived by: "Dad's philosophy is make a new friend every chance you get."

Childhood

Harry grew up on a farm north of Holdrege, the second youngest of nine children. His younger sister died at age 5 of strep throat, leaving him the youngest.

It was hard losing a sister, but Harry has good memories of farm life and his childhood.

"I remember a lot of good things that happened to me," Harry said.

His family worked together milking cows, raising hogs and chickens to eat, and selling eggs to earn income.

"We didn't have many wants," Harry said of his childhood. "We had all we needed. We had fried chicken every day."

Harry benefited from the knowledge of his older siblings, especially one of his sisters, who taught at the Snowball rural school. That school is now housed at the Nebraska Prairie Museum.

Harry started attending school at the Ash Grove No. 9 rural school when he was just 4 years old. "I wasn't sure if I started school early because I was that smart or that I had a little sister born and they wanted me out of the house," Harry joked. But, he did humbly admit that he liked school.

"I really studied when I was in school," Harry said. "I had the good fortune of being half-way intelligent."

His family also valued education. His dad had gone to seminary school and, in addition to farming, became a minister. They always had books in the house, and his mother read a Swedish newspaper from Chicago.

"My mother was a grammarian," Harry said. "She was very careful about this. She had a lot to do with raising us kids."

High School/Military

In high school, Harry's family moved to Sumner for two years when their family farm sold. They were able to move back to Phelps County a few years later, and Harry attended his last two years of high school in Holdrege. Because of living about 15 miles outside of town and there were few vehicles at the time, Harry boarded with a family in town during the school week and went home on the weekends.

In high school, the only sport Harry remembers playing was basketball. "I wasn't very good at it," he said. "But, I played it."

Harry excelled in leadership, music, and academics. He was elected president of his senior class, earned an excellent rating in the state music contest with his small mixed vocal group, and earned a perfect score in one portion of the American Legion Young Citizen's Contest.

After high school, he and his brother, Ralph, worked for a few years earning 10 cents a bushel harvesting corn to earn money for college. After two years of attending the Kearney State Teacher's College, he returned to Holdrege to work for the Agriculture Adjustment Administration. It was there that he met his wife, Evelyn, who had graduated from Holdrege High School in 1933.

Harry joined the National Guard and moved to California a few years later. He became an officer in the National Guard and eventually a captain. He commanded an African-American transportation company and served the country during World War II in New Guinea, the Philippines, and Japan.

Career

After his military service, he returned to Holdrege to work as a Veteran's Service Officer, and then a salesman for Allmand Bros. when it was just starting out. Finally, he began a career in financial services.

He worked for Investor's Diversified Services selling mutual funds, life insurance, and financial planning services. The company changed names to American Express Financial Advisors and is now known as Ameriprise Financial. It was a job he continued until he retired at age 80. "I felt that I was doing good for the people," Harry said about his career. "I didn't make a lot of money at it, but I made a lot of friends."

Throughout his career, Harry was active in many, many organizations in Holdrege, including the Holdrege Chamber of Commerce, where he served as an ambassador; the Phelps County Historical Society, where he served as president; the Phelps County Community Foundation board; and the Educational Service Unit board. He is now the oldest living member of the Holdrege Rotary. He also has been active in the Methodist Church.

He and his wife also were instrumental in developing the brown historical book of Phelps County that was published in the early 1980s for Holdrege's centennial celebration.

"I've had a lot of good experiences in Holdrege, and I'm proud of Holdrege," Harry said.

In addition to his work and service career, he has always enjoyed photography as a hobby. His photos are on permanent display at the Nebraska Prairie Museum.

"Holdrege is my town, and I really feel at home in Holdrege," he said. "I feel that I'm a part of Holdrege, and Holdrege is a part of me."

About Us

The mission of the HPS Foundation is to support and enhance the educational efforts of students and teachers of Holdrege Public Schools by providing funding for innovative and challenging programs, learning experiences, and activities.

Holdrege Public Schools Foundation

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