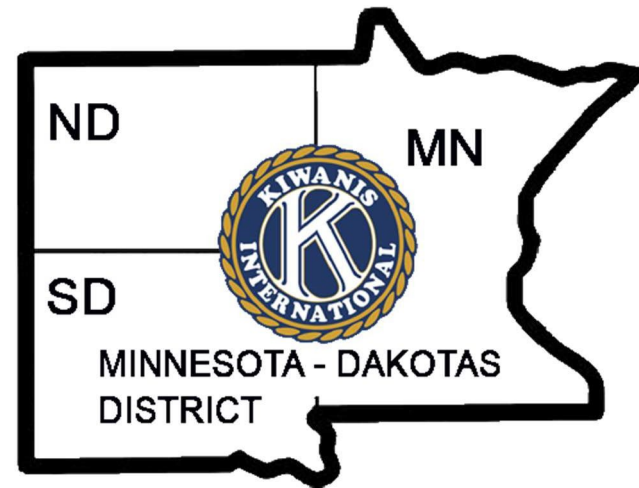


Awards Luncheon

**Kiwanis International
Minnesota-Dakotas District
108th Annual District Convention**



**August 9, 2025
12:00pm - 1:30pm**

**Best Western Plus
Willmar, MN**

Star Awards



Background:

There are many Kiwanians in our district who serve their clubs and their communities with unwavering commitment who are never recognized. This award is an opportunity for clubs to acknowledge those efforts by Division nomination, and to publicly recognize and honor them before their peers at the district convention.

Criteria for Award:

All currently paid members of the Minnesota Dakotas District are eligible for the award with the exception of current club presidents, current immediate past presidents, current presidents elect, current vice presidents, current governor and current Lt. Governors. District board members that don't fit the above description are eligible for the award, including club secretaries and treasurers.

Process:

Each club in the district is allowed to nominate ONE member for the award each year. The deadline is April 1st to your Lt. Governor. Each division determines their own process to select ONE Kiwanian for the award from that division. The Lt. Governor of each division must submit the division winner to the District Office by May 1st.

Clubs are to submit written justification as to why the member selected deserves to be the "Division Star" for their division.

Distinguished Club Awards for 2023-24 Bradley Knudson, 2023-24 Governor

The criteria for the 2023-2024 Distinguished Club Award were based on a combination of KI recommendations and my goals as District Governor. Monthly club reports were used to gather the information for each club. The primary criteria considered were:

- Completed 10 or more monthly reports
- Increased membership by 2 or more members
- Used Awards and Rewards to improve membership retention
- Support of Service Leadership Programs
- Improved recognition of Kiwanis in their community

Division 7

Dale Schuetz

Columbia Heights- Fridely



Dale is a Kiwanis member for 21 years. Dale was President, 2006 and 2007, and Vice President and Board Member most years as member of the club.

Dale was the Speaker coordinator for club programs for many years. He attended many Kiwanis Int'l Conventions and MNDK District Conventions.

Kiwanis Awards: Zeller award, Vantine Award, Distinguished Club President, Gold Key Outstanding Club Advisor award, and 2021 Key Club Int'l Outstanding Advisor Award.

Key Club Advisor for 20 years. Participated in Key Club service projects and provided

transportation when needed. Dale was proactively introduced of new projects for Key Club members. i.e. Sled-A-Thon, Books for Africa, Hospitality House, Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, Feed My Starving Children, SACA- food shelf.

Community Awards:

Hero Award from Cummins for help with refugee families and other city-sponsored programs.

2003 Columbia Heights Humanitarian of the Year Award.

U S Gov. Int'l Refugee Resettlement Org from New York. **Dedicated Service Award**

Active in all Kiwanis Club Service Projects:

Recycle Center -Saturdays - volunteers for scheduled time.

Dresser Building for Bridging Inc. Kiwanis One Day Service Project - Division 7

Annual Club Peach Sale Fundraiser

Other Roles and Accomplishments:

Built house with Habitat for Humanity organization

Past President of First Lutheran Church and Mens Club

Past Sunday School Teacher and Confirmation Leader 7th to 9th Grade.

North Heights Church Hospitality Team Member.

Program Agenda

Master of Ceremonies..... Carol Nitschke

Lunch:

Welcome.....Carol Nitschke

Remarks.....Dawn Puderbaugh Hodges, International
Trustee/Counselor

Division Star Awards..... Carol Nitschke

2022-23 Distinguished Club Award.....Bradley Knudson

Closing.....Carol Nitschke

Menu

Tex-Mex Lunch Buffet

Division 1 Lucinda Sorensen Minot Golden K Kiwanis



Cindy Sorensen has been a valued member of the Minot Golden K Kiwanis Club since September 16, 2021. Always upbeat, welcoming, and ready to lend a hand, Cindy brings a joyful spirit and a strong sense of service to everything she does.

Now serving as the club's Secretary, Cindy is always going above and beyond. She assists with organizational tasks, helps the club gain recognition in the *Minot Daily*

News, and contributes to the website as needed, providing consistent support for the club's activities.

Cindy serves right alongside her husband Richard, who is the club's Treasurer, making them a true Kiwanis duo. One of her favorite volunteer activities is helping with door security at the Legion baseball games, a role she says keeps her connected to the community in a special way.

She especially loves the fellowship of the club and looks forward to the program speakers at each meeting. Her dedication and positive energy have not gone unnoticed, and the Division 1 Star Award is a well-deserved recognition of her outstanding commitment to Kiwanis and the Minot community.

Division 6 Loreena Luetgers Early Risers of Worthington



Member of the Early Risers of Worthington for 29 years, the first woman member with another lady on the same day; Served as first woman president, all committees, chair and secretary; During president term tried to start a Hispanic club in our community; Co-chair of All Inclusive Playground, raised \$453,000.00 in 10 months of 2020 with no fundraisers; Awarded the Kiwanis International & Landscape Structures *Legacy of Play*; Co-chair of All Inclusive Dock; Designated to do club website; and Co-advisor for K-Kids.

Attended 25 District Conventions; Attended 6 International Conventions; Division 6 Lt. Governor, first team of 3 of the new plan; Club Leadership Education for 20 years; Director of Education and Leadership Development Coordinator: 4 years as assistant and 10 years in position educating numerous Lt. Governors in a three-day setting.

Member of The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for 41 years, leadership role and designed chapter website; Church: first woman elder, leadership, education and teaching; American Cancer Society and Relay for Life events; and working for law firm – parttime, not retired yet.

Thank you to Steve Handegaard, we were a team; and Earl Forbes of KI, who was scared to see what I would come up with for Lt. Governor Education; all the friendships and support from so many; and In Memory of Larry Rittgarn for taking a chance on me.

Thank you In Memory of Jean Collins, my original "Kiwanis Sister" (thanks to Tom Horan). The background of my picture was Jean's quilt during her Governor year. It went with her to every meeting, everyone had to sign it and now my treasure.

Division 5

Paula Deckert

Kiwanis Club of Mitchell



Paula Deckert has been a member of Kiwanis and a member of the Mitchell club for years. She has served as club President, Treasurer and Board Member. She also served the MNDAK District in 2022-23 as Lt Governor for Division 5.

She participates in club activities including Chair of Palace City Kiwanis Half Marathon committee, Chair of Membership Committee, Baseball

Tournament, Spaghetti Dinner, Fundraising Play, Supermarket Sweep and the Heart and Soul Cancer Walk booth.

About 4 years ago, the Mitchell Kiwanis Club fell to a low of about 22 members. We were struggling to maintain the events we held because of such low membership. Paula made it her personal goal to increase our membership and save our club. She created membership events, encouraged current members to ask friends and coworkers to join, and personally asked several people to join. Her enthusiasm was contagious and within about two years we had increased our membership by over 50%! She knew the importance of our club to the children of Mitchell, and she wasn't going to let it fade away.

Paula was also instrumental in the success of the Palace City Kiwanis Half Marathon, created 8 years ago, which has now become our best and most lucrative fundraiser. Because of the impact this event has on the community of Mitchell, the Kiwanis Club was awarded the Tourism Award from the Mitchell Chamber of Commerce.

Paula is Kiwanis. She cares about children – children of our community and children of the world. She is totally invested in making our community better for all. She deserves the Star Award.

Division 2

Gerry Worner

Otter Risers Kiwanis Club



For 45 years, Gerry Worner has been the unwavering heartbeat of the Otter Risers Kiwanis. More than just a member, Gerry embodies the spirit of service, consistently putting his enthusiasm and dedication into action. Whether meticulously staking the parade route under the summer sun and coordinating the on-time start of parade units from 3

directions, ringing the bell as part of our club's support of the Salvation Army, greeting the public and accepting donations for Otter Cove's Festival of Lights Parade or simply being a dedicated attendee of our weekly club meetings and monthly board of director meetings, Gerry can always be counted on. His energy is infectious.

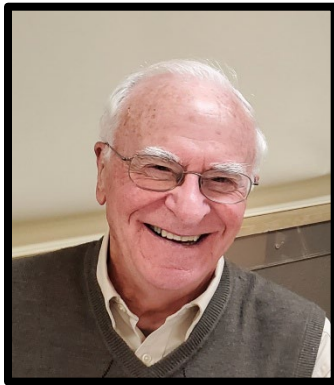
Gerry's commitment extends beyond hands-on service. He's our living history book, a walking repository of club bylaws and past achievements, ensuring our traditions are honored and our future is informed. His passion for Kiwanis is evident through his efforts as our champion recruiter. His membership minutes are legendary for their creativity!

Gerry's genuine belief in our mission draws others to our cause. Gerry Worner isn't just a long-standing member; he's a leader by example, a dedicated volunteer, and a passionate advocate. His exemplary commitment makes him a truly deserving candidate for the Kiwanis Division Star Award.

Division 3

John Cremers

Kiwanis Club of Brainerd



John has been a member of the Brainerd Club for 51 years. He is involved in all of the club projects and makes sure that weekly meetings happen by picking up lunch from the caterer weekly, making coffee and setting up the food table. He puts out water, salt and pepper, napkins, etc. and returns leftovers and dirty dishes to caterer after cleaning up the meeting room.

John is a warm and friendly jokester with a servant heart who is always the first one to volunteer for every project the club participates in. Most folks, at age 90, have slowed down, but not John. He just takes on more and more and does an excellent job on whatever he's helping with.

His positive attitude paired with his willingness to speak up make him someone who can work with anyone and do it honestly. You never have to worry about where he stands.

John has a love for youth and still attends many of the school sporting events. He's also remained active physically and bowls in a mixed doubles league weekly. Whether we're picking up the highway or raking Kiwanis Park, John is out there with all of the younger people working right alongside them (and teasing them unmercifully!)

We're all privileged to know and learn from John. He is the epitome of a Division Star and we're so proud to nominate him.

Division 4

Shelley Dragoo

Lead/Deadwood Kiwanis Club



Shelley's 29-year journey with the Kiwanis Club of Lead starting in 1996, is a testament to her unwavering dedication and selflessness. Serving as a leader on many committees and starting several new club traditions, her commitment to excellence remains constant. She has accepted the important role of Club President 3 times starting just 2 years after she joined.

Before personal computers were popular, Shelley created a local community calendar back when floppy discs were the norm. This calendar still helps the club to raise funds and serves as a local directory for the businesses in the Lead/Deadwood area.

To provide more local recognition for Kiwanis, Shelley created a badge for members to wear and started a club challenge. It is a fun way to raise a little extra money for our club and she has donated a lot of her own personal money to keep this challenge going. Several Kiwanis International leaders have commissioned her to make them.

Among other things, Shelley headed up a committee to buy a tent for the Prospector Bowl football games which is the club's signature project. Shelley has been the chairperson of this event for the past several years.

The Kiwanis Club of Lead will be 100 years old this year. Shelley is the initiator and committee chair to head up a 100-year legacy project for the community of Lead, SD. Along with the City of Lead and many member and community member donations, and grants, her vision is to upgrade a local park so all children in the area can have a new and safe place to play. This will be ADA accessible and all-inclusive for all children. She keeps the club informed of all donations and updates from the city and the contractors. This park will be renamed Kiwanis Park in celebration of her club turning 100 years old this year.

The Kiwanis club of Lead is proud to nominate Shelley Dragoo for the Star Award for 2025.