



Le Bon Mot



News letter for the John R Mott Chapter of YMCA Retirees of Iowa and Eastern Nebraska

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2024

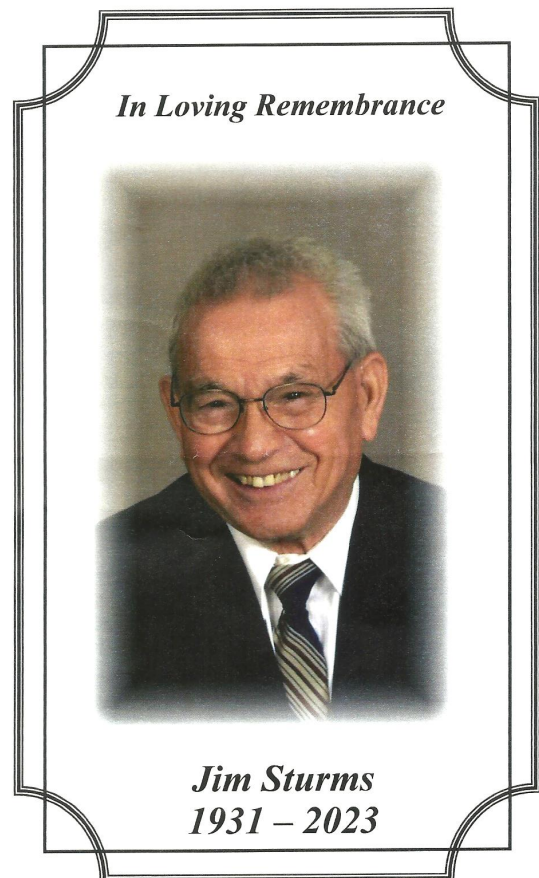
From the Editors Desk

Over the years it has been my joy to stay in touch with everyone with this simple newsletter. We have formed so many lasting friendships with the Mott members. This letter is bittersweet, because it is time to say good-bye to two long time members that have passed. Both were instrumental in keeping the Mott Chapter going back in the 1990's (or before) and helping us all bond together as a family of friends to sustain each other.

Marv and I were able to attend the funeral of Jim Sturms on Friday, Dec 1, 2023. It was good to see Jim Weaton, his brother, and Hank and Jo Bagelmann also in attendance. We were not there for the visitation on Thursday so we may have missed other Y friends. There were handshakes, hugs, tears, and a full church.

Pres. Marv Z said, "Sometimes we are not aware of the impact we are making in other peoples lives...Jim's life certainly exemplifies that."

Jim was eulogized by friends and family. To everyone's delight and surprise, Barb had the YMCA song (recorded by the Village People) played as the casket was ushered out. A true celebration of his life!



Jim Sturms Obituary

JIM STURMS

MUSCATINE, Iowa - Jim Sturms, 92, passed away on Saturday, December 2, 2023, at Wilton Retirement Community.

Funeral Service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, December 8, 2023, at Wesley United Methodist Church. Pastor Kayla Lange-Carney will officiate. Burial will be in Memorial Park Cemetery.

Visitation will be held from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 7, 2023, at the Ralph J. Wittich-Riley-Freers Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the family for a scholarship that will be set up in Jim's honor at Muscatine High School. Online condolences may be made at www.wittichfuneralhome.com.

Jim was born on July 31, 1931, in Muscatine, the son of James Clinton and Elma Hazel Stock Sturms. He married Barbara Rose Beckett on June 11, 1960, in Nashua, Iowa at the Little Brown Church in the Vale. They were married for 63 years.

Jim spent his first 17 years in and out of the University of Iowa Hospital. Although he was faced with many challenges, he never let them define him. Some of his most cherished honors were when he was named Handicapped Iowan of the year in 1975, and when he was inducted into the Muscatine High School Hall of Honor in 2005. Jim spent over seven decades serving wherever he lived on community boards, trustees, at the local, state, national, and international levels.

Jim was the instigator of raising funds and constructing 3 new YMCA's in Marshalltown, Burlington, and returning to his hometown of Muscatine in 1986.

Jim was a 1951 graduate of Muscatine High School and earned his AA degree from Muscatine Junior College. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Iowa Wesleyan University where he received his business administration degree. Jim received his certification as YMCA Director from George Williams College in 1958. Jim was also a member of the YMCA organization and served over 42 years of service at the YMCA as an Executive Director.

Jim was a member of Rotary International for 65 years and a member of the 33 club. He was a member of the Wesley United Methodist Church. Jim was an avid Chicago Cubs and Bears fan.

Jim is survived by his wife, Barbara Rose Sturms; children, Jay Sturms and his fiancé, Deb, Kyle Sturms, and Becky Wichers and her husband, Joel; grandchildren, Christine, Curtis, Kayla, Jenna, Drake, Drew, and Luke; great grandchildren, Camden, Weston, Josephine, Drayton, Kaydence, and Rhett; sister, Jean Haller; and many nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his parents; brother, Donald Sturms and his wife, Ruth; daughter-in-law, Joani Sturms; and brother-in-law, Fred 'Gumps' Haller.



As many of you know, after Beth Oleson sold her home we lost track of her. A week or so ago Scottie Soczek contacted me with the information that she had passed. It was posted on social media by her daughter. Here she had been in Kalona all the while but we had no way of following the paper trail.

I suggest that as an aging group we all submit a trusted contact in the case we are not able to follow up for ourselves and we loose contact with our Mott friends. I do not want to see this scenario repeat itself.

Beth Oleson 1944-2024



Beth M Oleson

September 22, 1944 — January 2, 2024
Kalona

Wellman- Elizabeth (Beth) Maureen Oleson, 79, of Kalona died Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at Parkview Manor in Wellman.

Beth was born September 22, 1944, in St. Charles, Illinois to John and Susan (Hempstead) McBurney. Her father worked for the postal service, so she grew up in various places including Stuart, Iowa, San Diego, and Elk Grove, California where she graduated high school in 1962. She later moved with her parents to Pine River, Minnesota and met the love of her life, Merrill.

On September 9, 1967, Beth was united in marriage to Merrill G. Oleson in Anoka, Minnesota. Merrill's work with the YMCA took them to Camp Iaghowan in Amery, Wisconsin; Camp Edwards in East Troy, Wisconsin; and the Forest City Family YMCA in Forest City, Iowa. Beth enjoyed traveling, wildlife, crocheting, church activities, and spending time with family. In 2004, she moved to the Kalona area to help care for two of her grandchildren. She enjoyed attending their concerts and performances.

Beth is survived by her two children: Jay (Jill Cody) Oleson of Bainbridge Island, Washington and Paula (Jeremy) Richardson of Kalona, Iowa; 4 grandchildren: Anthony Pitts, Katherine Oleson, Marina and Terra Richardson; a sister Mary Kroll of Missouri; four nieces and a nephew. She was preceded in death by her parents and husband.

Graveside service and Celebration of Life will be held at a future date in Forest City, Iowa. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to your local YMCA.

Goodbye dear friends. May you rest peacefully in God's arms. (Or in Jim's case, may you run like the wind.) God Bless.

SPRING MEETING FOR THE MOTT CHAPTER WILL BE APRIL 14 IN NEWTON, IOWA

Marv and Connie Zimmermann will host the Spring meeting in Newton, Iowa. The dates will be Sunday April 14 and Monday April 15th. We will be attending the Jasper County Concert Association performance of ABBAFAB a tribute to ABBA at 2 pm Sunday afternoon. We will follow with dinner and social time. Monday we will hold our Mott Chapter meeting and listen to an Ukrainian guest speaker describe their cultural life. More details will follow. Save the dates!!

We have also been invited to join the Ozark Chapter in Bentonville, AR on April 23-25. They will keep us informed of their plans.

Communications

Marv and I were able to have lunch with Chuck Pletke and Dodee Pugh on Dec 20th at the Machine Shed in Des Moines.

Chuck stays busy every morning (6-7 days a week) with various coffee, church, and friend groups. He always seems so informed about what is going on in his town. With the holidays closely approaching plans had been made to get together with family and celebrate.

Dodee now has one of her sons staying with her. It is mutually beneficial. We were lucky to catch her at a time when she was free. Dodee is still involved with the 5 Fires and their efforts to keep the Boone Camp going. They have been very successful and that is a great source of pride for her. She, too, was looking forward to holiday plans with the family.

HIGHLIGHT FROM FALL MEETING IN LE MARS IOWA

Brad Ellenbecker, Director of Thriving Y's (National Resource Office) addressed the Mott Chapter during their fall meeting. As a National Field Officer his first duty is to support Thriving Y's and collaborate work between them. His second duty is in CEO searches and providing Y's resources needed in the many other scenarios. The office is in charge of 2605 facilities nationally. There are not regional definitions for the field officers, so his work can take him anywhere in the country. The current terminology is area Alliances. Iowa is part of the Heartland Alliance. Many Y's have struggled since Covid, part of Brad's duty has been to recover PPP Federal money to reimburse Y's and help them stay solvent.

Brad started his career in Newton, Iowa and it was great to see a young familiar face still excited about the work of the Y.



January/February Celebrations

Anniversaries: none in Jan or Feb

Birthdays: none in Jan

February Birthdays:

John Donovan 2/09

Dodee Pugh 2/24

Congratulations New Retirees....

Jennifer Roberts and Vicki Foreman

Bill Roux. Come join us!

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

SAVE THE DATES for the Spring Mott meeting in Newton, Iowa April 14-15 hosted by Marv and Connie Zimmermann.

2025 Reunion Cruise Jan 26-Feb 2

Our next YMCA Alumni Reunion sales from Galveston, Texas into the western Caribbean. Travel arrangement provided by Royal Caribbean and their new ship *Harmony of the Seas*.

CHECK OUT THE YMCA ALUMNI WEBSITE FOR ALL UPDATES!!

www.ymcaalumni.org

HOW TO DONATE /RENEW

EAF click membership info/EAF/donate
Mail to Y USA EAF

101 Wacker Dr 15th Floor

Chicago, IL 60606

Memo Line: Chapter designation

WORLD SERVICE Y-USA

www.ymca.org/world-service

Mary Tikalsky, World Service Director

RENEW MEMBERSHIP

www.ymcaalumni.org/renew

Renewal forms mailed yearly in November.

NATIONAL SERVICE PROJECT

www.wawokiye.org

or click the links on your Connections mail.

NSP Volunteers Chair George Painter

NSP Chair Lou Falk

Annual Campaign Jan-March

Send to: YMCA Alumni Treasurer

PO Box 725

West Chester, OH 45071

Memo line: National Service Project and chapter affiliation

The Mott Chapter Officers **Look Forward to Seeing You !!**

Our slate of officers for the 2023-26

President: Marv Zimmermann
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