Division Star Awards

2017-2018

Kiwanis International
Al Fitterer is a 44 year member of the Mandan Kiwanis Club. Over the span of his membership he served as a district committee chairman, past President, and several terms on the scholarship selection committee and the Board of Directors, including 2016-2017.

With a current membership of about 40 members, Al has been an integral part of Mandan Kiwanis. He has been instrumental in a primary project of the Club, the Field of Dreams Little League program. The Little League program was adopted as an annual service project by the Club in 1955.

From 1983-1999 and 2000-2002, Al was the committee chairman. He coordinated sponsorships for the program, which included drafting a letter that was mailed to community businesses requesting financial support in exchange for their business name to be included on team shirts. In 1995, the Club committed to raising a $40,000 initial contribution for the Field of Dreams, which was an expansion of four additional ball diamonds to the Mandan softball park. Al was a key member who helped set up a major fundraising event which included a Kids Activity Night and Noon luncheon featuring speaker Jerry Bell, President of the Minnesota Twins. Additionally, Al has consistently been a top salesman of tickets for the Club’s annual Pancake breakfast, which is the Club’s primary annual fundraising event. Al can always be counted on to provide a strong choral presence at Club meetings and a helpful mentor to all members.

Al has been a Mandan business owner since 1976. He is a member and former Trustee of the Church of St Joseph in Mandan, ND. He and his wife, Vangie, have been married for 49 years, and have three children and six grandchildren.
Division 2

Eddie Johns
Kiwanis Club of Fargo Roughriders

Fargo Rough Riders is a true service club. Eddie is a key person helping the club in all aspects of service. He gives freely of his time and talent to carry out the mission of our club and outreach to the community. He has helped many Club Presidents to conduct efficient meetings by setting up the meeting room, providing a loud speaker, helping the club program to keeping on schedule and often volunteering to head up club projects. He warmly greets new members, visiting Key Club members and others, seeing that they get a club sponsored meal. Eddie actively participates in all areas of Kiwanis. He offers constructive and thoughtful ideas for youth and adult leadership development, organizes and participates in service projects and fund raisers. Last year our club earned over $4,000 as a result of Eddie’s leadership in the Christmas Wrapping fund raiser.

Eddie gives freely of his time and talent for club service projects and fund raisers such as: building shelves, flower planters, and remodeling and landscaping at low income sites in Fargo. He also coordinates our club’s activities with our West Fargo Key Club. He serves as club liaison to the Fargo Food Pantry and the Fargo Air Show.

Eddie serves his community and Kiwanis with generosity, kindness and gives freely of his time, talent and energy to make a better world for children. At the time the Golden K Kiwanis Club was struggling to continue operating, Eddie gave them encouragement and after they disbanded brought two prospective members from Golden K to our club. Eddie is a deserving candidate for the Division Two Star Award.
Division 3

Gary Torfin
Kiwanis Club of Buffalo

Gary Torfin is the division 3 representative for the Minnesota/Dakotas Star Award. Gary is a charter member of the Buffalo Kiwanis Club, and has served as Past President, and Past Lt. Governor for Division 3. He is currently the club Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, and serves as the club official contact in the community.

A few years ago his club lost their non-profit status due to their not meeting the new IRS reporting requirements. Gary was instrumental in recovering the club’s 501 (C) 4 status, which required 3 years of painstaking work.

Gary is always very involved in club service and fund raising activities. He participates in the club’s Bell Ringing for The Salvation Army, Mother’s Day Flower fundraiser, Garage and Crafts fundraiser, Poinsettia Plant fundraiser. He has also participated in many of the club’s following volunteer programs: ECFE Fair (Early Childhood and Family Education), Fire Department Open House (children and family) program, Head Start Reading for kids, Crisis Nursery support, Open Doors for Club Meetings, and Scholarships for Buffalo and Monticello High Schools.

Gary is always very faithful in making sure that the club meetings run smoothly and making people feel welcome. He always arrives early to open the facility and make coffee for 7:00 a.m. club meetings.

Gary is a Navy Veteran, serving 4 years, and was employed for 30 years as a Sheriff’s Deputy. Gary’s wife passed away two years ago, however, he continues to have and maintain a wonderful family unity.
Vern Hagedorn deserves to be a STAR KIWANIAN in our Division 4 for many and varied reasons. He is a seven year, distinguished Secretary for our club. In this role, he brings a deep knowledge base from his educational and Kiwanis administrative experience which is constantly invaluable. Vern was instrumental in aiding the merger of the two Rapid City Clubs; and, when Lt. Governor, he helped us implement the progressive steps needed to remove a harmful president who was not upholding the Objects of Kiwanis. Through applying what he believes and knows, he leads our President and Board of Directors to make wiser and more compassionate decisions regarding our involvement in our community.

He fulfills his secretarial duties with flair and imagination, creating minutes of our regular club meetings which keep every member connected to our activities. He also writes a colorful and intriguing monthly Newsletter, keeping all informed of our various committees’ progress in planning and carrying out our projects, and including other informative and challenging items for our members. He originated sending the Newsletter to various community partners, and Division/District officials. Vern also regularly maintains our active Webpage (rckiwanis.org) which covers every facet of our club, including an email link and a link to the club’s Facebook page. Added to the vast intellectual gifts Vern brings to our club are his ability and willingness to work with his hands, fixing broken flag stands, wall clocks, or hangers for our banners. Currently, because he cares so much, he is heading an effort to finding a PA system to help those in our club with hearing problems have an easier time listening to our programs. Finally, we believe Vern Hagedorn deserves the STAR KIWANIAN Award because his choices as a member of our Kiwanis Club clearly exemplify the Objects of Kiwanis.
Glenn is an exemplary leader who places others before himself. Glenn gives freely of his time, his money and his heart to advance our Kiwanis goals in serving the children of this world. Glenn leads others by example using a gentle, thoughtful approach that not only reassures others but motivates them to consider others before self. Glenn is committed to supporting ways in which to educate the public and especially children on the importance of Agriculture in our Community, our State and our Country.

Glenn not only gives of his time and money, but is exceptional at encouraging others to join him in doing good things for others. A perfect example is the Eliminate project in our own club. I gave Glenn a brochure about Eliminate. A few days later he told me he wanted to get involved and he would do a Walter Zeller donation, but he was going to do it with a birthday request for himself by asking his family to donate to the Eliminate project. This was a great success that led to Glenn’s first Walter Zeller Award. After that Glenn approached me and said “Mark, you cannot Champion something you have not bought into”. Glenn then matched what I could give to establish my Zeller and that continues every year with matches in very thoughtful and unique ways for others in our club.

Glenn is the quintessential husband, father, friend and community minded citizen. What a great gift he has been to me in my life. What a wonderful person to have in our community.
Wilbur Neushwander-Frink is an unsung hero for her work with the disability community. For over twenty-five years she has been driven by the passion to make a difference in the lives of others, and for her upbeat, positive and truly inspiring personality. Her good work has changed how our community appreciates and interacts with people with disabilities. Through her advocacy she has removed barriers – encouraging people with disabilities to have a voice in their own livelihood and she has dedicated her time to ensure that this voice is heard at the community, state, and national levels.

Wilbur’s work with the disability community started when she worked with MBW Company of New Ulm as a nurse supervisor. It was there she became aware of and eventually an active ally in the People First self-advocacy movement of Minnesota. Responding to requests from the People First members Wilbur began her first theatre group in New Ulm called The United We Stand Players in 1994. Then she teamed up with the Mankato Downtown Kiwanis Club in 2006 to start a group called Aktion Club Theatre of Mankato and another group in Fairmont in 2017. She also started a new nonprofit called Open Arts Minnesota in February 2018 which will focus on these same issues statewide.

Through her theatre work Wilbur has changed the lives of many people. She gives them the confidence to speak out about injustice, learning to advocate for positive change in their lives. When the actors take their bows at the edge of the stage their faces radiate joy. For many it is the first time in their lives that they are acknowledged. The actors are recognized for their common humanity, shared with the appreciative audience, not for their labels. It is powerful, meaningful and life changing.
Robert King
Kiwanis Club of North Suburban, St. Paul

We are recognizing Robert King with the Division Star Award because he embodies and is a true representation of the Kiwanis spirit. Bob tirelessly gives of himself and has been dedicated to the service of others for more than 50 years.

It is our good fortune that a friend from kindergarten sponsored Bob as a Kiwanis member who has been actively involved in our club for 30 years. Bob served as club President, many terms on the Board of Directors, and chaired numerous committees including malt shop fund raising and pancake breakfasts. Bob served as Lt. Governor in 1998 overseeing 23 clubs and was awarded the Distinguished Lt. Governor award in 1999. He continuously supports our many service projects and a valued member of our team.

Bob instituted the Beginning Reader bookshelves at the Roseville and Shoreview branches of the Ramsey County Library. This successful program provided a continuous supply of new books for over six years. Our shelves saw more books being checked out than any other area of these two library branches. This was the predecessor of our Reading Oasis program now in force.

Bob served many years as an assistant Scout Master and council member. He coached the Roseville youth hockey program for 6 years and served equal time as the treasurer. He has been an usher at his church for over 50 years, church council treasurer, and chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee. He has also been a volunteer for Meals on Wheels for over 10 years.

He is a veteran of the US Navy and after 15 years of night school, earned a BA from the University of Minnesota. He was a dedicated employee for over 40 years with the Deluxe Corporation.