1996/1997 Minnesota/Dakota Districts
Kiwanis Year History
Written by Lyle Solem 1996/1997 Governor and First Lady Donna Solem

Governor, Lyle Solem, Rochester Minnesota
Governor Elect, Jeff McKinney, Huron South Dakota
Circle K Governor Merijo Bruns, Fargo ND
Key Club Governor Jennifer Hegdahl, Sioux Falls, SD.
Kiwanis International Convention was held June 27-30 1997, Nashville, TN.
Kiwanis District Convention was held on August 1-3, 1997 Sioux Falls, SD.

Lt. Governors
Division 1 Robert Nowicki ** Rochester MN, Division 2 Thomas J. Laughlin ** # Faribault MN, Division 3 Arthur M. Kjos Winthrop MN, Art passed away during his term was completed by Dale Hanke Mankato MN, Division 4 Donald S Gamber, Pipestone MN, Division 5 Robert G. O’Fallon, Willmar MN, Division 6 Melvin M. Fisher **, Inver Grove Heights MN, Division 7 Ann H. Hansen, Chaska MN, Division 8 Bruce Frank, Coon Rapids MN, Division 8 Charles A. Carr, St. Cloud MN, Division 10 A Susan Adam **, Duluth MN, Division 11 Joe W. Rust, Grand Rapids MN, Division 12 Jeannine F. Amon, Crookston MN, Division 13 Norman E. Winkelman, Jamestown ND, Division 14 Dixie R. Johnson, Detroit Lakes MN, Division 15 David L. Rinden, Fergus Falls MN, Division 16; Martin Wenes, Watertown SD, Division 17 Richard O. Tufte ** #, Brookings SD, Division 18 Bob Everson, Mitchell SD, Division 19 Robert A. Ackerman ** #*, Lead SD, Division 20 Edwin F. Zuern ***, Bismarck ND, Division 21 Ken R. Engberg, Crosby ND, Division 22 Kenneth D. Swift, Bigelow MN, Division 23 Jim Neiles Pierre SD.

The ** denotes distinguished Lt. Governor.
The # denotes and represents starting one or more new Kiwanis Clubs in their Division.

Lt. Governor Training. The year started out very strong with all Lt. Governors attending their Lt. Governor training session held on May 3, 4 & 5, 1996 in Marshall, MN. Our theme for the year was TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Division Visits:
Our travels started on October 18th with our first Division meeting in Pipestone, MN on October 19 and on October 20 we were in Worthington, MN. This was just a short two day excursion to get acclimated on what is ahead of us.

On October 24, 1996 we left Rochester, MN. and returned to Rochester on November 12, 1996. During this time we made 11 Division visits to all South Dakota and North Dakota Divisions plus the Kiwanis Divisions in Northwestern MN. We also attended the Circle K (FDLC) in Bismarck ND and the Key Club Rally, at Craigens’s Resort, in Brainerd, MN. Our travels were very interesting: heavy rain and hail on our way to Pierre SD, highway closed west of Rapid City because of a 34 inch snow storm. We stayed at Lt. Governor Bob and Vonnie Ackerman’s Bed and Breakfast, located a few miles out of Lead SD. We arrived on October 28th. to a welcome of Fifty inches of snow on the ground at Bob and Vonnies B&B. All the Schools in and around Lead SD were close but Kiwanis must go on. Our Division meeting was held in Lead on October 28th, the attendance was outstanding and the elementary school choir of 40 kids sang. What a lovely evening. We left Lead SD and headed north to Crosby ND. On this trip we had 90 mile per hour winds as we were crossing Western North Dakota heading for Crosby ND. The snow and blizzards, ice storms and rain never stop dedicated Kiwanians. Our attendance at all Division meetings were very good.

We made a few more Division visits during the winter but the remainder of our Division visits were to the Northern part of Minnesota, they were completed between April 17, 1997 through May 10, 1997.
At this time I would like to share with you some of the highlights and low-lights of our District during our year as Governor and First Lady.

The Kiwanis year 1996/97 should be called the year of the big snow storms and flooding in our MN/DAK District. The flooding around the Eastern border of North Dakota and Western Minnesota was the most severe flooding in the history of the states. These floods had significant impact on our Kiwanis Members and our Clubs.

Flood disaster brings people in need together and Kiwanis stepped up to the plate to help.

In February I received a request from the Federal Government office FEMA to deliver information to all cities on the borders of Western Minnesota telling them about the possibility of flooding and what help they could receive from the Federal Government. This subject was discussed at our Mid Winter Board Meeting and approved as a Kiwanis project. Lt. Governor Kenneth Swift from Worthington MN coordinated the project to deliver information to all the cities on the Western border of MN.

When the flooding started in North Dakota I made a request to Kiwanis International Foundation for a grant to help our flood victims. This grant was approved and we received ten thousand dollars ($10,000). Along with this request I sent memo’s to all present Governors of Kiwanis International requesting financial or material support to our flood victims. The reception was outstanding. We raised a total of $27,230.36. District Secretary Tom Horan and the Lt. Governors of the areas that were affected coordinated the program to distribute the $27,230.36 to the communities that had Kiwanis Clubs, members and non-profits that needed financial support. The financial donations came from members or clubs in the following states. Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin, Wyoming and I apologize if I have missed some states. I was also in communication with other Clubs that organized to send non financial support. For example from Las Vegas we received a semi load of clothes, from North Carolina a semi load of sheet rock and ten men traveled from Nebraska to work in the Moorhead area and many more items of support for those in need.

Membership: This has been an outstanding Kiwanis Year for starting new Kiwanis Clubs. We organized four new Kiwanis Clubs, Box Elder-Ellsworth Air Base, Rapid City SD, Golden K Faribault MN, Brookings SD Sunrisers and Black Hawk, Black Hawk SD. Membership wise it was not a good year even though we organized four new clubs. At year end we were down 253 members. I contribute part of this to the severe floods in Northwestern MN and Eastern North Dakota. Five Kiwanis Clubs terminated in year 1996/1997. Two clubs terminate because they did not have a meeting place or their members were devastated because of the flood. Three of the five were Golden K Clubs.

Our Mid-Winter Conference was held in Minneapolis MN on February 7-9, 1997. The attendance at this conference was the largest ever held in our MN/DAK District. We were honored to have Kiwanis International President Jerry Christiano and first Lady Aniata and Trustee Brian Cunat and his wife Miki in attendance. President Jerry was the key note speaker and he gave an outstanding presentation. At the end of his presentation he presented 14 Hixson’s and/or Tablet of Honors to attendees. Thank you past Lt. Governor Division 8, Maelyn (Elmo) Hansen for your support and organization of the Mid-Winter Conference.

Kiwanis IDD program. You the members and clubs really stepped up and made significant contributions to the IDD program. Thank you for all your support and you have save many lives. Our District’s goal was to raise $700,000 by October 1, 1997. We exceeded our year end goal by over $25,000. This would not have happened if it wasn’t for Dr. Don Mattson of Willmar Minnesota for his dedication and financial support. Thank you Don.

Circle K and Key Clubs. Our District, MINNESOTA-DAKOTAS DISTRICT OF KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL RECEIVED THE R.D. (GUS) GUSTAFSON AWARD presented by CIRCLE K INTERNATIONAL on August 3, 1997 Chicago, Illinois. This award is given to Districts that the Governor and sponsoring clubs actively participate and work with the Circle K organization. This was the first time our District had ever received this award. Thank you clubs and members for support of Circle K and our Key Clubs. During my term as Governor I visited many schools that had Key Clubs and the comments I received from the School Principals were all very positive. Your support of the Districts Kiwanis Outreach program was $5,506.48. You exceeded the previous year by a factor of
two and was the highest dollar amount being contributed to the Out Reach Program in the previous six years. Out Reach Dollars are used to financially support our local Key Clubs and Circle K.

**International Convention.** Was held from June 27 to July 1, 1997 in Nashville, TN. All in attendance enjoyed the Convention. This year for our District get together at the Convention we had our dinner and evening outing on a River Boat Cruise. This was a first time that our District meeting/dinner was held outside of the hotel at an International Convention. All sailors, (Kiwanians and Partners) enjoyed this outing very much.

**District Convention.** Our last official business or should I say the big get together was at the 80th Annual District Convention in Sioux Falls SD on August 1-3, 1997 The Sioux Falls Kiwanis Clubs were our host and they did an outstanding job. The Convention CO-CHAIRPERSONS were Renard “Ren” Fetzer, Sioux Falls South Club, and Mary Lynn Myers, Sioux Falls South Club. The facilities, meals, attendance and music were outstanding. Representing Kiwanis International was our assigned International Trustee Miguel A. Clare and partner from Panama City, Panama.

One of our Keynote speakers was Lance Incitte, Past Distinguished Governor from the New Jersey District. Lance’s topic was: Your IDD Dollars at Work. Lance gave a very moving talk and slide presentation on his trip to Pakistan pointing out the problems we can solve by supporting the Kiwanis World wide IDD project.

As the Governor and First Lady our objective was to visit all 23 Divisions within the MN/DAK District and attend all Circle K and Key Club rallies or conventions and to promote Kiwanis in all three states. Our objectives were met. We had a very enjoyable year visiting Kiwanians throughout the MN/DAK District.

I must say that this year was a very enjoyable year for Donna and myself and we thank you the Kiwanians for your support. As the Kiwanis Governor you also get to work with our youth programs. I must tell you, our youth are outstanding. These young adults and kids never get tired. They could dance all hours of the night and then be back up a 7:00 AM to put in another long day.

Our year is now history, Donna and I want to thank all of you for your service to your communities. You have done an outstanding job. We enjoyed our year as your Governor and First Lady. We have made many new friends, traveled to many new areas and we really enjoyed our many trips to over forty official outings. In closing we have to say that the year 1996/97 was an enjoyable year and possibly the best year of our life.

Yes **TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.** You did that in 1996/1997. Keep promoting Kiwanis. We thank all of you for your support.

1996/1997 Governor Lyle Solem and First Lady Donna Solem
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