

# Nebraska Community Foundation recognizes Kermit Karns, Imperial's local foundation

*Karns recognized for \$100,000 in gifts to the local foundation*

**By Russ PANKONIN**  
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

Imperial's Kermit Karns and the Imperial Community Foundation received special recognition from the Nebraska Community Foundation during their annual meeting in Norfolk last Thursday.

The NCF recognized Karns and his late wife, Lottie, as members of the Jim and Elaine Wolf Club and one of the newest members in the NCF Legacy Society.

The Jim and Elaine Wolf Club recognizes individuals, families and their private foundations, and corporations who have made cumulative, lifetime gifts of \$100,000 or more to the NCF or its affiliated funds.

As a member of the Wolf Club, individuals also become members of the NCF's Legacy Society.

Karns has been instrumental in setting up nursing scholarship funds for individuals who will bring their nursing education back to Chase County.

He also set up an endowment fund for local high school scholarships.

He worked closely with the Imperial Community Foundation to endow the scholarships with more than \$100,000 in gifts.

As a result, the Imperial's foundation was among six community foundations recognized for their achievements during the past year.

The ICF received an Affiliated Fund Award for the establishment of the non-traditional scholarships endowed by Karns.

Karns and ICF board members Lori Pankonin and Elna Johnson were present at the banquet to accept their awards.

Carol Maddux of Wauneta is an outgoing member of the NCF's board of directors.

Chair Kathy Thuman of Maywood will be succeeded by Mark Graff of McCook.

## Foundation becoming a model

Jeff Yost, president and CEO of the NCF, said the Nebraska Community Foundation has become a role model for other states for its focus on reinvestment and economic development in rural Nebraska.

The foundation is a partner of the Hometown Competitiveness Program which concentrates on developing local leadership, youth involvement and opportunity, philanthropy and entrepreneurship.

Recently, the Kellogg Foundation selected NCF and the Hometown Competitiveness Program to receive a \$2 million grant to further implement the program in communities across the state.

Rick Foster, vice president of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Mich., said the NCF and the HTC program represent the finest commitment to rural development that they have seen. "You are our story," he told the crowd of nearly 200.

Susan Berresford, president of the \$470 million Ford Foundation in New York City, praised the foundation's efforts to bring



**Kermit Karns**

young people back to their rural Nebraska communities.

"This provides affirmation about new futures here," she said.

She said local, state and national foundations can play a role in developing entrepreneurship in communities and creating economic development opportunities.

She encouraged communities and their people to embrace new ideas to enhance their futures.

She noted change will be inevitable throughout rural America and urged people to prepare for it and manage it in a way that keeps a community's values intact.

Nebraska is leading from the grass roots up, not the rich on down, she said. Philanthropic history is being made in Nebraska and could become the model for charitable giving throughout the country, she added.

Pay special attention to newcomers and women in a community, she urged. They can bring fresh, new ideas to the table that can benefit a commu-

nity in many ways, as long as they feel acceptance and inclusion from the community.



The Imperial Community Foundation was honored for its work with Kermit Karns in establishing non-traditional scholarships for nursing students. Accepting the ICF award were (front, from left) board member Elna Johnson, Karns and board member Lori Pankonin. Nebraska Community Foundation representatives pictured include, top from left, Jana Jensen, Jeff Yost and Kathy Thuman. (Republican photo)

