

T H E W I L L A C A T H E R F O U N D A T I O N

*Preserving our past,
Pioneering our future*



T H E W I L L A C A T H E R F O U N D A T I O N

*Encouraging the reading and enjoyment of her work for future generations
Preserving the settings and archives associated with her life and times*



TO OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

Preserving our Past, Pioneering our Future. This is such a fitting description of all of the many and varied endeavors the Willa Cather Foundation presses forward on every day. In fact, we thought it so apt that we've adopted it as the title of the new fundraising campaign we're launching in 2010 aimed at increasing annual donations.

As you can see from the photos on the cover, *preserving our past* was one of the reasons we felt it so important to save the Red Cloud Opera House. From the once beautiful and vibrant center of community activity it was in Cather's time, by mid-century it had become a lifeless eyesore. But with vision and help from our wonderful donors, we were able to transform it back into a teeming beehive of Cather and community goings-on.

The restored Opera House is also helping us to *pioneer our future* by providing us a base from which to host events and live performances. It also allows us to work on such critical programs as properly archiving our amazing collection of Cather artifacts and memorabilia, as well as push forward on programs to help ensure that school kids throughout Nebraska and the region are reading Cather and then coming to her hometown to fall in love with her work as we all have.

Our new campaign will also help us to build the foundation for the upcoming restoration of the Moon Block, the building adjacent to the Opera House that will house a proper home for our Archives, expand our bookstore, create residential units for operational income, give us backstage space for the Auditorium and renovate five business bays in historic downtown Red Cloud.

2009 was a year that helped the Cather Foundation move forward in so many ways, and with your help, 2010 will take us much, much further. I sincerely thank you for all that all of you do.



Efforts to *preserve our past* are part of daily operations at the Foundation office in Red Cloud where the staff works diligently to preserve and maintain ten historic sites that are directly related to Cather's life and work.

The Red Cloud Opera House, once Cather's cultural window to the world, is again at the center of Red Cloud life. 2009 brought another incredible year of programming with highlights including a special traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution, "Beyond Baseball: The Life of Roberto Clemente" (as well as number of presentations we describe on page 4).

Restoration of the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie continued to move forward with removal of nearly 2,000 invasive trees, reintroduction of native plants, and the practice of rotational grazing. Most notable was a 200-acre prescribed burn that will enhance restoration efforts through the promotion of native plants and the creation of a diverse habitat for animal species.

Additional activities included a second Elderhostel (now known as Road Scholar); a week-long Prairie Writers' Workshop; co-sponsorship of the 12th biennial International Cather Seminar; and the 54th annual Willa Cather Spring Conference that included a special centenary birthday celebration in honor of our founder, Mildred Bennett.

Your past support has enabled the Foundation to become a multifaceted organization that serves many diverse interests. Whether your passion lies with preservation of our historical collection; programming in our beautifully restored Opera House; or restoration of our native prairie, we thank you for your generous support of our efforts to preserve the legacy of one of America's most beloved authors and we hope that you'll be our partner as we *pioneer our future*.



John A. (Jay) Yost
President
Willa Cather Foundation
Board of Governors



Ashley Olson
Director of Finance
& Administration



Stephany Thompson
Director of Foundation
Programming

CATHER AND CHICAGO

The Cather International Seminar found itself, in 2009, in a city that was vital in the development of Cather's imagination: Chicago.

Chicago was the major rail hub for Cather on her journeys East (and then back West). It was also a vital center for music and opera and the home of the Art Institute, where Cather encountered the inspirational world of European art. Cather's novels often touch on the city: *The Song of the Lark* and *Lucy Gayheart*, in particular, draw on Cather's deep experience of Chicago.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Cather Foundation jointly sponsored the International Seminar, based at the "University Center," a purpose-built convention facility in downtown Chicago. Events included a reception in the "Cliff Dwellers" club, a spectacular space overlooking Millennium Park and Lake Michigan, and a reading by Cather enthusiast and fellow-novelist Bradford Morrow in the Chicago Public Library.



Bradford Morrow

Mr. Morrow, who has family roots in Nebraska, deftly interwove reminiscence, literary criticism and place-writing in a narrative that had the resonance of memoir.

And then there were the papers. We had over 120 attendees, and some 80 papers over four days. We had a lively gathering of familiar faces and new acolytes, professional scholars and independent readers and critics: all, we hope, to be seen at the 2011 International Seminar in Massachusetts.

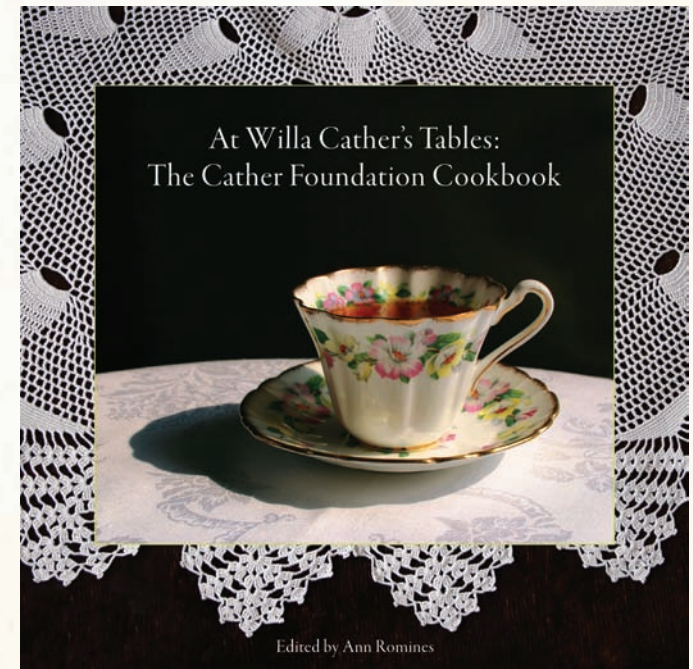


A RICH AND DELICIOUS LEGACY

We are grateful that Ann Romines' duties as Professor of English at The George Washington University did not prevent her from dedicating a good deal of time and effort during 2009 to the creation of *At Willa Cather's Tables: The Cather Foundation Cookbook*.

Romines, a Board of Governors member and accomplished amateur cook, has honored Willa Cather and the Foundation itself with a lively book that celebrates not just Cather's love of good cooking, but also the artistry with which it is reflected in her work. A treasury of rare photographs, reminiscences, personal essays, and abundant recipes old and new, the book invites you to enjoy the foods served at Willa Cather's many tables, in her fiction and in her life.

With a large helping of recipes from the Cather Foundation and its many friends worldwide, the book is also that wonderful thing, a *community* cookbook. This particular community is one that spans the globe, and many decades.



A WORLDWIDE MISSION

As much we love to share with visitors the “miles of copper-red grass . . . drenched in sunlight” that Willa Cather described so expressively in *My Ántonia*, we embrace the fact that Cather belongs to the world. She was a native of Virginia, spent formative years in Nebraska, and traveled extensively throughout her lifetime. As beloved as her prairie novels are, it is a disservice to her legacy to think of her as merely a prairie novelist. Her gaze was wider.

The Foundation takes pride in the Nebraska-based historic preservation work that constitutes a part of our mission, but we realize that it is perhaps not practical to bring Cather’s reading public all to Red Cloud for a visit — at least not all at once.

For that, and for a great deal more, we have the web. At www.WillaCather.org, we can do our part in bringing this timeless writer (and citizen of the world) to the attention of a virtually limitless audience. The Foundation’s website is increasingly central to our activities, both in communicating news of local programming and in hosting stories and features of interest to a global public.

In 2009 we were honored to publish “Rediscovering Serena’s Album,” featuring the entirety of the 1880s memory book owned by Cather’s schoolmate Serena White. Among many entries in this fascinating document, available nowhere else, is one by a precocious teenager named “Wm. Cather M.D.” We also have begun posting videos of noted writers including Pulitzer Prize winner David McCullough and the late Cather scholar Susan Rosowski; created for the award-winning documentary *Willa Cather — The Road Is All*, these interviews are available thanks to the efforts of the film’s director, Foundation Board of Governors member Joel Geyer.

If Cather harbored a certain distrust of technology in her late years, she is nevertheless being well served by her friends online. Visit us at www.WillaCather.org.

The Opinions, Tastes and Fancies of
Wm. Cather M.D.
Red Cloud
Oct 10, 1881

Autographically expressed thus:

My Favorite:
Color: *Eye Green* Plant or Potess: *Tomato*
Flower: *Capitlower* Free Writer: *Emerson*
Book: *Shelby* Composer: *Bethoven*
Animal: *Cat* Character in History: *Benjamin*
Season: *Miss Willows Beauty* Character in Romance: *Tristram*
Scenery: *The green show glenched hills*
Music: *A Squalling Baby*
Amusement: *Pivirection*
Occupation during a Summer's Vacation: *Shipping Goods*
My Pet Hobby: *Snails + Shelby*
My Chief Ambition in Life: *To hear M.D.*

Serena's Album was preserved by the family of Florence White Grosvenor, younger sister of the album's original owner. Among Grosvenor's descendants are Jane Dressler, music professor at Kent State University, and her daughter Virginia Dressler, Digital Library Programs Librarian at Case Western Reserve University. It is through their generous efforts that the Foundation has been able to publish this important historical artifact.

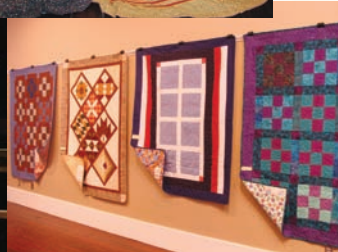


Serena White

Florence White Grosvenor

IN THE OPERA HOUSE

There were several standouts among the broad assortment of cultural programs and activities in the Opera House and Art Gallery in the last year. *Quilters*, a community theatre production, was a musical tribute to the lives of pioneer women as interpreted through the panels of a legacy quilt. Red Cloud quilters themselves created the piecework backdrop for the production, and there was also another important tie-in: in cooperation with the Quilts of Valor Foundation, the Art Gallery displayed more than forty beautiful quilts created over a three-year period and later donated to area war veterans.



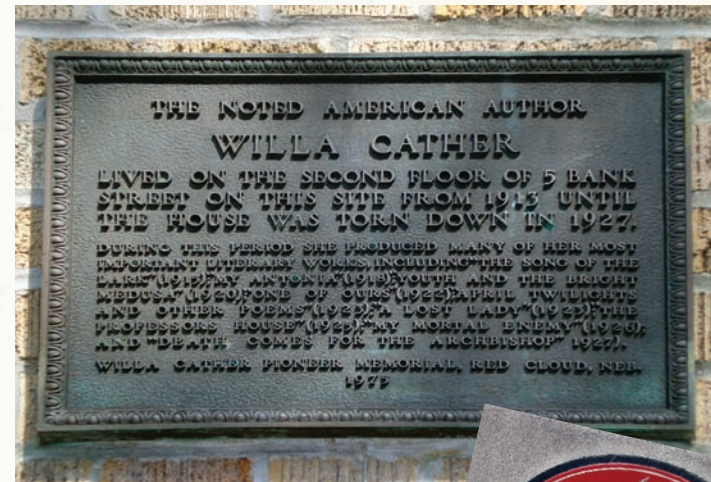
Our old friends and annual visitors, the Missoula Children's Theatre, helped young area performers put on *The Little Mermaid*, and twins Gunnar and Matthew Nelson brought classic rock-and-roll to the venerable Opera House with their tribute to their father, "Ricky Nelson Remembered."

The New York-based Paper Plane Theatre Company staged Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* during a 2009 summer residency in Red Cloud — a highly memorable experience for area audiences, and we hope for this ambitious young company as well.

"WILLA CATHER'S GREENWICH VILLAGE"

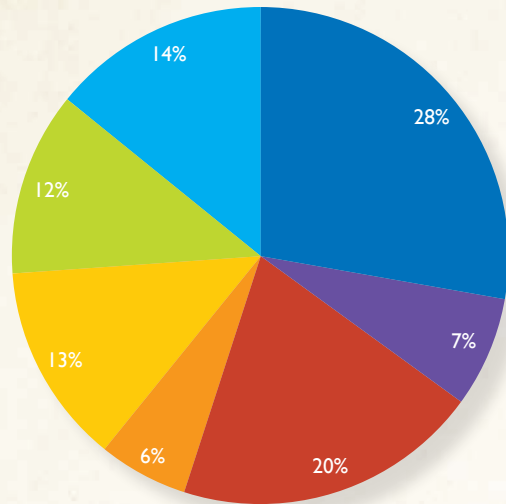
Although she traveled widely, for most of her adult life Willa Cather was a New Yorker. And for more than 25 years, her home was Greenwich Village. One of the Foundation's activities far from our Nebraska headquarters is our guided walking tour of Cather's Greenwich Village, which culminates at the Bank Street site of her longest Village residence — the "walled stronghold of her very self," in the words of her friend Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant. Under the direction of our founder Mildred Bennett, in 1975 the Foundation erected a plaque commemorating Cather's residence there.

Some of the sites on the tour exist in memory only, or are represented mainly by plaques. But many Cather-related sites in this historic neighborhood remain, creating an evocative fabric against which we can recreate the life and times and work of "the noted American author."



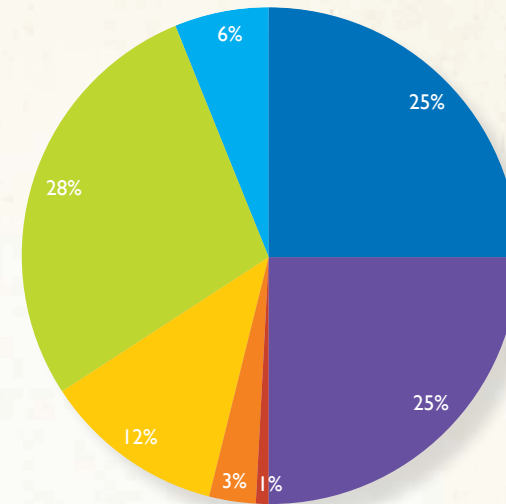
FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2009

SUPPORT AND REVENUE



■ Contributions	\$138,883
■ Memberships	33,781
■ Grants	103,581
■ Rental Income	28,243
■ Nebraska State Historical Society Appropriations	68,430
■ Sales and Admissions	59,317
■ Conferences, Seminars, Other	70,560
Total Support and Revenue	\$502,795

USE OF FUNDS



Program Services

■ Nebraska State Historic Site Operations and Maintenance	\$118,985
■ Opera House Programming and Operations	120,131
■ Scholarships	4,950
■ Prairie Restoration and Maintenance	15,226
■ Bookstore, Publications, Conferences and Seminars	56,206

Supporting Services

■ Management and General	136,063
■ Development	28,772

Total Expenditures

\$480,334

In 2009, certain income items were restricted and therefore not available to cover operating expenses. Although these restricted grants resulted in the net gain in assets shown above, an operating cash shortfall did occur. The Foundation has since taken and continues to take various steps to ensure an operating surplus in 2010 and future years.

These figures are based on final year-end audited information compiled by an independent public accounting firm.

SUPPORT

The following individuals and organizations were donors to the Willa Cather Foundation in 2009. Gifts including a payment on a pledge or grant are denoted by an asterisk. Space does not permit us to list donations under \$50.00, but we are grateful for these contributions. Every gift is important to us.

\$50,000 AND ABOVE

Jim & Angela Southwick, Heber City, UT

\$25,000 TO \$49,999

Carol Cope, Kearney, NE
Nebraska Arts Council*, Omaha, NE

\$15,000 TO \$24,999

Jim & Trish Schreiber, Meadow Vista, CA

\$10,000 TO \$14,999

John A Yost & G. Wade Leak, New York, NY

\$5,000 TO \$9,999

Thomas Reese Gallagher, New York, NY
Reese Gates, Red Cloud, NE
Garnet Lewis, Red Cloud, NE
Nebraska Travel and Tourism*, Lincoln, NE

\$2,500 TO \$4,999

Melvin C. Anderson, Red Cloud, NE
The Theodore G. Baldwin Foundation*,
Kearney, NE
Bob & Joanne Berkshire, Omaha, NE
Paul R. & Lynette R. Krieger, Hastings, NE
Daniel & Lucia Woods Lindley, Evanston, IL
Nebraska Environmental Trust*, Lincoln, NE
U.S. Dept. Agriculture-Rural Dev.*, Kearney, NE

\$1,000 TO \$2,499

Adrian Almquist, Bloomington, MN
Marion A. Arneson, Wayne, NE
Erma B. Bennett, Indianapolis, IN
Marilyn B. Callander, Ph.D., Lebanon, NJ
Laurie Smith Camp, Omaha, NE
UNL Cather Project, Lincoln, NE
Culligan of Hastings, Hastings, NE
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Hansen-Wulf, Inc.*, Red Cloud, NE

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Ruth & Jim Keene III, Omaha, NE
Kinder Porter Scott Family Foundation,
Lincoln, NE
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Reverend & Mrs. Charles Peek, Grand Island, NE
Glenda J. Pierce, Lincoln, NE
James C. & Rhonda Seacrest, Lincoln, NE
Barbara Sprague, Red Cloud, NE
LeRoy & Jean Thom, Hastings, NE
Gary & Marcia Thompson, Red Cloud, NE
Joseph R. & Lesley Urgo, Clinton, NY
R.T. Vanderbilt Trust, Norwalk, CT

\$500 TO \$999

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Richard (Dick) Amack, Lac du Flambeau, WI
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Dr. Fred & Mary Bliss, Davis, CA
Bob & Cathy Crawford, Red Cloud, NE
Roy & Gloria Dinsdale, Palmer, NE
Elise R. Donohue, Clyde Park, MT
Marsha E. Fangmeyer, Gibbon, NE
Great Plains Communications, Blair, NE
Richard C. Harris, Sea Cliff, NY
Richard Holland, Omaha, NE
Kevin & Beth Jensen, Duluth, GA
Andrew & Becca Jewell, Lincoln, NE
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Betty & Ron Kort, Hastings, NE
Rick & Barb Kudrna, Red Cloud, NE
Dr. Susan N. Maher & Al Kammerer, Omaha, NE
Susan D. McClanahan, New York, NY
Nebraska Humanities Council*, Lincoln, NE
James R. & Janet M. O'Keefe*, Hastings, NE
Francoise Palleau, Paris, France

Peoples-Webster County Bank, Red Cloud, NE
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John F. Preis, Richmond, VA
Republican Valley Arts Council, Red Cloud, NE
Brad & Nancy Sherwood, Red Cloud, NE
Steve Shively, Logan, UT
Frank & Shirley Sibert, Kearney, NE
C. Kay Stahly, Kearney, NE
Robert Thacker, Canton, NY
Curtis & Margaret A. Watson, Red Cloud, NE
Dayre & Lu Williams, Red Cloud, NE
John & Ardis Yost, Red Cloud, NE
Mike & Carmen Zalman, Lincoln, NE

\$250 TO \$499

Colleen & Dr. George Adam, Hastings, NE
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Duane & Clare Baylor, Ralston, NE
Timothy W. Bintrim, Johnstown, PA
Virginia Christopher, Bucklin, KS
Jeanne C. Collins, Denver, CO
Dr. Gary Cook, Cumberland, MD
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Alice Dittman, Lincoln, NE
Reverend Ruth Eller, Bountiful, UT
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Melissa J. Homestead, Lincoln, NE

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Diane Karr, Blue Hill, NE
Thomas Kelley, Santa Ana, CA
Christine Kephart, Toms River, NJ
David L. & Amy Kornblau, Manhasset, NY
John D. & Deborah Ann Mercer, Oak Park, IL
Gary & Beverly Meyer, Red Cloud, NE
Mid America Arts Alliance*, Kansas City, MO
Fred & Ann Moseley, Cumby, TX
John & Anne Mulvihill, Kansas City, MO
John J. Murphy, Santa Fe, NM
Elsa Nettels, Williamsburg, VA
Sara Parks, State College, PA
Shari Patrick & Steven Leichter, New York, NY
Daniel D. Rasby & Molly M. Meehan-Rasby,
Rapid City, SD
Red Cloud Women's Chamber, Red Cloud, NE
Guy Reynolds, Lincoln, NE
Ann Romines, Alexandria, VA
Ann Satterthwaite, Washington, DC
Betty Sayers, Holdrege, NE
Richard Schilling, Loveland, CO
D. Charles Shoemaker & Lynne A. Friedewald,
Hastings, NE
Edward & Jeri Shute, Red Cloud, NE
Richard Norton Smith, Arlington, VA
Dr. Amy Springer, Red Cloud, NE
Sylvia A. Stevens & Dawn A. Nehls, Mesa, AZ
Steven & Kathleen Strasnick, Santa Cruz, CA
Linda Stych, Conifer, CO
Jon Teaford, Lafayette, IN
Dwight E. Theobald, Red Cloud, NE
Estate of Margaret Lambrecht Votipka, Fairmont, NE
Sidney Wade, Gainesville, FL
Vernon Ward, Omaha, NE
Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Green Valley, AZ
Dan Yost, Hastings, NE

\$100 TO \$249

Martha Ackmann, Leverett, MA
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Sylvia L. Anholz, Denver, CO
Michael & Susan Avery, Overland Park, KS
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Barrel Bar, Hastings, NE
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Roger Bradford, Lexington, MA
Carl & Karen Brasee, Grand Island, NE
Curt & Mary J. Brumbaugh, Red Cloud, NE
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Mel & Sandra Carlson, Grand Island, NE
Senator Tom & Margo Carlson, Holdrege, NE
Catherland Auto Sales, Red Cloud, NE
Jack L. & Tia Clarke, Newbury Park, CA
John Conley, Omaha, NE
James G. Croghan, New York, NY
Cutter's Cafe, Red Cloud, NE
John & Nikki Defarin, Lincoln, NE
Dr. Jerry Dollar, Poestenkill, NY
Jane Douglas, Columbus, NE
Jonas Dovydenas, Lenox, MA
Frank Dowding, Saint Paul, MN

Jane K. Dressler, Kent, OH
Angela Duca, Red Cloud, NE
Reginald Dyck, Columbus, OH
Dr. Jennifer Eimers, Marshall, MO
David & Connie Eldred, Plano, TX
Farmers Cooperative Association, Red Cloud, NE
Larry & Lyn Fenwick, Fort Worth, TX
Gertrude E. Ferguson, Shawnee Mission, KS
James L. & Marianne Fitzgibbon, Red Cloud, NE
Dr. & Mrs. Donovan Foote, Hastings, NE
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Abe & Pauline Fratts, Santa Ana, CA
Elisabeth R. French, Washington, DC
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Henry & Shirley Hansen, Phoenix, AZ
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Theresa J. Osborne, Forest Hills, NY
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Joe Starita, Lincoln, NE
State of Nebraska Tourism, Lincoln, NE
Roger & Liana Steele, Grand Island, NE
Dr. Kaz & Opal Stivrins, Lincoln, NE
Dr. David & Kathleen Stoddard,
Grand Island, NE
Richard G. Stratton, Buffalo, NY
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Pam Swisher, Ft. Calhoun, NE
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Art & Carol Thompson, Eagle, NE
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Steven Trout, Hays, KS
Alexandra Truitt, South Salem, NY
Ken Winkle & Ann Tschetter, Lincoln, NE
Antonette Turner, Bladen, NE
Don & Caroline Underwood, Pleasant Hill, CA
Union Bank & Trust Company, Lincoln, NE
University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Webster County Community Hospital,
Red Cloud, NE
Dr. James E. Weesner, Lincoln, NE
William A. West, Denver, CO
John & Bernadine Wherry, Pawnee City, NE
Rev. Thomas C. Widner S.J., Indianapolis, IN
Barbara Wiselogel, Red Cloud, NE
Dr. James Woodress, Claremont, CA
Jeff & Cindy Ryman Yost, Lincoln, NE
Jerry & Vicki Yost, Hastings, NE
Josh Yost & Amy Skalka, Hastings, NE

\$50 to \$99

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Keith & Zola Albers, Red Cloud, NE
Henry Altchek, New York, NY
Florence Amamoto, St. Peter, MN
Sylvia Andersen, Red Cloud, NE
Antje Anderson, Hastings, NE
Kari Anderson, Kearney, NE
Susan Shively Anderson, Fort Collins, CO
Cheryl Arends, Omaha, NE
Mary Atwell, Roanoke, VA
Ken & Keron Bailey, Guide Rock, NE
Laura Barlament, Staten Island, NY
Carol Barnes, Colby, KS
Roger & Joan Bassett, Fullerton, NE
Judith M. Bassnett, Camdenton, MO
Bob Beardslee, Red Cloud, NE
Elizabeth M. Beasley, Kansas City, MO
James & Sue Beitel, Lincoln, NE
Georgia Bishel, Hastings, NE
Jack & Sandy Bowen, Little Rock, AR
Melissa Bradley, Denver, CO
Cynthia Bruneteau, Tyngsboro, MA
Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA
Ken Burns, Walpole, NH
C & D Service Center, Red Cloud, NE
LoAnn Campbell, Hendersonville, NC
Pam & Jim Carrier, Lincoln, NE
Dr. Isabella Caruso, Brooklyn, NY
Ruth Challburg, Red Cloud, NE
Susan Charley, Dyersburg, TN
Kara K. Choquette, Highlands Ranch, CO

Roy E. Cook, East Granby, CT
Evelyn M. Copeland, Southbury, CT
Barbara Jean Cortesio, Des Moines, IA
Roger & Pat Crook, Red Cloud, NE
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Jim & Terri Eberly, Red Cloud, NE
Ella Epp, Henderson, NE
Rebecca L. Evers, Kearney, NE
Becky Faber, Lincoln, NE
Janet Faubel, DeFuniak Springs, FL
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