

Others First, Self Last

Why are some people remembered? Is it because of their accomplishments, offices they've held, their notoriety, their prominence, or perhaps for something else? There are obviously a number of good reasons, including some of those previously mentioned, as to why people are remembered and in some instances commemorated.

One notable individual instrumental in the betterment of her community and county was Pauline Welcome. Her motto, "Others First, Self Last," seems to epitomize her legacy, and to provide a valid reason for remembering her, particularly in terms of the positive and lasting influence she had on Martin County.

Pauline H. Luegge was born in Rutland Township, Martin County, in 1896. Her father died when she was fourteen, leaving her mother with eleven children. Because her mother was unable to care for all of them, some of her children went to live with friends and relatives. Pauline was taken in by Mrs. S. H. Merrill, a music teacher. Mrs. Merrill had health problems, consequently, although Pauline attended Fairmont High School several hours daily, she spent the remainder of each day helping with housework and cooking for Mrs. Merrill during her ten year stay at her home.

Following graduation from Fairmont High School, she worked at Fairmont Railway Motors for one summer. However, she was urged by friends to become a rural school teacher as it paid \$50.00 a month, an inviting sum of money at that time. As a result, she made the decision to attend Normal School for two years. Following graduation from Normal School, she taught in Martin County schools for six years. Then, in 1928, she married Earl M. Welcome. He owned and operated several farms in Martin County and the town of Welcome was named in honor of his father.

Following her husband's death in 1951, Mrs. Welcome moved into the town of Welcome. During the years that followed, her life exemplified her motto, "Others First, Self Last." She was active in the Martin County Public Health Nursing Service and its auxiliary and she was a charter member of the planning committee for the Lakeview United Methodist Home. In addition, she authored a number of books commemorating local history including "*The History of Welcome, Minnesota*," "*Manyaska Township*," "*Welcome Methodist Church*," and "*The Welcome Village Cemetery*." Having a keen interest in the Martin County Historical Society, she generously furnished a complete room with displays of artifacts from her home in Welcome and her historical family heirlooms. That room in the Pioneer Museum is aptly named "The Welcome Room," in honor of her family. Her civic mindedness also included being a member of Martin County Farm Bureau, the Fairmont Community Hospital Auxiliary, and other organizations in addition to her considerable financial contributions to numerous charitable organizations in Martin County.

In March of 1973, Mrs. Welcome was honored by being named "Philanthropist of the Year" by the National Board of Health. The following year, 1974, she was named "Martin County's Outstanding Senior Citizen." She moved to the Lakeview Methodist Home in 1976 and passed away in 1978. She is buried in the Welcome City Cemetery.

It would seem that Pauline Welcome's motto, "Others First, Self Last," inspired her to leave a substantial and significant legacy that proved instrumental and virtually immeasurable considering the lasting effect it has had on Martin County and its citizens. It's a motto that could certainly be worthy of consideration in today's society. When considering her start in life, one of eleven children sent to live with someone outside of her immediate family, her accomplishments are truly remarkable. She didn't ask for anything, she apparently didn't feel "entitled," yet she was very generous and more than willing to give of herself, her time, and her resources in an effort to contribute to the continued development and evolution of a better Martin County. Those individuals that have positively affected our lives as a result of what they've done, whether we realize it or not, must be remembered and recognized. Their accomplishments have been instrumental in shaping our local society into what it has become today.

For more information on this topic, or to become a member, visit the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont.

8-16-74
Outstanding!



Mrs. Pauline Welcome, philanthropist, sits amid many antiques

Sentinel photos by Bob Schroeder

