

## REMEMBERING

Margaret Hayford O'Leary Norwegian teacher

## St. Olaf professor used music to share her love for Norway

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In some ways, Margaret Hayford O'Leary lived her whole life with her feet planted in two lands.

There was, of course, Minnesota, where she taught for more than 40 years at St. Olaf College in Northfield, often with her guitar in hand.

And then there was Norway, her ancestral land across the sea. Her love for the country radiated across her music, her home design, her knitting patterns, her teaching.

O'Leary spent four decades sharing this love with students and colleagues. During her career, she co-authored language textbooks, published a book on Norwegian culture and customs and spent summers teaching at the University of Oslo International Summer School. In 2016, she was awarded the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, an honor reserved for those who have contributed "outstanding service in the interests of Norway."

O'Leary, known as an expert in all things Norwegian, died June 30 of cancer in Northfield. She was 67.

Raised in Richfield, O'Leary found herself captivated by Norway from childhood. She began learning Norwegian as a young teenager at Skogfjorden, the Concordia College Norwegian Language Village. Her studies paid off.

"Margaret truly sounded like a native speaker," said Solveig Zempel, a retired Norwegian professor and long-time colleague at St. Olaf. "She had really mastered the language."

O'Leary often shared her love of Norwegian culture through song. She strummed her guitar and sang with her students to teach them vocabulary, imparting a sense of the language's musical quality.

"I was always a little envious. I knew it made a big difference in her classroom," Zempel said. "She was a very dynamic teacher and a wonderful musician."

"She was a very dynamic teacher and a wonderful musician."

— Solveig Zempel, colleague at St. Olaf College

Outside of work, her love for Norway was evident in her hobbies and home life, her family said. As the lead singer of a folk group called the Lost Norwegians, she helped her bandmates fine-tune their pronunciations and shared stories about Norway with audiences between songs.

When O'Leary and her husband, Douglas, built their house in Northfield, she showed the builder photos of Norwegian home interiors for reference. The house has the light wood, knotty pine staircase, openness and natural lighting so characteristic of the homes she admired, said her son Sean Hayford O'Leary, of Richfield.

She knitted sweaters with Norwegian designs, including a tiny version for her twin grandchildren, born a year ago on Syttende Mai (May 17), Norwegian Constitution Day. The family often made lefse, a Norwegian flatbread, the day after Thanksgiving.

After her cancer diagnosis, she sometimes told her family, "Den tid, den sorg." It means "that time, that sorrow," an expression to remind them not to grieve before she was gone, to cross that bridge when it came, Sean said.

She remained a teacher until the end.

"She finished her last grades for her last class in the hospital," Sean said. "She was that dedicated."

Just a few weeks before she went into the hospital, O'Leary went to St. Olaf to lead a Norwegian anthem on Syttende Mai. She wore a bunad for the occasion, a formal Norwegian costume reserved for special events. A thin tube carrying oxygen looped across her face. As the music played, O'Leary raised her hand and directed the crowd in song.

"Ja, vi elsker dette landet," they began together. "Yes, we love this land."

In addition to her son and husband, O'Leary's survivors include daughter Kari, of Brainerd, and son Erik, of Minneapolis; her mother, Rachael Hayford, of Richfield; her sister, Andrea Nelson, of Mound; and two grandchildren. Services are planned for 2 p.m. July 28 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield.

## Selzer, Donald Wright "Tad", Jr.



As fireworks lit the Twin Cities skyline, one light faded with the peaceful death of Tad Selzer on July 4, 2018, the 26th anniversary of his

marriage to Kathy (KJ) Conover - the love of his life. In addition to his wife, survivors include his cherished step-daughter, Keri Echo Kranz (Nate) of Minneapolis and his siblings: Claire Whiteman (Chuck) of State College, Pennsylvania; J. Ann Selzer of Des Moines, Iowa; John Selzer (Leslie) of Overland Park, Kansas; and Kitty Swan (Tim) of Denver, Colorado. His adoring nieces and nephews will miss his wit and generous attention: Will and Sarah Whiteman; Cora and Jay Selzer; and Kathryn and Sophie Swan. Tad was born August 26, 1952, in Manhattan, KS, the son of Donald Wright Selzer and Jane Banta Selzer (Abernathy), both deceased.

Tad graduated from Topeka West High school in Kansas in 1970, the University of Kansas in 1974 (Rock Chalk!), and the University of Minnesota law school in 1977. After 20 years practicing labor law at the Oppenheimer law firm, he joined Marko Mrkonich as a founding member of the Minneapolis office of the Littler law firm until retiring in 2009.

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1977, Tad was the grateful recipient of two organ transplants—a kidney donated by his sister Claire, and a pancreas from an anonymous donor—which helped forestall the effects of diabetes for over a decade. In the end, a massive infection overpowered his compromised immune system.

Tad served on the boards of the Regional Blood Services Committee of the American Red Cross and was the current Chair of the board of Providers Choice. He was a proud founding member of the High Holy Knights of Squanderation, whose motto is: "I'll take two, they look small."

For more than 20 years, Tad's passion was co-hosting the Rockhouse on KFAI with Miss Sara Oxtan, making use of his extensive collection of LPs and CDs of jazz, blues, R&B, and soul. Few could match Brother Tad's depth of music knowledge.

Tad was surrounded by his loving family at the end, who eased his transition with some of the music Tad loved and shared with the world.

Tad's life will be celebrated on July 28 at 2:00 p.m. at the Turf Club in Minneapolis, 1601 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104. Memorial contributions may be made to KFAI radio station in Minneapolis.

## PAID NOTICES

Baird, Katherine..... Welch, MN  
 Bleckinger, Debra..... Cottage Grove  
 Buss, Melissa..... Eden Prairie  
 Cahalan, Christopher..... Brooklyn Park  
 Carter, Irene..... Brooklyn Center  
 Cook, Gerald..... Maple Grove  
 Gentz, Robert..... Waconia  
 Hammes, Paul..... Omaha, NE  
 Hanson, Loren..... Bradenton, FL  
 Hoska, Gerald..... Eden Prairie  
 Lashbrook, Georgia..... Bloomington  
 Lotterman, Lillian..... St. Louis Park  
 Lynne, Merle..... Clarkfield, MN  
 McGough, Peter..... Falcon Heights  
 Mies, Rebecca..... Burnsville  
 Nirva, Michael..... Faribault  
 Oliver, Raymond..... Robbinsdale  
 Olson, Steven..... Stanchfield, MN  
 Plumb, Alice..... Lakeville  
 Raffelson, Owen..... Coon Rapids  
 Selzer, Donald..... Mpls  
 Straight, Robbie..... Crystal  
 Svobodny, Joseph..... Eagan  
 Zimmerman, Milton..... St. Louis Park

## Baird, Katherine E.



Age 88 of Welch, MN passed away at St. Crispin Care Center on July 8, 2018. Born on Dec. 30th, 1929 to Brice and Gertrude Barnhill.

Katherine grew up in Minneapolis with her brother, Roger Barnhill. She attended Southwest HS where she met her husband, Douglas Baird. She graduated from the UofM and taught elementary school before starting a family. She was active with the political issues of her time and as a long-time member of the Izaak Walton League, she worked on conservation issues. Protecting the natural environment was very important to her. Her love of nature and gardening brought her to Welch. She spent her time growing flowers and making beautiful arrangements. She loved telling stories; sewing and she enjoyed cooking extravagant meals for the family, especially at holidays. She leaves her daughters Madeline Baird, Jennifer Baird, Pamela Grossmann; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren missing her very much. A memorial reception on July 13, 2-4:00 at Cremation Society, 7110 France Ave., Edina.

## Bleckinger, Debra Kay (Klitzke)

Age 63 of Cottage Grove. Passed away suddenly on July 5th, 2018. Preceded in death by parents, Wendell and Dorothy Klitzke. Survived by husband Michael, daughters Megan Bruce (Andy, step grandson Hayden) and Sara, son Eric, brothers David, Steven and Richard. Our beloved mother and wife will be deeply missed. Visitation 5-8 PM Thursday 7/12 at Wulff Funeral Home, 2195 Woodlane Dr., Woodbury. Funeral service 12 PM Friday 7/13 with visitation half hour prior to service at Lakewood Cemetery, Memorial Chapel, 3600