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O'LEARY



Margaret Hayford O'Leary soaks in the scenes during a trip to Norway. Margaret, who died June 30, was a scholar and advocate for all things Norwegian, in addition to being a wife, mother and friend to many. (Photos courtesy of the Hayford O'Leary family)

Changes coming to the Northfield Weekender

There are some major changes coming to the *Northfield Weekender* in the near future.

Starting with the Aug. 4 issue, the *Weekender* is moving away from the traditional newspaper and back to its roots of a total market coverage advertising shopper.

What does that mean? It means that the *Weekender* will still carry your favorite advertising inserts, whether you like shopping at the local grocery store, big-box retailers or local mom-and-pop businesses. There will be display advertising throughout the pages each Saturday as well.

The main difference is there will not be "news" in the shopper.

Residents who have been in Northfield for many years will remember the *Northfield Area Shopper*, which was in place up until about six years ago. The *Weekender* will look much more like the shopper of old.

News? You can still get the best news coverage of the Northfield community if you are a subscriber to the *Northfield News*, which is delivered each Wednesday to subscribers and retail locations throughout the area. In that, you'll find more news in Wednesday's papers. We are essentially moving our news and sports stories out of the *Weekender* and into Wednesday's paper — an even better incentive to subscribe. Subscribers can also read every story online at www.northfieldnews.com.

The decision to stop including news in the *Weekender*, a free publication, was made for a variety of reasons. In order to provide the in-depth, all-encompassing news and sports stories that our readers deserve, we have to protect our printed subscription product.

We hope that if you have become accustomed to receiving the news for free on the weekend, but have not subscribed to the Wednesday paper, that you will help support our local journalistic efforts by becoming a subscriber. If you are already a subscriber on Wednesdays, we thank you and hope you enjoy the expanded content.

Our writers and editors work hard to provide the most in-depth and comprehensive stories on our community and the impact decisions in St. Paul and Washington have on our region. They are an award-winning group of talented professionals. We believe local, homegrown journalism is a key part of our democracy. It's our role to keep the community informed, but doing so comes with a cost.

Tariffs imposed upon paper prices from Canada have had a major impact on our expenses. Quite frankly, it's not cheap to deliver a free newspaper on Saturdays. By subscribing, and paying to receive the paper on Wednesdays, you help support our efforts.

The great news is that if you aren't yet a subscriber as of yet to Wednesday's paper, now is the perfect time to come on board and join the team. Along with a great, expanded product delivered right to your mailbox every Wednesday, you get 24/7 access to the stories on our website, as well as to our family of newspapers throughout southern Minnesota.

The newspaper industry is changing. We are changing. And we hope you will join us as we adjust and continue to be a valued part of the Northfield community, as we have been for more than a century.

LIFE WELL LIVED

Hayford O'Leary a Norwegian expert, loving mother and great friend

By PHILIP WEYHE
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Margaret Hayford O'Leary had her audience with the king.

After a lifelong love affair with all things Norwegian, Margaret was knighted in Norway in 2016, later procuring a private audience with King Harald V in January 2018. Six months later, after a two-year battle with cancer, she died at age 67 on June 30. She was the King Olav V Chair of Scandinavian-American Studies at St. Olaf College at the time of her death.

But more than a scholar and advocate for her ancestral home, Margaret was a present and loving matriarch and a great friend to many.

"I will miss her, most of all," said Torild Homstad, a 55-year friend and colleague. "But I will miss our almost daily conversations; I will miss the times we spent together, knitting or eating or having a glass of wine; I will miss consulting with her on things about Norway and students, and her consulting with me."

She paused, "I'll just miss her a lot. On many different occasions."

Norwegian roots

Margaret discovered her love of Norway at a young age. Her grandfather

spoke fluent Norwegian, though he died before she was born. Her grandmother made lefse regularly, a tradition Margaret carried on.

By the time she was 12, she was taking lessons from the Sons of Norway, and as a young teenager, she headed to a Norwegian language camp, Skogfjorden, at Concordia College. There, she met Homstad.

"We were both passionate about Norway and learning Norwegian. I think part of it was the family traditions. I think some kids maybe feel them more strongly than others. Kids dream about other places and other things, and Norway happened to be the place and things we dreamed about," Homstad said.

Margaret went on to attend the camp for 15 consecutive years, as a camper, then counselor and then teacher.

After growing up in Richfield and graduating as the valedictorian of her class, she headed to Concordia for college. There, she planned to become a high school German teacher. But she soon found out that was the wrong path and committed instead to becoming a professor of Norwegian.

In her final year at Concordia, she met her future husband Doug O'Leary.

"She gave me the time of day," Doug said. "She put up with an awkward boy



Margaret Hayford O'Leary grew up in Richfield, Minnesota, as part of a family with deep Norwegian roots.

from Montana."

The two married in 1976, as Margaret was finishing her master's degree in Madison, Wisconsin. They then moved to Northfield in 1977 when Margaret took a position at St. Olaf.

They went on to have three children: Kari, 38, Erik, 32, and Sean, 27.

Wife, mother, friend, professor

Over the years, Margaret managed to influence many around her, starting with her family. It says something that all three of her children went on to major in Norwegian at St. Olaf.

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O'Leary: 'She was kind of a career leader and role model'

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"She was kind of a career leader and role model," Sean said of his mother. "She was a really strong person."

Margaret put a high priority on holidays and celebrations with family and friends. Every Friday after Thanksgiving, she invited friends and family into her home to make lefse.

"There was always enough to share with everybody who showed up to make it and more left over for Christmas and New Year's Eve," Doug said.

Meanwhile on May 17 each year, Norwegian Constitution Day, or Syttende Mai, she'd take the family down to St. Olaf for a celebratory breakfast. She dressed in a bunad dress, while the kids wore sløyfe bows.

She took the family to Norway several times. In 2002-03, they spent a year there.

"At the time, I was kind of unhappy to leave my friends, and you don't believe them when you're 12 and they say 'You'll appreciate it later,'" Sean said. "But you really do."

After receiving her Ph.D from Madison in 1987, Margaret continued climbing the ranks and racking up accolades as a professor at both St. Olaf and at the International

Summer School at the University of Oslo, where she taught for 10 consecutive summers. She could often be found with a guitar, singing her way through classes. She bonded with many in her classroom.

"She loved her job in a way that I can only imagine loving a job," Sean said.

Margaret didn't confine her love of Norway to the classroom and the home. She brought it into the community through a singing group called the Lost Norwegians, which performed at events, weddings, nursing homes and more.

Margaret was so dedicated to her craft that, in her last weeks, she

was found leading a Norwegian choral performance at St. Olaf and grading papers in her hospice bed. It was that commitment that earned her an audience with the king.

"It was her lifelong work of spreading Norwegian language and culture in North America, and her work in creating close bonds between Norway and the U.S.," Homstad said.

Now that she's gone, many around her are struggling to let her go. As Sean iterated, Margaret was a woman of passions and interests, which endeared her to many, forming relationships she always honored. She made herself a difficult

person to let go.

"This time of year, of course, she had been in Norway, so I can pretend she's still there," husband Doug said, fighting through tears. "I'm definitely struggling to say goodbye. The whole family just misses her a lot. We have so many good memories."

Reach Associate Editor Philip Weyhe at 507-645-1115 or follow him on Twitter @nfnphilweyhe.

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