



# the Story Catcher

A publication of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society

## Michael Cartwright Receives “Spirit of Mari Sandoz”

By Con Marshall

Michael Cartwright, an English professor at Chadron State College (CSC), was presented the prestigious ‘Spirit of Mari Sandoz Award’ during the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society’s annual conference in late March.

Cartwright formerly served as executive director of the Sandoz Society and has been a member of its board of directors for a quarter of a century.

Ron Hull of Lincoln, chairman of the Heritage Society, noted that Cartwright’s life and work is truly, “In the spirit of Mari Sandoz.”

“Michael Cartwright is one of those Nebraskans,” Hull said, “who is completely authentic, a western man of the high plains, a fine scholar and teacher, a person of integrity—the kind of man Mari Sandoz liked.”

*“Sandoz paid close attention to the values of the storytellers. She seemed to have a special ability to get inside other people’s skin and think like they did.”*

He has taught English nearly 40 years, including the last 26 at Chadron State College. Colleagues report that besides having a deep interest in literature, Cartwright has a knack for developing

that same interest among his students.

He uses the Socratic method of teaching that involves asking a lot of questions and encouraging the students to say the important things.

While serving as dean of the School of Humanities and Social Science at Chadron State in the mid-1980s, Cartwright probably “saved the day” for the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society as it has evolved with its headquarters on the CSC campus.

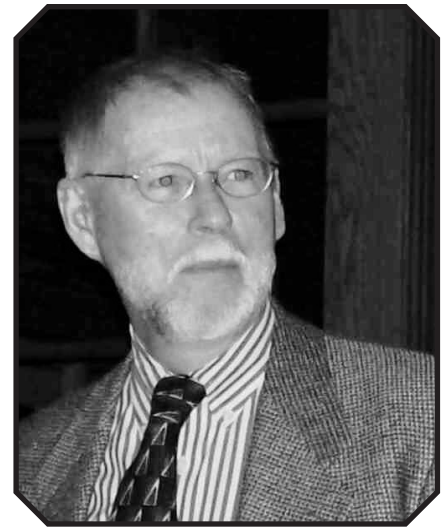
The society was started at Chadron State in the early 1970s, but hadn’t had much activity for a few years.

When he heard that a group of Sandoz admirers in eastern Nebraska was planning to create a society, he hurried to Lincoln for the meeting. He told them a society was already in place, and convinced them to help rejuvenate it.

Cartwright has spoken at the Society’s annual conferences and helped organize the programs several times. While serving on a panel that discussed Sandoz’s work during the 1999 conference, he suggested that the author fits the definition of a folklorist in many ways.

Sandoz listened to stories told by her father, Indians and pioneers, then recounted them, Cartwright said.

**The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society newsletter has a new name and a new design. This newsletter is published three times a year.**



Michael Cartwright

Sandoz, he said, paid close attention to the values of the storytellers. He said she seemed to have a special ability to “get inside other people’s skin and think like they did.”

During the 2004-05 school year, Cartwright was the recipient of Chadron State’s Teaching Excellence Award.

Besides his tenure on the Sandoz Society board, he has been on the boards of the Nebraska Public Radio, the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Upper Niobrara-White Natural Resources District. Cartwright is also the director of the Nebraska Center for the Book. ☞

See Cartwright’s speech on page 3.

# The Story Catcher

The Story Catcher is published three times a year by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society seeks to build appreciation of Mari Sandoz's body of work, to preserve the literary works and legacy of this premier historian, and to raise funds to support these efforts.

Each year, the Society hosts a conference that celebrates and studies the works of the author, publishes the writing of scholars and students, promotes student writing contests and writing institutes; and sponsors scholarships.

Additionally, the Society provides collections on loan to the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center at Chadron State College (Nebraska) and supports its academic, archives, and research programs.

Address changes should be mailed to 2301 NW 50th Street, Lincoln, NE 68524.

Contributions to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society are tax-deductible. For membership information, see page 8, call 402-304-8103 or e-mail [marisandoz\\_society@windstream.net](mailto:marisandoz_society@windstream.net), or [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org).

## Mari Sandoz

Mari Sandoz (1896-1966) came from the Sandhills of Nebraska to write some of America's most enduring books on Great Plains history.

As the author of *Old Jules*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *Crazy Horse, the Strange Man of the Oglalas*, and others, she was a tireless researcher, a true storyteller, and an artist passionately dedicated to a place little known and a people largely misunderstood. As a historian and as a novelist, Sandoz stands in the front ranks of western writers and has achieved a secure place as one of the finest authors in American literature.

She created vivid stories of the last days of the American frontier, and was an internationally-known chronicler of the West and one of Nebraska's most important writers.

# Fremont Tribune Promotes Crazy Horse

*Edited from an article by Tracy Buffington,  
Fremont Tribune Editor*

When the Fremont (Nebraska) Tribune staff was asked to be involved in the One Book One Nebraska project at Keene Memorial Library, it seemed like a natural fit. The Tribune has a history of promoting literacy.

The effort became a two-page pull-out section distributed on April 2, just as the month-long project was beginning. The pull-out section contained an overview of the project, details about the book *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas* by Mari Sandoz, a biography of the author, a calendar of events, a Readers Guide, glossary, biographical information about people in the book, and discussion questions.

The section caught the attention of readers as well as that of Ron Hull (past president of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society), the keynote speaker at a May 2 One Book, One Nebraska presentation at Keene Memorial. Hull wrote a letter of thanks to the Tribune, stating he was impressed with the section.

Bill Vobejda, publisher of the Fremont Tribune, responded.

"We wanted the readers guide to help give people more information about the book," he said, "so they would feel comfortable enough to pick up a copy and give it a try and hope they would also choose to participate in the events in Fremont."

An April 3 Tribune story outlined the discussion with Hull and information about "Crazy Horse: A Photographic Biography," a traveling exhibit showing the life and times of the famed American Indian leader.

At the time of the publication of the section, library director Ann Stephens was reading the book.

"It's interesting to read about the culture and habits of Native Americans as well as the interaction with the settlers and soldiers," she said. "I like Sandoz's writing. I like the detail about the things that are happening."

Overall, One Book One Nebraska at Keene Memorial Library was well received by the community. Stephens, in thank you letters to the Tribune, said the turnout was "modest but enthusiastic." She also thanked the Tribune for the section and a contribution that allowed Keene Memorial to purchase multiple copies of "Crazy Horse." ☺

**In 2007, Readers across Nebraska are celebrating One Book One Nebraska by reading *Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas*. See [www.onebookonenebraska.org](http://www.onebookonenebraska.org) for discussion questions, program ideas, and a calendar of events.**

**Celebrating Reading**  
**One Book One Nebraska**  
at Keene Memorial Library

**Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas**  
by Mari Sandoz

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# Sandoz's Secret Was to Listen

By Michael Cartwright  
2007 "Spirit of Mari  
Sandoz" Award Recipient

Thank you for honoring me with the Spirit of Mari Sandoz Award. It is an honor not lightly bestowed, nor is it lightly received. I shall remember this moment and cherish this award—as long as I have a memory.

No one can accomplish anything alone and many people have helped me. Members of the Sandoz Board, the faculty of the (Chadron State College) Department of English and Humanities, and my wife, Jeanetta, have taken up the slack when I was working on one project or another. By way of thanks for all the help and this award, I would like to make an observation or two on the works of Mari Sandoz.

In my profession: English literature and Literary Criticism, we have a number of ways to categorize literary works. For example, there are psychological novels, novels of ideas, Gothic tales, and sociological novels. However, one must be aware that these are not mutually exclusive.

Like other great literary figures, Mari Sandoz, the artist, is *sui generis*—one of a kind. Her works should be examined in terms of themselves, by what Sandoz has done with her material rather than in terms of categories into which we think her work ought to fit. Vine Deloria recognizes this in the final paragraph of his preface to *Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas*:

"I doubt if anyone else could tell the life of Crazy Horse as well as Sandoz does. She must have known many Sioux people during her formative years, and memories of those people

must have come flooding back when she began writing.

How else can we explain how her writing captured nuances that only a few would know and understand? How unfortunate that reviewers and scholars lacking any experience of the western lands have missed the real genius of the book. Although it has stood the test of time, it has not received the claim that it is due.

*She writes about  
us—our heritage—who  
we are, where we came  
from and the hopes,  
dreams and aspirations  
of our ancestors.*

Perhaps it speaks primarily to those people who, like Sandoz, have their roots in the plains and their peoples.

Or perhaps it is the careful reader who savors the well-written word who can see in this book history as biography and biography as history."

Sandoz' genius lies in her refusal to slavishly imitate the conventions of established disciplines.

Yes, she sometimes uses the techniques of a historian, but she pushes out against the constraints of historical conventions. Yes, she sometimes uses the techniques of a novelist, but she grounds her work in the facts of a documentable past. Yes, she is sometimes a biographer, but in the vein of Fawn Brodie and Margaret Yourcenaur who push the form into psycho-biography.

There is an old song that goes:

*Oh your separate parts are not unknown  
But the way you assemble them is all your  
own.*

In the Winter 2007 issue of *One Drop* (now *The Story Catcher*), the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society newsletter, (former Society president) Ron Hull writes: "...reading *Crazy Horse* reminded me that we have our own equally interesting and dramatic culture right here on the Great Plains."

The wisdom of the Native Americans, the cattlemen, the farmers, the pioneers come vividly to life in the many books written by Mari Sandoz.

She writes about us—our heritage—who we are, where we came from and the hopes, dreams and aspirations of our ancestors.

Ron, like Mari Sandoz, observed that culture is complex and mercurial. Like a palimpsest—a painting which turns out to be a series of paintings laid one atop the other obscuring but not destroying the original—the history of the great plains, starting with the Native American's interpretation of events thousands of years ago, has been repainted by European immigrants and is being repainted now by Asian and Hispanic immigrants.

In that same issue of *One Drop*, Richard Voorhees encapsulated the essence of Sandoz' approach to her material: "She learned to listen behind her father's stove."

Sandoz' secret was to listen—not to the dictates of form—but to the land, to the wind in the Cottonwood trees, to the Native peoples, to her family and neighbors and to use combinations of established forms to give what she heard a local habitation and a name infused with her own compassion for the essential tragedy of the human condition. ♪

# Sandoz Annual Conference Celebrates Crazy Horse

## 18th Annual Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Conference held in Chadron in March

*Compiled by Lucinda Mays,  
conference coordinator, and  
Richard Voorbees, board member.*

More than one hundred intrepid devotees made their way to the campus of Chadron State College in Northwest Nebraska for the 18th Annual Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Conference in March.

Travelers from the east battled high winds and dodged tumble weeds – those from the west and south blew in just in front of the spring blizzard that hit Wyoming with snows as deep as 50 inches.

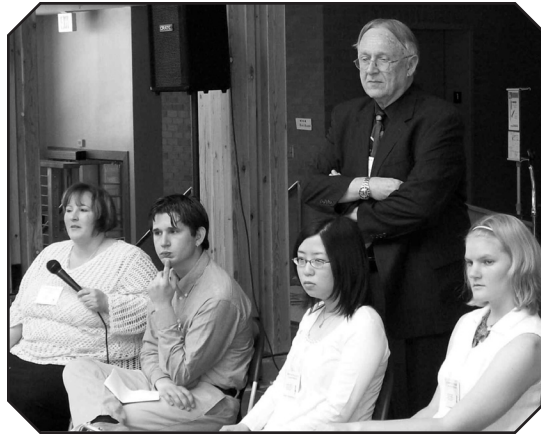
Two speakers could not get through as the roads out of Wyoming were closed for safety's sake. However, Dr. William Bauer and Dr. Ephraim Dickson will be able to speak at the Mari Sandoz Heritage Center another time. Despite the obstacles, it was a particularly strong conference and worth the trip.

Activities before and after the conference proved very popular. A pre-conference workshop was held in the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center archives with archivist Susan Rolfmeier and a post-conference tour showed participants area sites that were important in the life of Crazy Horse.

Society President Ron Hull opened the conference Friday morning with the observation that we ought not to underestimate the power of myth.

"We yearn for meaning in our lives. We study history in order to know who we are," he said.

University of Nebraska Professor John Wunder reported on the Mari Sandoz document in the KETV's time capsule. In the document, Sandoz refers to the Century of Matter (1856 to 1956) and the Century of Mind (1956 to 2056).



*John Wunder and students answer questions following the student's presentations.*

She anticipated that there would be advances in international relations, a decline in wars over monopolies. Underlying these circumstances would be nuclear power, a power that could not be monopolized.

In the first session, librarians Rebecca Pasco and Karla Wendelin reviewed "Crazy Horse in Juvenile Literature." They said they were dismayed to find a lack of respect for Crazy Horse and Indians as demonstrated in language and illustrations. There is oversimplification in the books, they said.

For example, the 1854 event involving the Mormon cow and the deaths of Conquering Bear and Lt. Grattan is dealt with in one sentence. In another book Crazy Horse appears in an illustration adorned in a way that was alien to him. Indeed, the person resembles Red Cloud. Source notes are rare. The two presenters said children need multiple sources of information.

In the second session, Kimberli Lee, Visiting Assistant Professor with the American Indian Studies program at Michigan State University, presented "Braiding the Rope: Interweaving

the Introductions to Crazy Horse." There have been three introductions to Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas.

The first introduction by Dr. Oates appeared in 1992 wherein he praised Crazy Horse as biography and history and he included a miniature biography of Sandoz. He praised Sandoz's unsurpassed rapport and empathy for the real human being and the rare focus on a native person and its people.

In the current edition of Crazy Horse, Vine Deloria Jr. says he was not impressed when he first read the book. However, after 50 years he came to praise the wealth of detail, the authenticity and the attention to the oral heritage. Sandoz had sound knowledge of bands, families and the division between North and South Oglalas.

This accuracy was brought into an emotional world.



*Conference attendees gather in the Mari Sandoz Heritage Center to hear speakers.*

Lee, who wrote about Mari Sandoz's activism on behalf of Plains Indian tribes, concluded that Sandoz wrote as an "alongsider"—those who listen and are allies.

Four student presented papers they had written.



## Annual Conference (continued)

—Daniel Schweitzer (Chadron State College), “Must’ as ‘Should:’ the Conditional Destiny of Crazy Horse.” Schweitzer presented a textual analysis focusing on Sandoz’s grammatical usage. Sandoz’s approach places the burden on the reader. Structurally there is transcendental vision, speculation, uneasy relations, various possibilities and a vagueness. Decisions are left to the readers.

—Kristina Hubbard (University of Nebraska), “Crazy Horse and Robert E. Lee: Military Strategies in 19th Century Warfare.” Hubbard discussed strategies each—Lee and Crazy Horse—used to defend their ways of life from the U.S. government.

—Megumi Watanabe (University of Nebraska), “Crazy Horse and Shigeru Kayano: Leaders of the Lakotas and Ainu, the Indigenous Peoples of Japan.” Shigeru Kayano, an Ainu man who lived from 1923 to 2006, became a member of parliament where he sought the preservation of Ainu culture and language. Watanabe discussed the commonalities of Kayano and Crazy Horse.

—Kimberly A. Bettelyoun-He Crow (Chadron State College), “The Broken Circle: Parental and Cultural Dysfunction in the Novels of James Welch.” Welch’s stories are about disintegration that results from living on reservations. In his five novels there is family deterioration, abandonment and alienation. Traditional women had been the back bone of the society. The loss of fathers in his books creates the loss of identity for characters.

Later, Jerome Green presented “A Military Perspective on the Great Sioux War, 1876-1877.” After 130 years, Custer continues to dominate the mythic heritage that pervades daily life, often with comedic reference.

Underlying the story is a culture conflict of 400 years. For the Plains Indians, stresses were mounting from the expanding interests of the United States.

The battle of the Little Big Horn involves heroes, controversy, ridicule and untold speculation. It was the greatest victory for the Indians, who had banded together, but led to reprisal and inevitable defeat.

The last session featured the grandsons of Crazy Horse: Doug War Eagle, Donald Red Thunder and Floyd Clown. Their legends of Crazy Horse and other relatives back to the mid 1700’s had only been shared orally. The Crazy Horse descendants, who now number 3,000 family members, have proven their lineage by probate, census, military ledgers and agency records.



*Lynn Roper, newly-installed president of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, addresses members and guests at the banquet.*

A family tree has been constructed for the grandchildren. The record of this journey, “The Authorized Biography of Crazy Horse and His Family,” is available on DVD from [www.reelcontact.com](http://www.reelcontact.com).

In the evening attendees gathered for a reception in the Sandoz Center Gallery featuring photos from Bill and Jan Moeller’s “Crazy Horse: A Photographic Biography.” The reception was followed by dinner in the Sandoz Center Chicoine Atrium.

While the weather was challenging, the conference was top-notch. ☞



## Discover the High Plains of Mari Sandoz: 2008 Sandoz Conference

Celebrating the land and environment experienced by Mari Sandoz is the theme of the 19th Annual Conference sponsored by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society.

The conference, The High Plains of Mari Sandoz, will be combined conference between the Sandoz Society and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum on March 27-29, 2008 at Chadron State College, Chadron, Neb.

The uniqueness of this conference and a full schedule of speakers on environmental and plant-oriented topics related to a variety of Mari Sandoz’s works is expected to attract a large attendance.

In addition, several new activities are planned that may include a day of hands-on seminars and other additions.

Mark your calendar now for this upcoming event. Because it is a joint conference, you may want to book your favorite hotel in advance.

Watch for details in the October issue of the Story Catcher. For more information, call the Mari Sandoz Heritage Center at 308-432-6401. ☞

# My Favorite Passage from Crazy Horse

Shannon Smith, Board Member

*At the award banquet, held during the 2007 Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Conference, four speakers read their favorite passages from Crazy Horse:*

*Strange Man of the Oglalas by Mari Sandoz.*

“Now every few days messengers came north to tell of the fine presents being given away at Laramie, guns and ammunition and many other things, they said, particularly guns and ammunition, and just for touching the pen. So in the Moon of Making Fat, Man Afraid went down and Red Cloud too. But not Hump, Worm, or Crazy Horse.

“These and many others stayed out on the Powder, some of them fasting and making the sweats, others going off into the hills alone with their medicine, hoping that the men at Laramie would be strong against the power and presents of the whites...

“...So the Oglalas sent some quiet men, with ears keen as the deer’s, to sit among the people at the council. Others, like Little Big Man, rode back and forth carrying news in their mouths as the forked-tail bird carries mud. They said many wagonloads of presents had already come, and that some whisky was leaking into the Oglala camp, although none could tell the soldier chief how this happened.

“The night Worm and Crazy Horse heard this they sat up very late. Man Afraid, like Spotted Tail, was not one to warm his belly with the burning cup, but others were not so strong and it was hard to forget that Red Cloud’s father had died of the whisky long ago. But the next day there was good news. Red Cloud would not sell the country, not for all the Great Father’s sugar and coffee and the trader’s hidden keg.

“The first thing the Oglalas had asked about was the ammunition. Then both

Man Afraid and Red Cloud wanted everything in the treaty explained, so there would be no things coming up that they had not heard about, as happened to the Cheyennes down in the Smoky Hill country.

“And when they heard the peace paper talking of a Powder River road, they rose up, both Man Afraid and Red Cloud, and wrapping their blankets around them, started away. But the head white man of the council called them back with soft words. It was not a new road they were talking about, only an old one already much tramped.

“Ahh-h, and then they had come this long way to talk of an old road?

“Yes, and to get their share of the wagonloads of the presents the Great Father wanted to give them, the whites said. Tobacco, coffee, sugar, blankets and calico, knives and hatchets, all were ready when they touched the pen.

“But where was this old road, where did it go? the Indians asked. They knew of none except the Powder River trail made long ago by the feet of the buffalo and the poles of the Indian travois, the trail going through their hunting grounds.

“In the middle of this counciling a long cloud of dust was seen coming up the Holy Road. In it were many, many soldiers, a band for music-making, some wagon guns, and several long trains of mule teams pulling heavy loads—all these soldiers and their goods coming here when there was to be peace. Whom did they want to fight?



*Board Member Phyllis Stone, one of four presenters, is reading a passage from Crazy Horse at the annual conference.*

“Some of the Loafers went down to visit the new camp and asked the soldier chief called Carrington where he was going. Maybe he didn’t know about the trouble at the council or maybe he was a little white man with a strong heart and a straight tongue; anyway, he told them right out he was going to the Powder River to build forts.

“So that was it, the Loafers thought, but saying nothing, for they had lived in the middle of the soldiers and wagon guns a long time. Finishing their pans of molasses and crackers, they carried the news to the Oglala camp. Then there was really trouble in the council, with the northern chiefs telling the peace men they were like all the others, trying to fool them with the lying tongue.

“The Great Father sends us presents and talks about buying a new road while the soldier chief comes to steal it before the Indian can say yes or no!” Red Cloud roared.

“And once more he wrapped his blanket around him, but in a different way now, and Man Afraid too. With the others following at his heel fringe, Red Cloud marched out and started home to the north country. Any whites who came up past the Dry Fork of the Powder would have to fight.” ❧

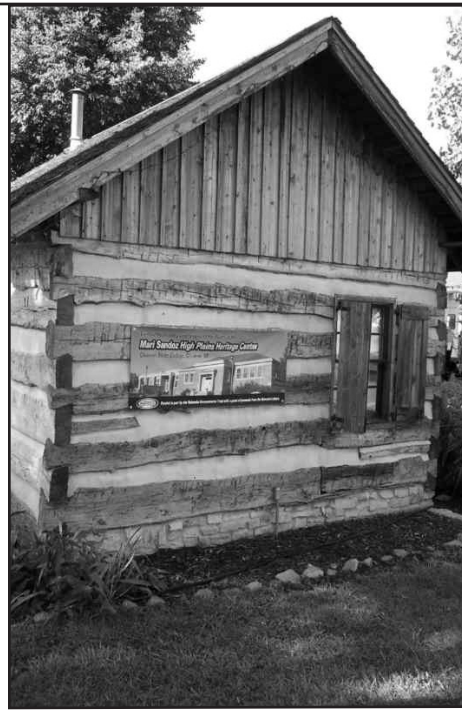


## Mari Sandoz, Crazy Horse Highlighted at Nebraska State Fair

The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society will once again sponsor a display during the 2007 Nebraska State Fair. The display will be housed in an historic log cabin, one of several buildings in the Fair's Heritage Village from August 24 through September 3, 2007.

The display features information about the Society, the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center and the "One Book One Nebraska" celebration of *Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas*.

Visitors can also view selected pieces from Kira Gale's photo exhibit entitled "Old Jules Country." ☞



## Sandoz Center Celebrates Her Life and Literature

The Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center celebrates the life and literature of Mari Sandoz and the culture of the High Plains. The Sandoz Heritage Society has loaned its expansive collection of Sandoz materials—hundreds of photographs, documents, books, manuscripts and letters—for preservation and display at the Center.

The Center's archives include material donated by the Sandoz family, sound recordings of the author and old Jules, personal items, and materials related to the history of the region.

Visit the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Web site: [www.csc.edu/sandoz](http://www.csc.edu/sandoz) to see the current collections, exhibits, and objects presented for viewing, and the archive and library materials available.

The Center facility is located at Chadron State College, 1000 Main Street, Chadron, NE 69337. The phone number is 308-432-6401. ☞

## Seiler One of Four New Sandoz Board Members Elected at March Meeting

Wally Seiler, a recent addition to the board of directors of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, is currently serving as the Society's treasurer. Coming from a banking background, Seiler is the manager of the Wealth Management Department of Bank of the West in Alliance, Nebraska.

He was first attracted to the work of the Society because he lived most of his life in the area of Nebraska that Sandoz immortalized in her writings. A love of reading and an appreciation for Sandoz' skill as a writer led him through most of her major works.

Seiler's extensive history of public service includes six years as a Commissioner on the Nebraska Library Commission; two of those years as chairman. As a longtime Trustee of the Alliance Public Library, Seiler was active (from the dream through the completion) in the building of a new, multi-million dollar library in Alliance.

In 2002, he was recognized by the Nebraska Library Association as the outstanding library trustee in Nebraska and in 2005, he was recognized by the American Library Association as one of the outstanding library advocates in the United States. Seiler continues to serve as a committee member of the Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Nebraska Library Commission.

As a member of the Speakers Bureau of the Nebraska Humanities Council, Seiler presents a program entitled, "Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit." He has given his program throughout Nebraska, and, privately, he has made his presentation over 800 times in the United States.

He is a member of the Judicial Commission for the 12th Judicial District of Nebraska, the Chapter Advisor of the Alliance DeMolay Chapter, and the treasurer of the First Presbyterian Church of Alliance. ☞



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Organization/Library/Corporation/School contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Address for person giving gift membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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