



Oct. 31, 2022

Aggie Alumni Association salutes Curtis couple

Del and Bev Van der Werff are the ultimate Curtis Aggie ambassadors.

Or, referencing their decades-long love of basketball, they could be the community's own Aggie globetrotters – here in Nebraska and around the world.

Wherever they take educational outreach, young adults are listening. They traveled to India six different times for Del's teaching duties, and once in Poland.

The pair were on the faculty and staff at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture for nearly three decades, and were international educators at least seven different times, all the while sharing with students that each individual can make a difference in this world.

Do your best, be involved, communicate well with others, and they will communicate with you. Recently, the pair shared their program about teaching in India, speaking to veterinary technology students.

This summer, basketball athletes gathered at Curtis for some ball playing, touring the campus of their alma mater, and reminiscing. Coach Del had them running laps in the gym at the Curtis Community Center.

In June of 2021, the couple attended the Aggie Alumni Day in the old gymnasium of campus and were surprised with the Alumni Service Award honor.

Dan Stehlik, who presented the award on behalf of the Aggie Alumni Association, said it didn't matter where you went in Nebraska, Del and Bev were there promoting the college.

"At the Nebraska State Fair in the old coliseum, at Husker Harvest Days, or at major agriculture events in the state, they were down there, stumping for the college out here in Curtis," Stehlik said.

Coach Del taught Human Relations, speech, communications, and general studies, plus coached some women's volleyball, and men's basketball for 29 years for the University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture (UNSTA), then NCTA.

Bev started her career as a staff assistant in the veterinary technology and animal science department for three years, then moved to Ag Hall for various capacities including recruiting. She also assisted with sports, traveling with Coach Del and the teams, as statistician and an assistant coach.

Agribusiness management alumnus and Aggie basketball player Gary Troester, and his 1980 classmate David Fulton, shared the values they found in communication skills emphasized by Coach Del.

“Sometimes as an ag lender you have to tell people no, but you also have to tell them why, and you need to tell them in a manner that they understand and appreciate your guidance,” said Fulton, who works in USDA Rural Development, and is in his second year at Aggie Alumni president.

Troester, who is an ag lender in California for the USDA’s Farm Service Agency, said Coach Del pushed his players to give their best effort in a ball game, and in dealing with people. “That carried over from basketball to the classroom, too. You could tell that he knew our capabilities; that he cared for each of us as individuals, and he taught us in Human Relations to communicate well and care about others.”

The Van der Werffs were always recruiting. It was rewarding to count the hundreds of individuals they met, focusing on the “hearts and minds” of every person, each told alumni.

“Certainly, they fulfilled the mission of the campus. Both of them were very instrumental in serving the college, and that is why we are recognizing them,” Stehlik said.

Wilford “Buzz” Cole also was honored for Alumni Service in 2021. He was on the Aggie faculty teaching electricity and maintenance, and also served in a capacity of his father, Wilford Cole Sr., as campus engineer.

Nominations for 2022 Aggie Alumni awards are underway for a Nov. 19 recognition program in conjunction with an “East Campus Tailgate” with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Contact Stehlik by Nov. 11 for suggestions at dstehlik2@unl.edu or call 308.367.5241.



Bev and Del Van der Werff of Curtis were recognized in 2021 with the Alumni Service Award. It was presented by Dan Stehlik, Aggie Alumni Association secretary and awards chair. The pair worked at NCTA for nearly 30 years. (NCTA photo)

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Online link: <https://go.unl.edu/dobh>