

It is our privilege to present our 2021 Catholic United Financial community service award to Hilary and Irene Drees.

They have been married for 63 years and are richly blessed with nine children; Guy, Jeanne, John, Todd, Joseph, Mary, David, Daniel and Charles, plus an abundance of grandchildren and great grandchildren. For the first 13 years they farmed near Shakopee and in 1971 purchased a farm southwest of Cologne.

Irene was born to George and Margaret Diethelm and has one sister, Kathleen. She was educated at St. Victoria's for 8 years followed by 4 years at Guardian Angel's. For six years, Irene worked as a nurse's aide until she became a fulltime mother and farm wife.

Irene has always been a willing and cheerful volunteer. In the early 70's she joined the choir, served as president of the Ladies Guild, helped to organize the winter carnival and taught 7th grade CCD classes. Since 1972 she has helped stitch many quilts for school and church sales and made banners for the altar. Irene has served on the liturgy committee, as Eucharistic minister, repaired vestments and washed the purification cloths. Irene was an FSA board member, Benton Township treasurer for 11 years and has helped with many Cologne Lions events.

Hilary was born to Hilarius and Agnes Drees and has 3 sisters, Mary Ann, Kathryn and Gertrude and 1 brother Clyde. Hilary was educated in Shakopee and has been a fulltime farmer all of his adult life. At St. Bernard he was the school board chairman, cut grass for several years and helped to shovel snow. He has also served as FSA chair and worked the 2000 census. Hilary is a longtime Lions member, a Mid-County board member for 12 years and Benton Township supervisor for 20 years. He is also a member of the Shakopee Heritage Society.

Hilary and Irene continue to serve as Benton Township fire wardens – which means you can obtain a burning permit through them.

In 1997 the Drees family was chosen as the Carver County Farm Family of the year.

A barn quilt was mounted on their barn wall in the summer of 2012 to encourage tourism in Carver County.

December is a hectic month for Hilary and Irene because they have appeared as Mr. and Mrs. Claus at various stores and events for the past 17 years.

Hilary and Irene have traveled by car numerous times to Spokane, WA to visit their son Daniel and have enjoyed several bus tours over the years.

Thank you, Hilary and Irene for your very generous contributions to our parish and community. You have truly modeled the importance of stewardship as a way of life.