



Arnold and Dorene Hulshof celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary in November. They raised their sons on a farm near Hull, but they now live at Crown Pointe Estates in Sioux Center. Photo by Aleisa Schat

## Hulshofs together for 75 years

Arnold, Dorene cherish rare anniversary mark

BY ALEISA SCHAT  
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SIoux CENTER—Dorene Boeve and Arnold Hulshof met when they were 16 and 17 years old, respectively. It was the mid-1940s and Dorene was just leaving the Sunday evening youth group gathering at Carmel Reformed Church. Arnold was driving by with a group of friends after they had attended their own Sunday gathering at First Reformed Church in Hull. "I didn't drive — I didn't have a

license. We had to go with our brothers because we didn't have a car," Dorene said, reflecting the gender conventions of the time.

"She was desperate for some reason for a driver," Arnold said, smiling.

"And then you came along," Dorene said.

Arnold and a friend, Gerrit Horstman, stopped and offered Dorene and her friend, Ruth Westra, a ride.

"And that was the beginning," Dorene said.

This year, 77 years after that first meeting, Arnold and Dorene celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary. It is an occasion so rare that the U.S.

Census Bureau does not even track the number of marriages that last three-quarters of a century. Even the number of married couples that make it to 70 years is vanishingly small — around one-tenth of 1 percent, according to the Census Bureau.

Ninety-five-year-old Arnold and 94-year-old Dorene live at Crown Pointe Estates, Sioux Center's senior living facility, where they have resided since 2016. They moved from independent to assisted living a little over a year ago.

"We don't get around quite as easy

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# STATE of mind

Michelle Martin, who grew up in Sheldon, stands next to her daughters, 4-year-old Madeline and 6-year-old Amelia, on the shore of Hawaii's Big Island in October. They traveled with family members to celebrate the life of Matt Martin. Photos submitted

BY ALEISA SCHAT  
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DENVER, CO—Michelle and Matt Martin always planned to visit Hawaii — the 50th state on Matt's bucket list — together. "One of Matt's life goals was to make it to all 50 states — and he had made it to 47 of them," Michelle said. Michelle is a 2002 graduate of Sheldon High School, but the 38-year-old lives in Denver, CO, with her and Matt's two daughters, Amelia, 6, and Madeline, 4. Michelle and Matt decided Hawaii would be the last state they checked off their list. Instead, this October, a group of 23 family members traveled to the Big Island to honor Matt's memory and celebrate his too-short life. On April 11, 2021, Matt died suddenly and unexpectedly from a cardiovascular complication in the Martin family's Denver home. He was only 44 years old. Included among those who traveled to Hawaii were Michelle's parents, Bob and Sharon Kirschbaum, who are residents of Sheldon. Bob is the former principal of East Elementary in Sheldon and has been the executive director of the Pearson Lakes Art Center in Okoboji for the past six years. See TRIP on page A9

Family members honor husband/father/brother/son with trip to Hawaii

## Activists question CO2 pipeline safety

30 groups sign letter to federal authority

BY ELIJAH HELTON  
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REGIONAL—CO2 pipeline opponents appealed to federal oversight Monday in a coordinated effort to halt progress on the projects, including the two slated to come through N'West Iowa.

Thirty groups, many of which have spent months organizing against carbon-capture lines, signed a letter to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. An agency in the U.S. Department of Transportation, PHMSA is the main national regulator for projects including the planned pipelines from Summit Carbon Solutions and Navigator CO2 Ventures.

Food & Water Watch was one of the 30 groups. The signature was penned by policy director Jim Walsh.

"Carbon capture and the hazardous pipelines it relies on are a danger to public health, safety and our climate," Walsh said.

The letter calls on PHMSA to block permits for new CO2 pipelines until it strengthens protections and regulations for any future construction.

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Jimmy Powell of Summit Carbon Solutions speaks at an informational meeting about his company's pending pipeline project in Sioux Center on Sept. 15, 2021. Many groups opposed to CO2 pipelines are wary of their safety and longevity. Photo by Elijah Helton

## Iowa Information acquires two papers

Carroll, Jefferson to retain their staffs

CARROLL—For the third time in less than two years, Iowa Information Media Group has added to its portfolio of publications.

The Sheldon-based Wagner family, well-regarded for its award-winning flagship newspaper, The N'West Iowa REVIEW, officially took ownership Wednesday of the Carroll Times Herald and The Jefferson Herald.

The Carroll Times Herald had been published by the Wilson and Burns families, the three-

generation local owners of the publication for 93 years. The Jefferson Herald was a second newspaper operated under the parent company, Herald Publishing.

The deal also involves purchase of the area shoppers, The Advertiser and Bee, by the Wagner family's newspaper company, Iowa Information Media Group.

The Wagner and Wilson/Burns families have been colleagues and friendly competitors at decades of statewide Iowa Newspaper Association and national awards

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## NEWS

## Sheldon family journeys to Hawaii to fulfill 50-state dream

## TRIP

Continued from page A1

The trip was one way of keeping Matt's memory alive, especially for his young daughters. It also was a way to gather with family again, under happier circumstances.

"The last time the whole family was together was at Matt's funeral," Michelle said. "It was like, 'OK, I love to see you guys, but I'm not quite brave enough to get on the plane with the girls for that long of a flight myself.'"

Matt's brother, Danny, lives the farthest away, in New Zealand, where he has a young family, and the rest of Matt's and Michelle's family members are scattered in different states.

"And so, it was like, 'Hawaii was always going to be the 50th state — what if we did it together?'" Michelle said.

Before the October trip, Michelle squeezed in two others, scattering Matt's ashes in the other two remaining states on the list, Tennessee and West Virginia. Finally, on Oct. 15 — what would have been Matt's 45th birthday — the group of travelers headed out on a boat in Hawaii and scattered his ashes in the blue waters off the island's shore.

That was at the beginning of the trip, and during the nine days the family spent in Hawaii, they made space for grief, but they made space for celebration, too — laughter and games and shared time together, creating new memories in a new place.

## Adventurers

It was a shared spirit of adventure that brought Michelle and Matt together in the first place.

Michelle moved to Denver after completing her graduate degree at Marquette University in Wisconsin. She joined a practice as a physician assistant, and in 2008, she met Matt, a project manager for an oil and gas company based in Colorado. The two were training for their first triathlon, and they belonged to a team of six triathletes competing to raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Those teammates eventually paired off and got married, and they became the Martins' dear friends.

Matt and Michelle were married in a Colorado ceremony in 2014, and they settled in the home where they eventually would begin raising their family.

"With each pregnancy, we did a lot of new construction projects, so it's the house we made it to be — it's our house,"



Family members of Michelle Martin and her late husband, Matt, convened in Hawaii on Matt's birthday, Oct. 15, to check off the 50th state on Matt's bucket list. Michelle grew up in Sheldon, and her parents, Bob and Sharon Kirschbaum, are still Sheldon residents. Photo submitted

Michelle said.

During their years together, Matt and Michelle traveled to many of the states on his bucket list. The list became a shared one — a goal they would complete together. They hopped on planes or took long road trips, visiting national parks and climbing mountains. They traveled internationally, too, to the beaches of Saint Lucia and the fjords along Iceland's rocky coast. They explored new cities and danced at friends' weddings.

When Amelia was born in 2016, they kept traveling, unwilling to become homebound just because they had young children.

"I'm thankful we did that early on when the kids were little. We were throwing them on planes, like, 'OK, let's go do this,'" Michelle said.

When Amelia was 18 months old, they braved the trans-Atlantic flight and took her with them to London and France. When Madeline was 18 months and Amelia was 3, they traveled to New Zealand to visit Matt's brother and family.

Like Matt, Michelle developed a love for travel early in life. She remembers her first trip out of the country — she was 16 and traveling to Spain with the Sheldon High School Spanish Club.

"On that trip, it was like, 'Oh my gosh, there's so much more of the world out there that I want to see, and luckily, Matt shared that same adventurous spirit,'" she said.

## Grief

Michelle never thought she would visit Hawaii for the first time without her partner and co-adventurer.

"Life throws you crazy curve balls," Michelle said. "You

definitely don't expect to be in the club of widows in your 30s."

Matt died on the eve of Madeline's third birthday. It was the day of her party, and Michelle's parents were in town for the celebration. Everyone was gathered in the Martin home, located just south of downtown Denver.

That day, Matt was there, singing "Happy Birthday" to Madeline, her face bright in the glow of her birthday candles. Matt donned a costume and danced around the yard as Kristoff, a character in the movie "Frozen." The assembled little girls, dressed in princess costumes, were delighted.

"Matt was an awesome, hands-on dad," Michelle said, recalling his goofy antics and the things he would do to make his daughters laugh.

During the party, Matt was laughing and talking, his usual warm and generous self. He was there, present, and full of life — and then he was not. He died later that night.

Living with the enormity of grief — the enormity of Matt's absence and doing everything possible to keep her girls' world together — has been impossible and painful and, ultimately, Michelle's only choice.

## Option B

"It's OK to not be OK," Michelle said.

In the wake of Matt's loss, Michelle turned to the stories of others who have navigated tragic loss, especially of those who lost husbands and partners at a young age and have spoken or written publicly about their experiences.

"They're raw — and just truthful — about topics that probably as a society we aren't great at always being open and

honest about," Michelle said.

Among the books she read early on was "Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy," by Sheryl Sandberg, chief operating officer of Facebook, who wrote the volume after the sudden loss of her husband, Dave Goldberg, when he was only 47 years old.

Michelle said she is learning to live her Option B.

"You always want your Option A — what you want the picture of your life to be," she said. "But you know, when Option A isn't available, how can you make the best of Option B?"

Michelle also is learning to resist the pressure to carefully manage outward appearances — to put her sadness in a neat package, tie it up and move past it.

"Sometimes, people think, 'Oh, OK, you've had a couple of weeks,'" she said. "But it doesn't ever go away. So, it's finding that purpose for your pain. You move forward with it."

In the wake of Matt's death, Michelle took long runs outdoors. She began journaling, writing her way through the experience of grief and sometimes posting her reflections on Facebook, hopeful she might help others learning to live with loss.

"You hope that you can help somebody in at least the way that other people have helped you," she said.

Michelle also has learned to welcome moments of ordinary happiness as they come — feeling the sun on her face during a long run or hearing her girls laugh together in another room.

Sometimes, she stands with her daughters under a sky full of stars, and they point to the brightest ones, "the Daddy

stars," as Amelia and Madeline call them.

"I know it's been healing for all of us just to continue to have him in day-to-day conversation," Michelle said.

## Pay it forward

Along with the family's October Hawaii trip, Michelle has started other rituals to help give meaningful shape to days that otherwise might simply be painful — holidays, Matt's birthday, the anniversary of their wedding.

"It's like, 'How do you make those days suck less? How do we give it a positive spin or make it something to celebrate?'" she said.

Michelle turned to close friends, some of them former members of that first triathlon training team, to help her keep Matt's memory alive for Amelia and Madeline.

"One thing I had told them is, 'OK, it's a lot of pressure to be solely responsible for carrying on who somebody was for the girls — so they don't forget,'" she said.

Those friends sent e-mail messages to Matt's co-workers, former classmates, anyone who knew him at some point in his life. They gathered stories about Matt from periods in his life, and they bound them together in a book for the young Martin girls.

In another effort to turn pain into purpose, Michelle, along with a number of Matt's friends, designated the day of Matt's birthday "St. Maddy's Day," a nod to Matt's love for celebration and his particular love for St. Patrick's Day. St. Maddy's Day is a day for random acts of kindness, done in honor of Matt, who was known for spontaneously taking co-workers out for lunch or offering help to anyone who needed it.

"I thought, 'How can we keep those random acts of kindness going,'" Michelle said.

Last year at school, Amelia and Madeline handed out "St. Maddy's Day" cards, which included a short note encouraging those handed a card to participate. Participants might fill someone's parking meter or hand a stranger a gift card for a cup of coffee.

Printed on the cards are the words: "A little act of kindness can put a colossal burst of sunshine into someone's day — now it's your turn to pay it forward. Do something kind and leave the card behind."

This year, the tradition grew to include more people.

"There were more than 2,500 cards that got handed out on his birthday, which I think is kind of cool," Michelle

said. "It can be something that snowballs. Friends, neighbors and co-workers mailed cards to a bunch of people — it's that idea that one good can turn into multiple."

Some of those cards are likely still being passed along around across the country in some of the states on Matt's bucket list

## Hawaii trip

This year, along with being an occasion for acts of kindness, Matt's birthday was the day that 23 of the people who loved him most gathered on a boat in Hawaii and ticked that last box on his bucket list.

Early in the day, the group snorkeled and had lunch on the boat.

"Then we went a little bit farther from shore and played some music, had a toast, shared a few stories and scattered the rest of his ashes off of the back of the boat," Michelle said.

Just after his ashes were scattered, a family of dolphins swam by.

"It was so cool," Michelle said.

In helping her young daughters process the event, Michelle explained that the ashes, or "Daddy dust," would go into the water, and it would continue to travel. Anywhere they saw the ocean, their dad would be there, too.

"These situations are confusing enough as an adult, and you can only imagine them trying to make sense of it," Michelle said.

Earlier that day on the boat, the group's guide had taken them up the coast, and he explained how different rock formations, if looked at closely enough, revealed in their contours the form of a goddess in Polynesian mythology. That reminded Amelia and Madeline of the Disney movie "Moana," which features a goddess, Te Feti, who takes the form of a volcanic mountain.

Later in the day, as the boat made its way back to shore, Madeline noticed a film on the water. In the swirls, she saw the features of her dad's face.

"Madeline saw it and looked overboard and said, 'Look, Daddy just followed us,'" Michelle said. "And she leaned over the boat and waved and was like, 'Hi, Daddy. I love you.'"

It wasn't the day Michelle hoped to have years ago, dreaming of this trip with Matt, but there was good in it, too — including for her girls.

"It was heartbreaking and heartwarming at the same time," she said. "It wasn't this scary thing — it brought smiles to their faces."

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