



Olger Sandven Memorial Scholarship

"Do the best you can and then a bit better."

*"Always tell the truth, because
then you won't have to remember what you said."*

"Seed bountifully; reap bountifully."

"There is no tomorrow for what we should do today."

Olger Sandven grew up with these kernels of truth as part of his everyday experience. His parents, K. B. and Elvira (Trandum) Sandven, believed in the value of hard work and a good education. They made many sacrifices to provide educational opportunities for their children and taught them to be good stewards of whatever resources became theirs to manage.

Olger learned these lessons well. As other siblings left the community to pursue education and careers that led them in many different directions, Olger stayed home to manage the farm and look after his parents. After serving in the Army in World War II, Olger's brother, Kenneth, returned to the farm. Olger and Kenneth farmed together until their retirement in 1989. Another brother, Roger, maintained his interest in farming from a distance. He was an engineer with Union Carbide based in Bloomington, Minnesota.

The Sandven Brothers Farm was well known in Benson County for its well-kept appearance and excellent conservation practices. So much so that in 1984, Olger and his brother Kenneth received the Benson County Soil Conservation Service Award.

Through the years, Olger supplemented his farming career by following a number of personal interests. For twenty-seven years he served as Beaver Township Supervisor. He also served fourteen years as a bank director and seven years on the Water Management Board. Olger was well known throughout the state as Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms in the North Dakota House (from 1968 to 1988) and the Senate (as Deputy 1973-1975 and as Chief Sergeant-at-Arms 1975-1986). He was active in the Republican Party but stressed that, while at the legislature, he worked "for North Dakota ... period!"

For several years, Olger conducted a one-man campaign to keep North Dakota clean. Using discarded chemical barrels, he cleaned, painted, and distributed some three thousand "Pitch In" litter barrels. Olger's barrels were found in parks and towns across the state. For his pride in North Dakota, in 1983 Olger received the North Dakota Heritage Award from Governor Allen I. Olson. He was also named a distinguished agriculturist by NDSU and listed in *Who's Who in North Dakota*. Prior to his death in 1996, Olger had begun a new kind of "political career." He served as delegate to the Silver-Haired Assembly where he was the voice of older North Dakotans on issues of concern to them.

Olger had at least one additional passion that contributed to his reputation as an outstanding community citizen. Perhaps because his formal education ended relatively early, at the eighth grade, Olger took great pleasure in investing in students. With brothers Kenneth and Roger, Olger established numerous scholarships at area colleges designed to provide financial assistance to Benson County students. Most of these scholarships bear the names of Olger's parents, K. B. and Elvira Sandven. Lake Region State College encouraged Olger to allow this scholarship to honor his exemplary commitment to education. His brothers agreed, and the first Olger Sandven Scholarship awards were made in December 1991.

The endowed scholarship will perpetually be awarded to Benson County students in their second years at Lake Region State College who have achieved high academic standing. For, in Olger's words, "in this world there is never too much human kindness and friendly fellowship." ♦