

# Ankeny through the decades...

recalling Ankeny news from the 1950's, 1970's, 1990's\*

April 2019



## 1950s

**"Green Valley" Is Big Hit:** The curtains closed and another wonderful play came to an end. "Green Valley" went down in the books as one of the best senior plays in Ankeny. A record crowd of approximately 700 saw the beautifully decorated stage which was known as "Green alley." During the course of the play, bean vines grew before the eyes of the audience and they also saw milk, which contained very high chemicals, glow before their eyes. A lot of things happened in Green Valley that seemed like magic when Tobias J. Everwheel, played by Roland Bachman, came to take Green Valley away from Eldon Berry (Ron Breezly). But thanks to the persuading of Prim (Sharon Phelps), Eldon's girl, and Grandpa Berry, portrayed by Richard Hildreth, and all the other Berry's, Everwheel was boosted out of Green Valley for good.



Although each committee did an excellent job on its work, the play would not have been a success without the wonderful directing of Mrs. Merna Pratt. She has completed her twelfth play in Ankeny. After the play the senior class presented Mrs. Pratt with a silver candy dish. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 18, 1957*

Be sure to check out the Ankeny Area Historical Society website [www.ankenyhistorical.org](http://www.ankenyhistorical.org) for upcoming events and activities!

\*Wording has been reduced to fit the space in some cases. Additional decades will be covered in future issues. Please become a member of the AAHS or send comments via email at: [history@ankenyhistorical.org](mailto:history@ankenyhistorical.org).



## Ankeny Area Historical Society

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## 1950s

### Two New Churches Plan Organization in Ankeny:

Catholics and Baptists Anticipate Building in the Very Near Future

**Catholic:** Monsignor Hansen, pastor of the Visitation Catholic Church in Des Moines, has announced plans for a Catholic Mission Hall to be built in Ankeny this summer. Plans call for the brick building to be located on the east side of Elm Street in the 400 block. It will be approximately 50 by 100 feet and will face Elm Street. Monsignor Hansen hopes the building will be completed by fall.

**Baptists:** Plans were announced by Rev. A.D. Mohr, former pastor of the Grandview Baptist Church in Des Moines, that a Baptist church is being organized in Ankeny. Rev. Mohr said that the first services will be held in the Ankeny Legion Hall in the very near future, and will continue there until plans are complete for building. The Baptist group is now in the process of purchasing land for that purpose. Rev. Mohr recently resigned the pastorate at Grundy Center and has been doing evangelistic work. The new church will be associated with the General Association of Regular Baptists. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 25, 1957*



The first graders at Parkview got into the Easter spirit in a big way last week as they began work on their Easter tree. Following the coloring of the eggs, the pupils each hung their own on the tree. Shown above is Ann Kinsey and part of her class watching as another Easter egg is put in place.

*Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 18, 1957*



It was styles and displays at Parkview Auditorium last Monday night as the Industrial Arts and Home Economics Department of Ankeny showed their work of the school year. Shown above, at left to right, are Suzanne Grove, Martha Lewis, Fran Rowland, Karen Fontanini and Karen Mathis, modeling clothes made in Home Economics class.

Press-Citizen Photo

*Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 25, 1957*



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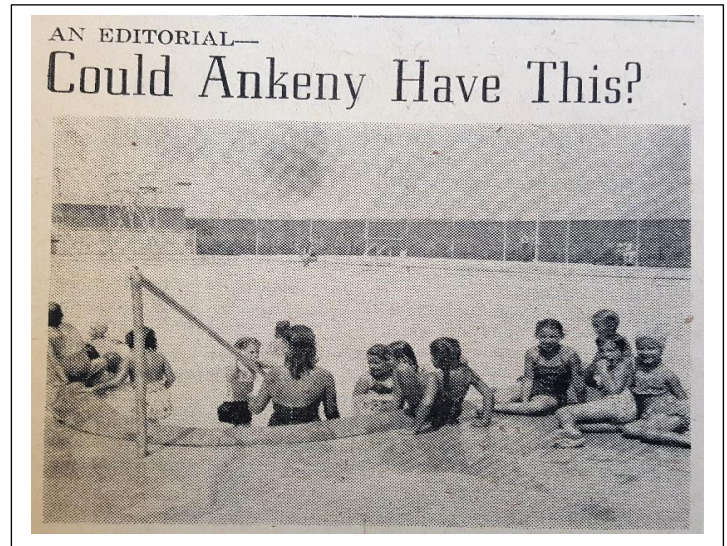
## 1950s

**Could Ankeny Have This?** Pictured is the swimming pool at Conrad, Iowa, a thriving small community of 700 persons, located just north of Marshalltown. On April 5, a committee consisting of Vern Smith, Earl Olmstead, Cleo Fuqua, Reco Logli, and this writer, all representing the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce, visited Conrad and talked to the men who were responsible for getting construction started.

**How They Did It:** In the summer of 1955, a group of Conrad businessmen formed a non-profit corporation. This group and all the residents of Conrad went to work and in the summer of 1956, the pool was opened to the public. A total of \$39,000 was spent on the project.

**Could Ankeny Do It?** There has been much talk in the last few years about a pool for Ankeny. Many problems arise on a project such as this. Some of the major ones being water, location and funds. The water supply in Ankeny is somewhat of a problem. It is hoped that new arrangements can be made in the near future to give Ankeny an adequate supply. However, in regard to the pool, after initial filling of the pool in the spring, very little water is needed to maintain its capacity through the summer. Several sites have been proposed by the Chamber of Commerce and its location doesn't create a serious problem. The finances for such a project would be the greatest obstacle in its path to reality. It is said that a complete filtering system is available free to the city for such a purpose and it alone would save several thousand dollars in the cost of construction.

Each year, civic groups of Ankeny spend hundreds of dollars for transportation when sending young folks to the already crowded pools in Des Moines. We could have this recreation and instruction right here. Many people will say, "We need things done in Ankeny before we need a pool." It is granted that some things are needed such as street construction and larger sewer facilities. BUT, can we just ignore the youth of the community until all the other projects are completed? The young people of Ankeny need recreational facilities and need them badly. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 11, 1957*



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## 1950s



Here are some of the favorite songs around school these days. Is yours included?

Jeanne Lentz- "Young Love"

Judy Allen- "My Little Darlin"

Carole Johnson- "Frogman"

Roger Spahr- "Round and Round"

Karen Stall- "Teen-Age Crush"

Ted West- "The Admiral's Daughter"

Janet Johnson- "Bad Boy"

Dennis Brazelton- I don't know!

Caroline Higginbottom- "Let Me"

Julie Henderson- "99 Ways"

Suzanne Moore- "Young Love"

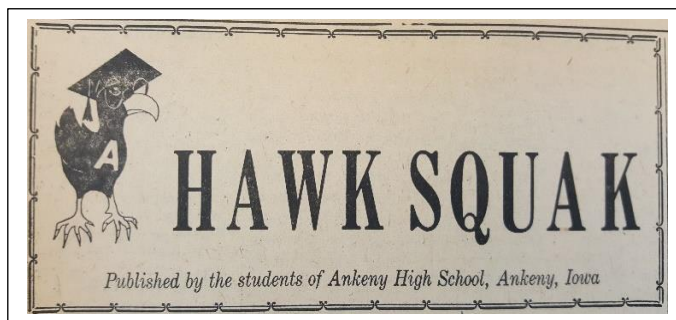
Pat Scholes- "Round and Round"

Jerry Dutcher- "Don't Forbid Me"

Bob Floto- "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor"

Vickie Johnson- "Love Me"

Marilyn Textrum- "Round and Round"



### Seniors of the Week

Our seniors of the week are Roberta White and Richard Hildreth. Roberta is taking bookkeeping, typing, English, and American government. Her favorite subject is English. Roberta stated her favorite singer is Pat Boone. Everett is Roberta's pet peeve. Next year Roberta plans to work, as yet she does not know where.

Richard is taking English, American government, psychology, and art. Art is his favorite subject. Richard's favorite record is "Young Love", and his favorite singer is Harry Belafonte. After graduation this spring, Richard will be in the navy. I know we all want to wish Roberta and Richard the best of luck this year and all the years to follow. -Jan Griesert . *Ankeny Press Citizen*, April 4, 1957



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## FROM OUR FILES



### 56 Years Ago

#### First Editions of the Ankeny Times

Joe Webb was seen in our berg Thursday.

\* \* \* \* \*

Henry Harvey gave a big dinner Thursday.

\* \* \* \* \*

Art and Cal Mills are boarding with their brother Al.

\* \* \* \* \*

Say Ward, what is the attraction over west of Bethany."

\* \* \* \* \*

Horace Nagel and son Roy were Ankeny visitors Saturday.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Hartman called at the Doke home Wednesday afternoon.

\* \* \* \* \*

Edd Doke and Al Mills helped Horace Nagle butcher Thursday morning.

\* \* \* \* \*

Doate Davidson and Aunt Lyda Wright were Ankeny visitors the first of the week.

\* \* \* \* \*

Art Mills has purchased Bill Atkinsons team, harness and wagon. That looks queer art ??

\* \* \* \* \*

Cora Doke was thinking she would have to write letters again Sunday night the blaze faced horse was so late coming.

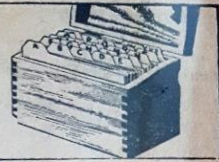
\* \* \* \* \*

The box supper at Rock Creek last Friday night was a grand success. The school teachers box brought \$5. Proceeds \$25.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some one at the church Saturday evening didn't have nothing else to do but carry the oil can out in the yard and steal a lantern. If the one is found, who did this mean trick, they will be severely punished!

## FROM OUR FILES



### 56 Years Ago

#### First Editions of the Ankeny Times

Ward Lewis says its mighty hard to shoot a hog. He says a man must have patience and a steady hand. So we think Ward, from our Tuesday observation.

\* \* \* \* \*

At last we can say, without fear of contradiction that B. A. Lamason is now dealing financially with his friends and patrons in the new bank building. Cigars were passed to his many friends and Ben is now happy to be on the sunny side of "Wall" street.

\* \* \* \* \*

The bachelor wants to know if kissing the wrong girl in a tunnel is not a railroad disaster.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rev. Samuel Goughnour and wife, also J. Smith and wife dined at the J. L. Hildreth home on Sunday.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bruce Spahr is going with Fred Sexauer's hay press. I know what is up, he wants to get a little money on hand to be ready for the box social.

\* \* \* \* \*

Geo. Harris and family, Link Hildreth and family, Jim Sage and family and the Bell family spent Tuesday evening at the Birdsell home. The evening was spent enjoyably and oysters were served.

\* \* \* \* \*

Aymer Doke purchased a ten cent hunting dog this week.

\* \* \* \* \*

Chas Davidson helped Frank Porter saw wood one day last week.

\* \* \* \* \*

Frank King, our rural mail carrier, was not able to take the mail Monday and sent his assistant, Sam Lee.

\* \* \* \* \*

The elevator and depot at Elkhart are being rapidly built.

\* \* \* \* \*

Findley O'Keen was seen in our town Saturday night. He spent Sunday at the home of his brother Bert.

\* \* \* \* \*

A large class is going into the Odd Fellows lodge here before long. They expect to go into the new hall next week.

\* \* \* \* \*

Oley Landey was in the capital city on business Tuesday.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ira Duley was quite badly hurt by being thrown from a wagon last Friday.

\* \* \* \* \*

Subscribe now and have something to read during the long exmo

April 9, 1959

April 2, 1959

# 1950s



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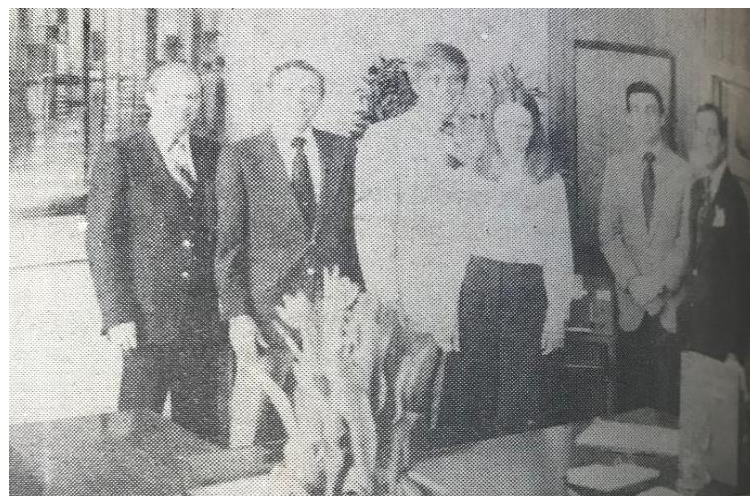
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## 1970s

**Speaks at Lions.** Ober Anderson, left, Polk County Extension Direction, was the guest speaker at the April meeting of the Ankeny Lions Club. He is shown with Lions program director Harlan Rigby and club president Jim Collins. Anderson spoke about the energy crisis and quizzed the audience about their "Home Energy Audit." This service is available to all citizens by contacting the Polk County Extension office. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 27, 1978*

**New Business Opens.** The brokerage firm, Edward D. Jones, and Company, has established an office in Ankeny at 500 SW Third Street, which is being operated by Registered Representative Doug Thieleke, third from left. Last week Thieleke and his wife, Kay, hosted an open house for Ankeny residents. Left to right are Roy Lawson of the Jones office in Indianola, Harold Barcus of the Ankeny State Bank, Mr. and Mrs. Thieleke, Duane Spicer of the Ankeny National Bank and Jack Phelan of the Jones office in St. Louis. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 7, 1977*



**Surprise Party.** A 70<sup>th</sup> birthday "surprise party" open house for Lola Lein has been planned for Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00 p.m. at her house at 110 SW Pleasant Street in Ankeny. Friends and neighbors and relatives are asked to stop by for a piece of birthday cake to help celebrate the occasion. (Mom, if you see this, pretend you didn't. Signed, Rod and Dee.) *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 7, 1977*



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## 1970s

**Ankeny Participates in National Industrial Ad Campaign.** Ankeny and 20 other Iowa cities are participating in a novel national advertising campaign designed to attract new industry. The Iowa Development Commission (IDC) is coordinating the cooperative campaign designed to promote the participating communities to industrialists outside of Iowa. IDC Industrial Director Dick Powell said the Development Commission pays for two-thirds of the advertising campaign while the cities share the remaining one-third. "This gives the communities the impact of a full-blown advertising program for a fraction of the cost," Powell explained. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 14, 1977*

**Hold Everything – School Year Extended to June 6.** According to a recent directive from the Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Iowa's public schools must complete the full 180 days of instruction for the 77-78 school year which would mean that Ankeny schools could not dismiss until Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. The previously established dismissal date for this school year was set for Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Two days were lost from the regular school year because of blizzard conditions. In the past, it was a state policy practice to forgive the make-up of snow days that would carry the school year past June 1<sup>st</sup>. In this recent directive, the letter of the law is being enforced which requires 180 days of instruction, one of which can be credited to an in-service day. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 13, 1978*

**Bike Lanes Altered.** The controversial Ankeny bicycle lanes and bicycle safety were discussed at Monday's meeting of the city council. Following a recommendation of the consultant who is presently conducting a traffic safety study, the two-way aspect of the lanes is being discontinued. The signs which indicate that bicycles are to travel in both directions on the same side of the street are now being removed. During the Citizen's Request portion of the meeting, Duane Doubleday of 1318 SW Third Street advised the council of the large number of bicycles and vehicles which were not observing the stop sign at SW Third and SW Flynn. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 6, 1977*

A year later....

**Full Steam Ahead on Bike Path.** Plans are now underway for the development of two different bikeway systems for Ankeny. One will be within the city. The other will link Ankeny and the Des Moines Area Community College. At last week's City Council meeting, Mayor Weigel appointed Lloyd Miller, Don Baker, Ed Shepherd, Bob Martin and Jane Pitz to a newly-formed committee which will be working to develop bike routes in Ankeny using the streets where one-side-only parking is allowed. The Council has accepted the agreement of the Iowa Department of Transportation for the development of a bike path between Ankeny and Des Moines Area community College. It will be primarily funded by federal monies as a Federal Aid to Urban Systems project. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 6,*

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## 1970s

*More about First Street ....*

### **First Street Improvement Committee**

**Convenes.** Within the past few months, the Ankeny city council has committed itself to a project to make major improvements on East and West First Street and last week's mayor's committee held its first meeting to study the project and consider additional aspects of its planning. The basic plan for the improvement involves three phases. They are: to widen East First Street from Delaware to just short of Highway 69, to re-do the First and 69 intersection which is statistically the most dangerous one in the city, and third, to widen West First Street between Highway 69 and Linden. The members of the study committee are Shirley Crawford of 510 NW School Street, Cindy Eisenhower of 710 NW Ash Drive, Marge Grant of 302 NE Bel Aire Road, John Lundstrom of 514 NW Cindy Lane, Darl Mullins of 1309 SE Sharon Drive, Merrill Seehorn of 902 SW Second Place, and Phil Webb of SE Seventh Street. Traffic counts on First Street reaching 8,000 to 10,000 vehicles per day and the poor condition of the road bed especially on First Street are the major justifications for the project. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 13, 1978*



**Thieves Strike Local Clothier.** Gary Waller, of Flatt's Men's Clothing located in the Ankeny Plaza Shopping Center, is shown at the empty suit racks of that store following a weekend robbery which netted thieves about 80% of the store's inventory of suits, all of the leather goods, some belts and ties. Entry was gained through the front door and the stock was removed through the back entrance. As of Monday, a dollar amount had not been given to the stolen inventory.

*Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 20, 1978*



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## 1970s

**Coast to Coast Store Slated for Ankeny.** A (Total Hardware Store) will be a new addition to the business district of Ankeny, Iowa. The owners of the future Coast to Coast store are Allen and Vickie Rewerts, formerly of Grundy Center, Iowa. They have purchased a home in Ankeny, at 325 Northwest Stratford Lane, and plan on taking an active part in all community affairs. The Coast to Coast Store will be much like a hardware super market with individual departments specializing in home improvement products, plumbing and electrical supplies, paint and wall paper, housewares and cleaning supplies. The store will also have a sporting goods department featuring archery supplies, fishing tackle, camping equipment, outdoor games, and firearms and ammunition. Other departments in the store will feature automobile parts and accessories, power tools, bicycles, appliances and giftware, hardware and a complete line of building materials. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 27, 1978*

### Ankeny's Marathon Man Roger Spahr – A

**Challenger at Drake.** Ankeny's Roger Spahr will be one of the 1,000 long distance runners competing in the 26-mile Drake Marathon on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. Roger had jogged a route in the country for several years, then took off at 5:30 in the morning far more seriously when he found out he had diabetes. Roger gradually started up from a half-mile a day to a five-mile run over the past 2-1/2 years. He uses this exercise to keep his blood sugar down. Roger says a good pair of shoes is a must in jogging and long-distance running, He has gone through three pairs of shoes since September and now has a pair with the right amount of cushion. Experts recommend that after you find the right shoes, you should buy two pairs of them. Roger foretold of Saturday's marathon, "I have ran on a lot of bad days this winter through rain and snow preparing for the marathon. I won't be the first one to cross the line but I'm going to finish." *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 27, 1978*



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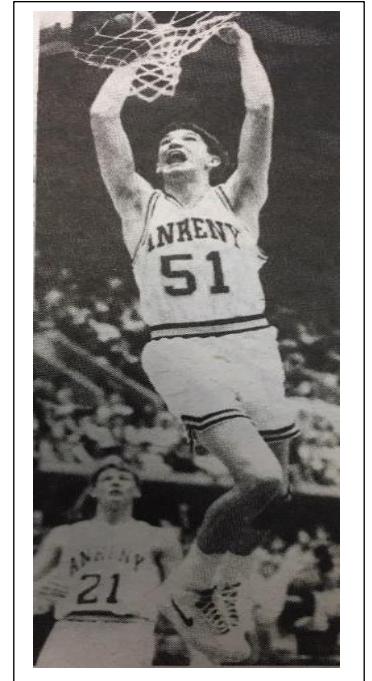
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## 1990s

**Todd Sears named to First Team All-State.** Sears, a 6-foot 7-inch junior, averaged 18.4 points and 10.4 rebounds per game as Ankeny finished the season with a 21-3 record. He scored in double figures in all 24 games. He was named the captain of the Class 4-A all-tournament team. Todd also led the Hawks to their second straight CIML National Conference championship. He earned all-conference first team honors for the second straight year and was the only unanimous choice to the first-team. Sears is also a standout baseball player who helped Ankeny to the Class 4-A state championship last summer. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 7, 1993*



**AHS sophomore Jessica Keenan-** sings the national anthem before the start of Sunday's Iowa Cubs game in Des Moines, while a sparse crowd behind her stand respectfully with hands across their hearts. Keenan has sung several times for the I-Cubs and sometimes gets a chance to sing for the parent-team Cubs in Chicago. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 20, 1993*



**Schneider's Square, a retail area on East First Street** – Associated Builders and Contractors of Iowa, in statewide competition, recently presented Ankeny Construction an award of merit for the design and construction. *Ankeny Press-Citizen, April 7, 1993*



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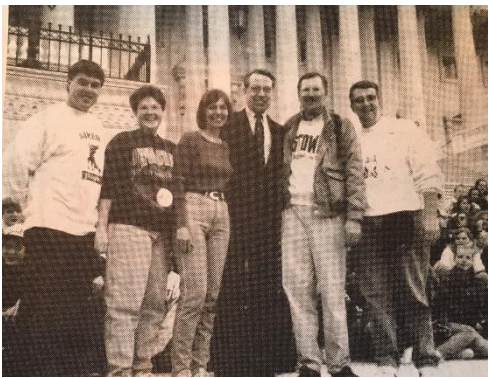
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## 1990s



**United Church of Christ breaks ground for a new church on Delaware** On Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, members of Ankeny United Church of Christ broke ground for their new building at 602 SE Delaware Avenue. The new building will consist of three wings. The west wing will be the worship sanctuary, seating 188 people with additional seating for 43 people in the balcony. The south wing will be a fellowship hall and kitchen and the north wing will consist of classrooms, a nursery, a library and offices for the parish secretary and pastor. MCS, Inc, of Audubon is constructing the new building. *Ankeny Today*, April 15, 1993



**Chaperones and Grassley** – Parkview Middle School's chaperones on the Washington, D.C. trip met with Senator Charles Grassley. Left to right in the photo are Dave Sharp, Carol Yager, Joyce Green, Senator Grassley, Mark Olson and Dennis Albertson. *Ankeny Today*, April 15, 1993

**Rasmussen retires as girls' basketball coach after 28 years** – After 28 years as a head coach, Dick Rasmussen has decided to step out of the coaches box. Rasmussen, who has been the Hawkette mentor since 1972, announced his resignation Thursday, April 22. Rasmussen said that he would continue as AHS' softball coach and as a teacher. "It was time," Rasmussen told reporters. "We graduated our team, a new team will start in and it's a good time for a new coach to come in. The time is takes, the clinics, the team camps, the coaching through the long winter months, I guess I'm burned out." Rasmussen guided the Hawkettes to three, six-player state titles, (1978, 1980, and 1989) and compiled a career record of 525-187. The resignation will be presented to the Ankeny school board May 3. Rasmussen said the decision was a difficult one. "It wasn't easy, but my wife and I discussed it for a period of time," said Rasmussen. "I have three grandchildren now and I'd like to spend more time with them." *Ankeny Today*, April 29, 1993

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## 1990s

**Honored for City Service** – Earlier this month, Ankeny Mayor Ollie Weigel and the City Council honored 17 city employees for their length of service to the community. *For 30 years of service:* Joann Goins, City Clerk/Finance. *For 25 years:* Myrna Anderson, Kirkendall Public Library. *For 20 years:* Opal Biner, Accounting; Thomas Blair, Utilities; Loren Bowers, Police Department. *For 15 years:* Jerry Card, Community Development; Roberta Fredericks, Police Department; Bert Geerdes and Dennis Guillaume, both of Public Works; Arnold Porath and Stanford Warner, Jr., both of the Police Department. *For 10 years:* Edward Hamilton, Police Department; Thomas Strait, Fire Department. *For five years:* Roger Blakesley and James Schmitt, both of Utilities; Jay Davis and Viola DeStigter, both of Community Development. *Ankeny Today, April 29, 1993*

