

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Appreciate those who gave, now are gone

CARTOONIST'S VIEW



"JUST HOW BAD WAS 2020? WERE SKIPPING THE YEAR-END REVIEW TO AVOID SHOCKING OUR VIEWERS ONTO THE PEOPLE-WE-LOST LIST!"

Joe Heller

They served their community, sticking their necks out there and leaving themselves open and vulnerable to criticism and worse. Whether we always agreed with their decisions or their politics or their stands or the things they did or said, they still deserve our gratitude and appreciation for service that came to an end this past year.

Duluth City Councilor Barb Russ resigned in May, citing health concerns as she battles cancer.

Duluth schools Superintendent Bill Gronseth attended his last School Board meeting in June to take over as superintendent of St. Peter Public Schools in southern Minnesota.

St. Louis County Commissioner Beth Olson, who represented western Duluth's District 3 for four years, decided not to seek reelection this fall.

State Sen. Erik Simonson of Duluth was defeated in the DFL primary in August, ending officeholding in St. Paul that included one term in the Senate and two in the Minnesota House.

A Duluth city councilor for eight years, Donn Larson died this past year at age 91. He also was an advertising agency owner; co-author of the book, "The Will and the Way;" and a civic leader, serving on numerous boards.

A state senator from 1971 to 1976, Ralph Doty also died this past year at age 78. He worked, too, as a junior high teacher, community college president, and Budgeteer columnist.

A longtime department head in Duluth City Hall, Dick Loraas died in March at 76. He additionally was a business developer for the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and a leader of both the Greater Downtown Council and Essentia Duluth Heritage Center.

A Duluth School Board member for 12 years, John W. Hawley died in October. He had also served on countless nonprofit agency boards and committees, including United Way and ARC as president. He was executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Duluth at one time and was the founding director of CHUM. The nonprofit CHUM serves thousands of low-income, homeless, hungry, or otherwise-marginalized community members in Duluth.

Beyond politics and government, Lee Stuart, executive director of CHUM, announced in March her retirement at the end of 2020. Rick Klun had already



Russ



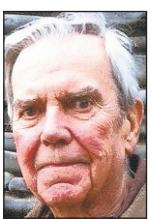
Gronseth



Olson



Simonson



Larson



Doty



Loraas



Hawley



Stuart



Klun



Overland



Nokels



Sampson



Floerke



McDonald



Swanson



Sertich



Bennett



Sojourner



Powless



Stratioti



Wheeler



Holwerk



Partika



Paulucci

retired at the end of last year after 15 years as executive director of Center City Housing. Maude Dornfeld stepped down in 2020 after seven years as executive director of Life House, a Duluth nonprofit that houses at-risk youth. And St. Luke's hospital President and CEO Kevin Nokels left his post after about 15 months.

In addition, Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation President and CEO Holly Sampson stepped down in June after 30 years

and was replaced last month by Shaun Floerke — who himself had to step down, from his position as Sixth Judicial District Judge, to take the foundation's helm.

In the world of sports, legendary Chisholm boys basketball coach Bob McDonald, who won three state titles and more than 1,000 games, died this past year. So did "Mr. Denfeld" Dick Swanson, the high

school's longtime softball coach; and Mark Sertich, the world's oldest hockey player,

according to Guinness World Records. Also from Denfeld, retired choir director Mark Overland died in April at age 70.

Additional noteworthy retirements over the past 12 months included Brad Moore as executive vice president of environmental and governmental affairs for PolyMet, Bill Bennett as CEO of the engineering and architectural firm LHB, and

William Ulland as CEO of the Duluth imaging technology company Ikonics.

Others from our city and region who died in 2020 included civil rights veteran Sue Sojourner, co-author of "Thunder of Freedom: Black Leadership and the Transformation of 1960s Mississippi;" Bob Powless, for whom the Dr. Robert Powless Cultural Center in the Gimaajii-Mino-Bimaadiziwin building is named; Rosemary Stratioti, organizer of the West Duluth Memorial Day Parade for more than 50 years and devoted fan of Dukes and Huskies baseball; Duluth-area businessman, civic leader, and philanthropist Tom Wheeler, who also was a regular contributor of commentaries to the News Tribune Opinion page; News Tribune editor from 1998 to 2001 David Holwerk; Father Richard Partika, well known for his many years of monthly letters to the editor in the News Tribune in support of life and in defense of the Catholic Church; and Grandma's Restaurant co-founder Mick Paulucci, son of the late frozen-food magnate Jeno Paulucci.

We all have our lists of those who played roles big and small in our lives and in our communities, who left us this past year, and who we can recall now on the occasion of the passing of another New Year's. Some of the lists were longer this year because of the persistently deadly and not-over-yet COVID-19 pandemic.

It's no small commitment, this taking your turn in the public eye and in public service, whether as an elected official or in some other high-profile leadership role. Our communities depend on and need those who take on the responsibility and who are willing to sacrifice time with family, leisure activities, and other pursuits.

For most public servants, especially on the local level, it isn't the money that calls them. Or the notoriety. It's that need in every great community for great citizens to step up, to lead, and to make their corners of the world better, more prosperous, cleaner, and safer.

May they all be remembered fondly and revered. May they be thanked and appreciated.

And may they inspire others to also step up, to put themselves out there, to be willing — for the good of community.

READERS' VIEWS

Stauber being targeted in coordinated attack

I was appalled to read about local elected officials denouncing Rep. Pete Stauber ("Duluth mayor, officials denounce Stauber," Dec. 16).

Since this was a personal opinion of the elected officials, they shouldn't have used their positions as officeholders to chastise Stauber for his support of a Texas lawsuit ("Stauber joins bid to invalidate millions of votes, overturn election," Dec. 11).

Regarding the comment in the News Tribune's Dec. 15 editorial (Our View: "We expected better from Stauber than partisan protest") that the newspaper

can criticize the congressman when warranted appeared to be just a personal option also. As far as destroying Stauber's credibility with his constituents, in my opinion, it was the newspaper's credibility that was destroyed.

I feel this was a coordinated attack on Stauber because of his association with President Donald Trump.

I applaud Stauber for standing up for everyone including those some feel he shouldn't represent. I resent the attitude that the newspaper's opinion is the only one that matters.

There are questions about the integrity of the 2020 presidential election. There are material facts supported by physical evidence and

signed affidavits that show credible claims of election interference. States changed election laws prior to the election without the approvals of legislative branches, which is not legal. Per the Constitution, the legislative branch is the only one with authority to change election laws. Apparently these states didn't mind breaking the law as long as it benefitted their political view.

Regarding how other countries view the U.S., I seriously doubt they are laughing and are embarrassed that this election was not transparent and has a cloud of illegitimacy because of allegations of voting irregularities.

Yes, as the officials' letter pointed out, in the

game of hockey, when the horn blows at the end of the third period, you stop skating and shake hands unless you go into overtime. Until there is a winner in overtime, there is no need to shake hands.

Kathy Beede
Duluth

Stauber betrayed northern Minnesota values

Rep. Pete Stauber's joining the indicted and disgraced Texas attorney general's embarrassingly baseless assault on our democracy came off as a sycophantic attempt to suck up to President Donald Trump and his unhinged base. ("US Supreme Court swiftly ends Trump-backed Texas bid to upend elec-

tion results," Dec. 11). While Stauber likes to portray himself as principled and independent, his endorsement of this meritless stunt revealed his true colors. I hope voters remem-

Readers' Views and Local Views

Letters to the editor are a critical part of the community dialogue, and the News Tribune attempts to publish all letters of opinion meeting our requirements. Letters are limited to 300 words, must be the original work of the author and must be exclusive to the News Tribune. Letters are edited for style, space, accuracy and civility. Letter writers are limited to one published submission every 30 days. With rare exceptions, the News Tribune does not publish poetry; letters that are anonymous, libelous or attack other writers; consumer-complaint letters; thank-you letters; or letters gener-

ated by political or special-interest campaigns. We will consider exclusive Local View columns of 600 words or fewer. Authors should possess unique insights, and their commentaries should demonstrate greater knowledge of their subject than letters. **Email submissions to:** letters@duluthnews.com. **Mail to:** Readers' Views, Duluth News Tribune, 424 W. First St., Duluth, MN 55802. **Fax to:** (218) 720-4120. Include a full name, address and daytime phone number. Only names and hometowns will be published.