



DOANE  
COLLEGE

## DOANE GRANDMA BECOMES PROUD HARLEY OWNER

# Doane Grandma Becomes Proud Harley Owner

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To be perfectly honest, Mildred Emanuel admits, she can't remember exactly when she bought her raffle ticket.

At 86, a Harley Davidson motorcycle wasn't exactly something she couldn't live without.

But this was important to her grandson, Matt Heller, a Doane senior in the marketing class that created the raffle campaign.

Emanuel tucked the ticket away in her North Bend home and forgot about it long before her name was pulled from more than 3,000 entries Oct. 7.

But don't think the motorcycle doesn't mean something to her.

It helps with an ache that started a few weeks ago when her brother, Paul Baumert, died.

When Emanuel heard that she had won, the first thing she did was take a step toward the phone.

Old habit.

"I just wanted to call Paul," she said.

Her winning ticket was the perfect reminder of the humor her motorcycle-loving brother brought to her life.

For Doane, her story is a perfect ending to a campaign that began with a donation and raised



\$34,200.

Both stories begin six months ago.

In February, Ray and Debra Croghan - owners of a Harley-Davidson® dealership on Colorado's front range - offered to donate new Harley-Davidson motorcycles to Doane and Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Ray is a 1972 graduate of Doane and a member of the Doane Board of Trustees. Debra is a 1975 graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan.

With the donation came a challenge.

Both institutions could use the motorcycles to raise money, but, each had to involve students in a real-life marketing, fund-raising, learning experience.

Doane's "Promotions Management" class tackled the project. David Thomas, assistant professor of marketing, adapted the course syllabus. Students divided into teams and settled on a raffle campaign.

They chose the \$24,000 high-tech Night-Rod™ motorcycle. Billed "a real head-turner" by the company, it's high-tech, offers a 115-horsepower ride and, not surprisingly, is geared toward younger riders.

Proceeds were designated toward the purchase of exercise equipment for the college's planned Recreation and Athletic Center.

Students created a plan to sell raffle tickets throughout Nebraska, from motorcycle rallies to Husker Harvest Days.

Then the real work - and the real learning - began. Students designed promotions, tickets, posters, press releases, a Web site, advertisements and more. They learned about copyrights, regulations and legalities. They learned details one often wouldn't encounter until on the job, including strict deadlines.

In the meantime, award-winning custom motorcycle painter Dan Ballard customized their prize. Ballard has designed and painted vehicles from Croghan for charity auctions supported by Garth Brooks and Brooks and Dunn that had

auctioned for up to \$90,000. He completed a "Tiger" design as ferocious and sleek as the motorcycle itself.

Students began the task of selling 3,000 tickets for \$10 each before the chosen deadline: Oct. 7, halftime of the Homecoming football game versus Nebraska Wesleyan.

It was around February that 83-year-old Paul Baumert made his last motorcycle ride. His health was deteriorating and the motorcycle was too much for him.

But let's back up and introduce him.

Baumert retired from a career as a supervisor of a Dodge County weed control district.

Some people take up cards.

He took up motorcycles.

"He was known far and wide for his motorcycle riding," Emanuel said.

People seem to remember a senior citizen motorcycle devotee, especially if he wears a black leather jacket and gold chain and makes the trek to Sturgis.

Baumert belonged to a regional motorcycle club.

His signature motorcycle was a red Honda Gold Wing.

It was almost as much of a signature as his trademark humor.

"He had a great sense of humor and wasn't afraid to show it," according to Zelan Heller, Matt's father.

"He always said 'All I need is gas (for the motorcycle) and underwear.' When gas prices went up, he said: 'I guess I'm going to have to give up underwear.'"

Baumert lived in North Bend, not far from his sister. Both widowed, they spent much of their time together, his motorcycle a familiar sight in her driveway.



She never rode it, preferring her bicycle. Besides, her brother didn't give rides or allow guest drivers. Too much liability, he would say.

Matt Heller sold many Harley raffle tickets in North Bend last summer, a town that shares Doane's colors and mascot. He placed an advertisement in the North Bend newspaper. He sold tickets to numerous businesses and sold even more at the family's fireworks stand (helping him become the top salesman in the raffle.) And he sold one - just one - to his grandmother.

Baumert died Aug. 28.

Motorcycles lined the streets the day of his funeral.

No one from the family was present when Emanuel's winning ticket was drawn. Matt and a cousin were tail-gating at a Husker football game.

Word spread in typical small-town fashion. A fellow North Bend graduate and Doane student called Matt and his cousin on a cell phone. Matt called his parents and grandmother, neither of whom believed him at first, thanks to the tail-gating in the background.

But when they did believe him, they all had to laugh at the irony. And they all thought of Baumert and the way he loved a good joke.

They are sure, they said, "he had a hand in this."

Emanuel plans to turn the motorcycle over to her grandson. The family will keep it for a while, maybe put it on display in their hometown, maybe put on a few more miles beyond the 60 currently on its odometer.

They'll likely sell it eventually, the family said, and put the money to education debts or improvements to the family farm operation by North Bend.

"But first, we'll revel in it for a while," Zelan said.

The two stories met at Doane when the family picked up the motorcycle in mid-October. The family met the Doane class, faculty and staff,

along with the donor of the motorcycle that started it all.

Ray Croghan congratulated the class.

He wanted this gift to be more than a donation, he said.

"I liked the idea that this might be a meaningful idea for the college. I liked the idea of giving you a little and having you turn it into a lot."

Then it was Emanuel's turn to speak, holding her handwritten notes, standing a foot shorter than Croghan, looking spry even among a classroom of youth.

"I never had a motorcycle..." she began.

"As a child I never had a teddy bear. And I never wanted either. But there has been a motorcycle in my life. My brother, two years younger than me, had one in retirement. We were always best friends....It raised eyebrows when he parked his motorcycle in my driveway..."

He rode until age 83, she said, until six months before he died.

"...I miss him. I miss that motorcycle in my driveway."