

To Serve a Need

“**T**O SERVE MY CLIENTS well, to make good the promises I’ve made to them, and most importantly, to never forget about them,” is the professional philosophy of Jim Foss, a senior district representative with the Western Dakotas Agency. This dedication to serving the needs of others earned Jim the William J. Wenger Award as NMB’s 2003 Fraternal Agent of the Year.

Named after NMB’s sixth president, the William J. Wenger Award was established in 1998. It is presented to a Society field representative or district manager who has proven strength in two areas: service to members in connection with their insurance portfolio; and service to his or her local branch. Jim Foss is the fourth agent to receive this honor.

Recipients of the award are nominated by their local branch members who try to keep the nomination a secret. Justin Griffin, president of Bismarck Branch 84, succeeded. Jim was stunned when he heard his name announced for the William J. Wenger Award at the 2004 Dakotas Seminar. “I couldn’t believe it. It was so unexpected,” exclaimed Jim. “In fact, I got a little emotional when I was asked to say a few words.”

A very honored and humble recipient of the award, Jim states, “It’s even more special in that it’s named for Bill Wenger.” The Foss and Wenger families became close friends over the nearly 26 years Jim has worked for NMB. He says,

“As far as I’m concerned, Bill Wenger is a great man.”

Jim will never forget how good Bill was to him in 1980 when his first wife, Nancy, was diagnosed with leukemia. Wenger told Jim not to worry about his job and to take as much time as he needed to be with his wife during her illness. Although Jim didn’t work for six months, his job was still there waiting for him. Jim says, “That’s something I will always remember about Bill and NMB.”

After Nancy died, Jim put all of his focus on his work and was able to earn the 1980 Agent of the Year award in just six months. He has gone on to win many prestigious awards during his long, suc-



Jim Foss (right), together with fellow district representative Terry Alley, grills in the rain to serve dinner for some hungry golfers attending a family golf outing hosted by Bismarck Branch 84.

cessful career with NMB. Jim has earned membership in the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) five times, most recently in 2002. He was also one of two charter members to NMB’s Master’s Club in 1995 and earned that award again in 1996, 2001, and 2002. He has earned an invitation to the annual President’s Conference 23 times, an honor that about 25 percent of NMB representatives achieve each year. And last, but certainly not least, Jim has earned the Agent of the Month award 43 times—the second highest in NMB history!

Fraternally speaking, Jim also has an impressive history. As the first NMB agent in North Dakota, Jim worked tirelessly in the formation of Mott Branch 79. He was also instrumental in the establishment of three other branches: Hettinger Branch 81, Bismarck Branch 84, and Dickinson Branch 91.

In 1997, Branch 84 became inactive and remained so until late 2002. It was then that Jim and his district manager, Scott McDonald, organized a movie event and sent out invitations to all NMB members in the Bismarck area. Admission to the movie was a non-perishable food item to be donated to a local food pantry. The response was overwhelming, with over 125 people attending. All were very enthusiastic about the branch being given new life. Many members offered to help with future events.

Jim’s commitment to the Dakotas



Due in large part to Jim Foss, Mott Branch 79 became the first NMB branch in North Dakota. In 1981, branch members spent three days cleaning the local movie theater before repairs and improvements could be made. A branch-sponsored Chinese supper raised funds for ceiling fans, new carpeting and reupholstered seating.

branches is unending. Serving as a resource and advisor, he makes it a point to help out whenever possible when any of the branches have fund-raisers to help a family in need. One time, he drove 300 miles round trip to help with a fund-raising dinner for a client suffering from cancer. Once a year, he drives 220 miles round trip during the busy holiday season, and often in stormy weather, to help serve Branch 79's Senior Citizen's Dinner to over 150 elders in the Mott community.



Fraternal Agent of the Year Jim Foss is presented with the prestigious William J. Wenger Award by NMB President George Yanna.

Living in Bismarck, North Dakota, Jim is most active in Branch 84. He attends branch meetings and enthusiastically participates in the planning of activities. Last year, he chaired Family Golf Day, served food at a bowling party, helped organize a movie event, and helped clean ditches on JOIN HANDS DAY, to name just a few.

Jim's service to others isn't limited to his clients and the branches. He is also an active member in his community. He served on his church council in Mott. He is a member and past president of the Mott Lions Club and the North Dakota Fraternal Insurance Counsellor's organization. He coached the Mott Junior League baseball team for several years and is always ready and more than willing to give golf lessons!

Jim's exemplary record speaks for itself. It leaves no doubt that he is most deserving of the William J. Wenger Award. Justin Griffin, president of Branch 84, says it best when he states, "Jim is the embodiment of fraternalism. He is always willing to help others and believes he is there to serve a need." ♦



Remember to Honor the Flag

FLAG DAY is an important day of the year when we as Americans set aside time to honor our nation's flag. The ANNUAL PAUSE FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, which originated in 1980, became a part of National Flag Day festivities on June 20, 1985, when President Ronald Reagan signed Public Law 99-54. The PAUSE is an invitation urging all Americans to honor the American Flag and our nation by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance each year on June 14 at 7:00 p.m. (EST).

"I pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

**Celebrate Flag Day
June 14, 2004**