Thank you,
Albert &
Laverne Elliott
Albert was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1911. His mother was an opera singer who travelled extensively, so Al was left in the care of a nanny. By the time he entered high school, the family had moved to upstate New York.

Laverne was born in the West Texas town of Stamford in 1924 and raised in nearby Abilene. She was the youngest of seven children in the Baker family.
Albert & Laverne’s Story

Al served in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II, stationed in the Pacific Theater at a MASH hospital. He was awarded a Purple Heart in 1944 for wounds received in action.

Laverne Baker and Lt. Albert Elliott were married on July 24, 1943. When Al was discharged from the Army in 1946, they settled in a small Texas town where their son, Michael, was born.
The Elliotts moved to Sturgis in 1953. The move to South Dakota came about when they read a story about the Black Hills in Life Magazine. They were so taken with South Dakota that they knew they wanted to live there.

When an opportunity arose for Al to transfer with the V.A. from Houston to Fort Meade, they jumped at the chance. Al was the Chief of Medical Administration at Fort Meade until his retirement in 1980.
Laverne graduated from Black Hills Teachers College to follow in the teaching footsteps of her four older sisters. She began her career teaching kindergarten at Deadwood Public Schools in 1959.

On her first day, with 45 students she was just getting to know, a forest fire surrounded Deadwood. The city had to be evacuated. She later said “There was nothing in my lesson plan for this insanity.”
A few years later, she began teaching first grade in Sturgis, first at Badger-Clark Elementary School and later at Sturgis Elementary. She retired in 1988, twenty-nine rewarding years as a teacher.

Teaching young children was her life’s work and passion. She believed it was her duty to ensure that every child who passed through her classroom would be able to read . . . and she believed that reading should be **Fun! Fun! Fun!** She strongly believed if children could not read at the end of first grade, their future was bleak.
She became a role model to many of her students who were inspired by her to become elementary teachers . . . and some of them still use her “Fun-Fun-Fun” tricks-of-the-trade.

She was publicly recognized for her work in the classroom when she was named Meade 46-1 Teacher of the Year in 1981. She also served on the governor’s Education Task Force.
Albert & Laverne’s Story

Throughout her life in Sturgis, Laverne was active in many local organizations, including the Sturgis Area Arts Council, Fort Meade History Museum, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Delta Kappa Gamma and PEO.

She had an intense love of gardening, and entertaining her many friends gave her great pleasure.
Albert & Laverne’s Story

Al was also an active member of the Sturgis community. He was on the Board of Directors of the Sturgis Titans, a minor league baseball team and served as treasurer.

He was involved in the Basin League Baseball Association and supported youth sports in Sturgis.
Albert & Laverne’s Story

He was active in Naja Shrine, the Scottish Rite Masons, Rotary, Optimist Club and served on the Vestry at St. Thomas Episcopal Church.
He also continued to serve his country as an active member of the Air Force reserves from which he retired with the rank of Lt. Colonel.

He continued to serve for many years after his retirement as a volunteer in Retired Affairs at Ellsworth Air Force Base.
And he never lost his passion for South Dakota and the out-of-doors. Al never missed a fishing or hunting season and closely guarded the location of his best fishing holes.

When both Laverne and son Mike took up skiing, Al did too, even though he thought that at 50+, he was too old.
Al died in 1992 at the age of 81. Laverne died in 2018 at the age of 94.

Although they were both born and raised elsewhere, Sturgis was home.
"Laverne was fun to be around and always enthusiastic about teaching."

"Laverne would be so pleased to see the outcome of the Elliott donation to the Sturgis Library. Many children will enjoy the beautifully decorated new room."
Ruth Smit

“Laverne’s laughter and upbeat personality is truly missed.”

“I feel blessed to have been friends of the Elliotts.”
Harriet Quail

“Laverne wanted the children to always do their best. Her favorite expression was, 'Work is fun'. And she made learning fun.”

“Thank you for your dedication to Sturgis. And Kathy and Mike, thank you for honoring your parents in this wonderful, fitting way.”
Sandi McNenny

“So here we are today accepting another wonderful gift from the Elliotts in the form of a donation, by way of their son Mike and daughter-in-law Kathy, going towards the newly remodeled children’s room in the Sturgis Library.”

“Thank you, Al and Laverne...Mike and Kathy!”
Kathie Flagstad

“Laverne was such a dedicated and caring teacher...”

“What a role model and unforgettable friend. Her legacy will live on and her devotion to all children and friends will be forever cherished memories.”
Kathy Behrens

"There are so many fond memories I have of Laverne and Al."

“I surely do miss all those fun times with Laverne and Al.”
Mary Tribby Stewart

"She taught me how to read and taught me how to make friends. And she has remained my favorite teacher through 19 years of schooling."

“I am forever grateful that my education began with such a beautiful, kind, warm woman.”