

TOGETHER

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JAN. 22, 1955

Mary Jane and Leslie Klebesadel

Mary Jane and Leslie Klebesadel celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Dec. 30 at Settlers Bay Lodge in Wasilla. Hosts were their daughter Lani and sons and daughters-in-law Dan and Janet, Jim and Lindell, Bill and Lucy, and Tom and Tawny. Their nine grandchildren also were present.

Earlier in 2004, they celebrated with a Caribbean cruise.

The Klebesadels were married Jan. 22, 1955, in Madison, Wis. They met as students at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. They were seated alphabetically (Kleinheinz-Klebesa-del) in a physics class, which resulted in a "happily ever after" tale.

After her graduation with a bachelor's degree in home economics, Mary Jane joined Northwest Airlines as a stewardess, then worked as a technician in the wood chemistry section of the U.S. Forest Products laboratory in Madison while Les completed his doctorate degree in agronomy and soil science.

Les had the good fortune in 1949 and 1953 to be invited by his uncle Dr. Harlow Hodgson for field work at the Alaska Agricultural Experiment Station near Palmer, where he became fascinated with the work and the beauty of Alaska.

In September 1957, the Klebesadels drove to Palmer, where Les began a position as research agronomist with the Experiment Station. In 1958, Les served as the first president of Palmer Community College (later Matanuska-Susitna College), and Mary Jane volunteered as its first registrar.

After their youngest child started school, Mary Jane started work as a teacher's aide at Swanson Elementary School in Palmer. She later transferred to the Palmer Pioneers' Home, where she continues to work, having completed 30 years of service there recently.

Les worked jointly with the University of Alaska and U.S. Department of Agriculture from 1957 to 1968, then became research leader and location leader for federal workers of the Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, in

Alaska before returning to university service as professor of agronomy in 1985 and retiring in 1987.

His research with forage-crop management and physiology focused on establishment, winter hardiness and survival, seed production, plant exploration and collections of grasses and legumes throughout Alaska and adaptive modification through generational natural selection of crop plants brought to Alaska from other areas of the world led to more than 100 articles in scientific and semipopular publications.

Since retirement, Les has written and illustrated two Alaska humor books, one of sourdough poems and one of fantastic birds.

The Klebesadels live near Palmer. They enjoy traveling and activities with their grandchildren: Amy and Shauna of California, Dylan, Morgan and Rayanne of Wasilla, Jenni and Danielle of Palmer, and Hannah and Emma of Eagle River.