

Viola Colglazier's 60 years of service recognized at State FCE

Written by April Peregoy



Sixty years of dedicated service to the local Home Extension chapters earned Holyoke resident Viola Colglazier special recognition at the State Family and Community Education (FCE) Convention, held in Holyoke last week.

Colglazier, along with two other district FCE members from Yuma and Washington counties, were honored at a banquet Saturday night, June 13 at SunSet View Community Center, for being 60-year members of the organization.

"I was thrilled," she said about being recognized at the convention. "It's quite an honor."

Since joining in 1949, Colglazier has witnessed the local extension chapters evolve, grow and eventually die out, with Jolly Dozen being the only surviving club out of the 14 that used to exist in Phillips County.

In *"Those Were the Days..." Vol. II: A History of Phillips County*, it states: "Probably the only reason we have endured as the only Extension club in Phillips County has been the strong leadership and encouragement of two honorary life members, Mrs. Frank (Bette) Linnenbrink and Mrs. Harold (Viola) Colglazier."

Colglazier was one of the founding members of the Eureka Club, serving as vice-president its very first year. In its early years it was a member of the Home Extension Service. When the Eureka Club left the Extension in 1960, Colglazier joined the Jolly Dozen Demonstration Club—as it was then called—in order to remain with the extension, though she has also stayed active in Eureka as well.

The Jolly Dozen Club was started in 1934 and became part of the home extension service in March, 1943. In 1950, the club paid its first state dues of 10 cents per member, with county dues being the same.

Having been a member for almost three years at the time, Colglazier was there when Jolly Dozen hosted its first Holly Daze Christmas Fair in November, 1963. Over 45 years later, the annual Holly Daze craft fair is still a hit with community members.

The following year, the club became known as the Jolly Dozen Extension Homemakers. It kept that name until the 1990s, when the national association changed its name to the present FCE.

Serving in every officer position available, Colglazier worked her way up to District assistant director. However, the following year when she would have held the district director position, she had to move to Denver, where she lived for three years before returning to Holyoke.

Though no official records could be found, it is known she has been president of the club several times. She was also a 4-H leader, teaching sewing to the girls and public speaking and record-keeping to the boys. As one of the initiators of Phillips County Museum, she devoted much of her time for 20 years to the museum and Phillips County Historical Society.

Over the years, Colglazier has attended 26 state conventions and one national convention. She has made many friends attending them, she said, and one year even received one of the highest honors bestowed by the club: honorary life member.

Yet, she is especially proud of the recent state convention held in Holyoke. "Having it in the theater (Peerless Center) worked out so well," she said. "We had a lot of nice programs and Rita Kleve gave a wonderful devotional. It was an awful lot of work."

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Even after 60 years, she is still giving what she can to the organization. “She did whatever she could to help with the convention,” said president Joyce Harms.

But Colglazier waved it off, saying Harms is the main organizer who really deserves the credit.

And it doesn't stop with FCE. Now in her 90s, she continues to be active in PEO, the Eureka Club and First Christian Church, of which she has been a member for over 50 years.

“I haven't done any more than other people in the club,” said Colglazier when asked about her contributions to the community. “I knew I would have to work at it when I joined. That's just the way it is.”