



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Staff, Volunteers Recognized for Work with Corrections Department

(Pierre) - Ten people were honored at an awards luncheon in Chamberlain Tuesday, April 17th for both their service and volunteer work with the South Dakota Department of Corrections (SDDOC).

Those receiving recognition awards include:

Don Irish, Springfield;
Ron Spencer, Sisseton;
Terry and Corbin Herman, Custer;
Nancy Orsbon & Sharon Starks, Pierre;
Father Jerry Kopel, Springfield;
Pastor Robert L. Anderson, Custer; and
Pastor Dave Zellmer & Ron Woodburn, Pierre.

Irish recently retired after 16-and-a-half years working for the SDDOC. He began as Administrative Assistant for Inmate Services in 1984, and continuing as Assistant Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent and finally as Deputy Warden for nearly the past seven years. His duties included supervising Unit Management Staff and the operation of inmate housing units, overseeing the education and vocational education departments and serving as legal liaison, public relations officer, safety officer and as special projects manager coordinated many projects that were beneficial to inmates and helped ensure public safety.

Spencer served as a contractual juvenile corrections agent in the Sisseton area for three years. He has dedicated the last 9 years to bettering the lives of kids in the Roberts County area.

The Herman's volunteered to take in a youth from the Living Center B program to live in their home. When told they could not be contractual foster care parents because they were not licensed by the Department of Social Services, they said that did not matter and took the child in to live with them. The young man went on to become Homecoming King, was named to the All-Conference Football team and was awarded a scholarship to play football at Northern State University this fall. Through the Herman's efforts, the young man earned an honorable discharge from the DOC and is also on schedule to graduate from high school this spring.

Orsbon and Starks both volunteer as part of the Woman-To-Woman (W-2) program at the South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre. Orsbon has helped recruit all of the W-2 volunteers. She has also volunteered her time to raise money for new furniture for the Parents and Children Together (P.A.C.T.) House. Starks was one of the first W-2 volunteers and is also active in teaching gardening and arts and crafts and helps organize donations for prison programs.

Father Kopel has served as the Catholic priest for the inmate population at the Durfee State Prison in Springfield for the past 7-and-a-half years. He also teaches an Ethics class at the prison.

Pastor Anderson has volunteered his time to help the youth assigned to the programs in Custer since the Boot Camp program opened. He performs the Saturday services for the CYCC programs, often being the only pastor serving the students there. Pastor Anderson also regularly attends Boot Camp graduation ceremonies.

Woodburn and Pastor Zellmer served as co-chairmen of the Pierre Aftercare Committee, the pilot program developed to recruit mentors for juveniles who had completed their correctional placement. Similar programs are active in ten other communities across the state.



Pictured from left to right: Don Irish, Father Jerry Kopel, Rod Woodburn, Pastor Dave Zelmer, Sharon Starks, Pastor Robert Anderson, Ron Spencer, Corbin and Terry Herman.