



TH: Dave Kettering

Katharine Schmidt, 14, recently won a national art and essay contest. She drew a picture of her mother, Sheri, and wrote about her mother's struggle with multiple sclerosis.

Teen's essay, art on national tour

First hand knowledge: Her mother has multiple sclerosis

By MIKE KRAPFL
TH staff writer

Cody Schmidt snickered as his mother and 14-year-old sister posed for a photographer.

That's the spirit of the Schmidt home, where football cheers go to the Minnesota Vikings and good-natured support goes to Sheri.

Sheri Schmidt, wife and mother, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis about seven years ago.

The disease typically strikes

people between the ages of 20 and 40, attacking the central nervous system. Common symptoms include weakness in limbs, impaired vision and coordination problems, according to the "Mayo Clinic Family Health Book." Its cause is unknown.

These days, the disease is affecting Sheri Schmidt's legs. She can get around with the help of a cane or a walker, but uses a wheelchair.

What's it like to live with MS?

Katharine Schmidt, a freshman at Dubuque Senior High School, knows all about it.

"We do many things together, and we don't let anything get in our way!" Katharine wrote about life with her mother.

"... we don't let anything get in our way!"

KATHARINE SCHMIDT
Essay winner, on her mother's living with multiple sclerosis

That essay, and the artwork that goes with it, are Iowa's contribution to a traveling exhibit called "MS Through the Eyes of a Child." The exhibit is sponsored by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The display of more than 100 children's drawings from all over the country has been all over the country. Stops so far include New York, Los Angeles, Kansas City and Springfield, Ill. It will be shown Friday through Sunday at Merle Hay Mall in Des Moines.

Katharine Schmidt's winning work includes a drawing of her mother resting her chin on a cane. Drawn around her mother's face are the walker and wheelchair she uses to get around. There also are drawings of the things mother and daughter like to do together: make family videos, cook, shop, read, play cards, raise money for the annual Multiple Sclerosis Walk.

Poster/Please turn to Page 2A

Quinn ready for some R & R from diplomacy work



CHUCK OFFENBURGER
for the TH

Cambodia post: Protests, shootings outside embassies part of the job

Kenneth Quinn, the Dubuque native and Loras College graduate who has become one of the most respected U.S. diplomats in his 31-year career in the Foreign Service, is ready for some peace and tranquillity in his life.

The 56-year-old Quinn is winding up three years as U.S. ambassador to Cambodia, and the last 18 months

have been especially tumultuous — and often dangerous — in the southeast Asian country.

But he's no newcomer to danger and uncertainty.

He was wounded in Vietnam, where he served as a military adviser and rural development officer in the late 1960s and early '70s. Former Iowa Gov. Robert Ray will tell you that Quinn is a genuine hero for the way he came home on loan from the State Department in 1978 and directed the huge humanitarian effort Ray ordered to re-settle more than 10,000 desperate southeast Asian refugees in Iowa after

the Vietnam War.

Quinn later returned to his diplomatic work and, in 1989 in the Philippines, he survived a nine-day siege of the U.S. Embassy where he was a deputy ambassador.

In Cambodia in early July, 1997, rival political factions engaged in an all-out war for several days in the streets right around Quinn's embassy and home in the capital city of Phnom Penh, as well as throughout the rest of the country, leaving hundreds dead.

None of the fighting was directed against the United States, but a stray B-40 rocket demolished the lower floor

of Quinn's embassy residence when he and his family, visiting from the United States, were upstairs opening his birthday presents.

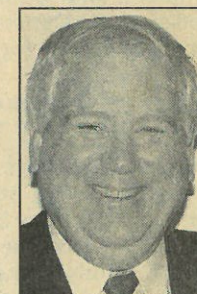
The fighting forced the formation of a new government, and its start-up has been contentious.

Last September, "there were eight consecutive days of massive demonstrations with shots being fired outside of, and over the top of, the embassy but never really right at us," Quinn said in a Thanksgiving Day interview from his office in Phnom Penh.

"Several people were shot against

the walls around the embassy grounds. Again, we weren't the target, but the American embassy often seems to serve almost like a magnet for political demonstrations."

And this same 18-month period has included the capture and



Kenneth Quinn
Dubuque native

Diplomat/Please turn to Page 2A



MORNING SMILE

Surprise, Mom! It's your day

MOSCOW (AP) — It came as a surprise to most people, but Sunday was Mother's Day in Russia.

The new holiday was created earlier this year by President Boris Yeltsin. But it was preceded by absolutely no fanfare or commercial hoopla, and many people only learned about it Sunday when government officials were quoted on radio and television hailing the holiday.

Deputy Prime Minister Valentina Matviyenko, the highest-ranking woman in the Russian government, used the holiday to call for improved government support for women.

Russia already has a holiday honoring women. Every March 8, sons, husbands and lovers buy flowers for the significant women in their lives to mark International Women's Day.

Then, many women grumble, the men go back to taking women for granted for another year.



TRI-STATE SNAPSHOT

A few harvest survivors await the winter snow. Photo by Martial Westburg, of Fennimore, Wis.

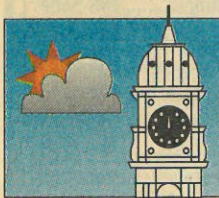
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FORECAST

TODAY: Partly sunny. Highs in the 50s. Lows 30 to 35.

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www.THonline.com

eventual death of Pol Pot, the 1970s terrorist who led the communist Khmer Rouge into control of Cambodia from 1975 to '79. Pol Pot was subsequently blamed for the deaths during those four years of 2 million of Cambodia's population of 7 million. He'd been in hiding ever since.

It has been "a very uncertain, very difficult time here," Quinn said.

But on Thanksgiving, which he was celebrating in the embassy in Phnom Penh with the 35 other Americans on his staff, Ambassador Quinn said he was thankful for the calm that reigned across the country.

"You have to preface everything you say about Cambodia with 'it could change tomorrow,' but things generally seem to be moving ahead peacefully here now," he said.

Agreements worked out to settle the fighting appear to be falling into place. One of the major political rivals, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, this past week was elected president of the national assembly. "If all goes well," Quinn said, the other rival, Hun Sen, will soon be elected prime minister.

That should allow Quinn to return to the United States for the Christmas holidays, which he plans to spend with his family in suburban Washington, D.C.

He and his wife, LeSon, whom he met in Vietnam, decided it was important for their three children's education that the family maintain its residence in the United States.

In the normal three-year rotation of ambassadors, Quinn expects the name of his successor in Cambodia to be presented soon to the U.S. Senate for confirmation. He said the

and Quinn will begin the next State Department assignment.

"I don't know yet what that will be," he said. "When I'm back in the D.C. area at Christmastime, I'll talk to some people at State and see what's available. I think it's doubtful I'd be appointed ambassador to another country. There are always so many people seeking ambassadorships that the normal course is that you just serve one of them."

Some ambassadors are political appointees, generally longtime friends and supporters of the president. The ambassadors who serve in the tougher assignments are generally career Foreign Service officers, like Quinn.

He doesn't rule out the possibility of retiring and moving on to a second career.

"Actually, I'd be quite interested in doing about what you're doing," he told me. "I kind of like the idea of joining some college. It'd be some place to teach a little, think a little and write a little."

After all those experiences, doesn't he have a book just waiting to be written?

"Yeah, I do," he said. "I hope I can get it out of myself eventually and tell the stories that have happened to me along the way. I have the title already - 'From the Mississippi to the Mekong.' I got my start on the Mississippi River, and I've wound up living on the Mekong River three different times."

His parents were Marie and George Quinn, who came to Dubuque in 1956 when George was assigned to run a Jordan's men's clothing store downtown.

He was in the first graduating class of

to Loras College, graduating in political science in 1964. He later earned a master's degree in the same field at Marquette University and a doctorate in international relations from the University of Maryland.

"I gave the commencement address at Loras in 1984, and I talked then about how the teachers and professors there had a real impact on my life later on," Quinn recalled. "They also gave me a sense that Iowa is a state that could make a difference, that we had a long history of helping people in need."

Quinn said he regards his involvement in the 1978 re-settlement of the refugees in Iowa, along with his coordination of the subsequent "Iowa SHARES" program that raised and delivered \$550,000 to refugee camps in Thailand, as "the single best thing I did in my professional life." (That Iowa SHARES acronym stood for "Iowa Sends Help to Aid Refugees and End Starvation.")

Former Governor Ray, who is now interim president of Drake University in Des Moines, said Quinn has represented the United States - and Iowa - very well in his assignments.

"You can't buy the kind of publicity and good reputation he has given our state around the world," Ray said.

"Ken is a working kind of ambassador, the kind who understands the people of the countries he is serving and the kind who understands his responsibilities to our nation's government. I give him a lot of credit. His work has helped save a lot of lives."

You can write Chuck Offenburger at Loras College, 1450 Alta Vista, Dubuque 52001, or e-mail him at coffenbu@loras.edu

The system, operated by the FBI and state governments, replaces the voluntary checks on handgun buyers conducted by state and local police and sheriffs that has been in place since 1993.

The Justice Department had long planned to set the system up and running on Nov. 30, the date set by the 1993 Brady Act, which established federal background checks for handgun purchases. But authorities said they expected some difficulties as they break in a new routine.

Under the new system, the number of checks performed will

be covered now, plus another 2.5 million annual transactions - when an owner retrieves a firearm from a pawn shop.

Problems also are expected because December is the busiest month of the year for gun sales - hunting seasons coincide with Christmas buying.

To prepare, the FBI hired and began training 513 people in West Virginia to handle its share of the work, set up two telephone centers through a contractor and sent teams to brief the nation's 106,000 gun dealers and pawnshop owners.



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Poster: Girl's parents proud of her efforts

Continued from Page 1A

"Even though my mom has MS, we can still do a lot of things together," Katharine said last week at the family home on Dubuque's south end. "It doesn't stop us from doing anything. It can make it more difficult, but we can adjust to it. It's just like a hurdle you can get over."

Sheri and Ron Schmidt are proud of their daughter and ex-

cited that 350,000 people all over the country are expected to see her work.

And Sheri doesn't miss a chance to make a sales pitch for the annual Multiple Sclerosis Walk.

"There is life after MS," say Sheri Schmidt and her daughter's artwork. "Even though it changes your life."

NEWS

You Can Use

The annual Multiple Sclerosis Walk will be May 1 in Dubuque. For more information about the walk or efforts to fight the disease, contact the Iowa Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society at 800/798-6677.

CORRECTIONS

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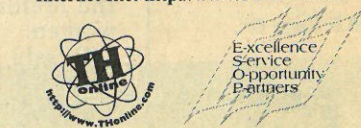
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