

GER Ron Hicks Honors North Dakota Elk for 75 Years Service

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Elks honors 102 year-old for 75 years of service

By [Tom LaVenture](#) on Jul 28, 2015 at 11:10 a.m.

After attending two days of state convention activities, the national leader of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks took time to honor a Jamestown resident with 75 years of service to the fraternal organization.

Grand Exalted Ruler Ronald Hicks of Fredericksburg, Va., along with Jamestown Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler Merle Weatherly, stopped by Ave Maria Village on Saturday to present Loren Roberts with an Elks pin and certificate for his 75 years of service. Roberts turned 102 years old on Wednesday.

"We certainly appreciate your service to Elkdom," Hicks said. "I know you have meant a lot to us and we all stand on your shoulders now."

Hicks told Morris about his own father, now 93, who was able to be present for his grand exalted ruler ceremony at the national convention in Indianapolis earlier in July.

"It's nice to have family around," Hicks said.



Also present for the presentation was Roberts' family. They visit him at Ave Maria where he has been a full-time resident since October 2010.

Roberts is a retired farmer who grew wheat, barley and flax on 1,200 acres in addition to raising cattle, according to his son, Randy Roberts, who now runs the same farm about 10 miles south and 10 miles west of Jamestown. Randy grows corn, wheat and soybeans.

Rita Morris, a daughter, was present with her spouse, Jim, and their daughter, Tara, who is a pharmacy student at North Dakota State University.

"Growing up we enjoyed meals at the Elks lodge and picnics in the summer," Rita said. "We have some good memories of all that."

"A lot of fun picnics," Randy said.

Their mother, Mavis, is 93 and now living at Eventide Jamestown.

Roberts said things change when he talked about his service in Elks. He recalled humble beginnings of the first Elks lodge in a Jamestown furniture store, where he said there was an open area where things were repaired.

Roberts recalled that membership was very high in the past and that it has dwindled in recent decades.

"There are a lot of things that I liked but what I would like to see is for it to get built up again," Roberts said.

"We don't have quite as many members as we did 30 years ago but we are still going strong," Hicks said.

Roberts and Hicks, a Virginia native, talked about their mutual interest in horses. Roberts said he admired horses that came from Virginia, while Hicks admired the wide open spaces that horses have to run in North Dakota.

"My grandfather used to race horses on the ice on Lake of the Isles in Minneapolis," Roberts said. "I have been riding horses since I was 4 years old."

Hicks was in North Dakota to attend the state Elks convention in Jamestown. He is touring the Elks associations in all 50 states to share a theme of "Elks pride and community focus" with a goal of reaching more communities that are not yet familiar with the Elks to inspire more membership, he said.

(Photo and text courtesy of the Jamestown Sun)