

Bugle

FALL 2025

**SUE
GRAFTON**

A PUBLICATION OF

The Honorable Order of



**Kentucky
Colonels®**



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Colonel Sue Grafton put the world of whodunit literature in alphabetical order, including 25 detective novels that followed *A is for Alibi*. Upon returning home to Kentucky, she was known for her support of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), the Kentucky Derby Museum, and the Louisville Free Public Library.

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Hub and Pete Erickson will soon celebrate Hub's 100th birthday.

From the Commanding General

Let's build a stronger Kentucky together.

The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels believes the work of nonprofits across the Commonwealth makes Kentucky stronger, and your donations support their work. The due diligence in our grant-making process and careful management of our finances ensure you can have confidence your donations are directed where they are needed most in the Commonwealth, making important investments in local communities.

Through this year's grants, we have provided a customized digital photo station for I Was Here in Lexington, therapy and sensory equipment for Orchid House in Louisville, breath alcohol testers for Fairhaven Rescue Mission in Covington, and a vehicle for Cumberland Valley Domestic Violence Services in London. These nonprofits are finding real solutions to issues facing the most vulnerable Kentuckians.

These grants are possible through the sustained support of Kentucky Colonels like John Cochran, who is featured in this issue of *Bugle*. John is a native of Marion, Kentucky, who now lives in South Carolina.

The Kentucky Colonels have a long history of supporting literacy and book projects in Kentucky. In this *Bugle*, we share the good works of the International Book Project and the Kentucky Humanities Council—as well as the story of Kentucky Colonel and mystery writer Sue Grafton.

We love to hear of multiple generations of Colonels in a family, such as the Erickson family. You'll enjoy reading about Hub Erickson (a Colonel for 64 years) and his son Pete Erickson (commissioned in 2010), and we look forward to celebrating Hub's 100th birthday.

We are building a stronger Kentucky together. Thank you, Colonels, for your service.

Cordially,

Gary W Boschert

Gary Boschert
Commanding General
HOKC 



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John P. Cochran

A Life of Innovation and Impact

Written by Colonel
Leslie M. Watkins,
Director of Major Gifts

As a young boy growing up in Marion, Kentucky, John Cochran loved to read *Popular Mechanics*. Each issue of the magazine had plans for a project. His parents could not afford the materials needed for the projects, but John managed to scavenge and piece together odds and ends that would work. In describing one of his projects, John said, "I turned a push mower upside down and used the wheels to make a go-kart."

Earning money for tuition by mowing yards and working 700 feet underground in the fluorspar mines, John attended Murray State University and earned a degree in Industrial Technology. After graduation, John's career began in 1969 as a field engineer with the electric service division of Westinghouse Electric Corporation. In this position, he traveled the United States solving warranty problems for the company.





During the Vietnam War, John joined the Air Force, signed up for Officer Training School, and was sent to Lackland Air Force Base. Because of a mix-up, he was not sent to Officer Training School and, instead, was assigned to an aircraft troubleshooting training program, a 16-week program that he finished in only six weeks. John confesses that while in this program, he went “absent without leave” to see his new bride and missed his scheduled guard duty. As his punishment, he was told to sit in a hallway for extended periods of time. While sitting there, he noticed the shelves in the day room were not well built



and asked if he could fix those instead of just sitting and he did.

Upon his transfer to Shaw Air Force Base, John cross-trained to be an education specialist, helping soldiers to earn degrees during their time in the military. In his time there, he assisted in the establishment of an on-base Golden Gate University campus. He earned his master’s in business administration from the University of South Carolina, the

first education MBA-ETV program in the nation. John petitioned the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to reduce a soldier’s required credit hours in order to override the University of South Carolina registrar and was successful.

While back in Kentucky on leave from the Air Force, John received a job offer from Kuhlman Electric Corporation in Versailles, Kentucky, a company for which he then worked for 20 years, starting as a market research analyst in 1973 and then moving into a research and

development engineer position in 1974. In this position, John developed multiple products for the utility industry, two of which were granted patents. He was the sole named inventor on one patent for a high voltage switch for which the United States Patent Office granted 58 claims of new and unique technology.

In 1977, he was promoted to assistant manager of corporate-level new business development, a group that sought and evaluated new technologies and business opportunities for acquisition and developed products offered as options available on production cars. John then moved to Associated Engineering Company to operate one of those acquisitions.

From 1979 to 1993, John served as president of Associated Engineering Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Kuhlman Corporation (NYSE), a company that manufactured instrument transformers and specialty products. Under his leadership, Associated Engineering enjoyed a compounded growth rate exceeding 12 percent for both sales and profits per year for over 14 years. John was nominated and commissioned as a Kentucky Colonel because of his work running the company, and has been a loyal donor to the Honorable Order since that time.

John co-founded Instrument Transformer Equipment Corporation (ITEC) and served as chief executive officer from 1994 to 2013. ITEC was built from a startup company into a world class supplier of instrument transformers for the utility industry. ITEC develops products including high voltage transformers and high-capacity current transformers, many of which were used in Grand Gulf I, which was the second largest nuclear plant in the United States at one time.

One of the contracts John obtained was to make generator current transformers for General Electric, and John built the equipment needed to make the transformers. Harkening back to his childhood days when he found ways to complete the projects in *Popular Mechanics* without the required materials he couldn't afford, he used materials he already had or could easily find. John said, "I've been known to create equipment with a bicycle chain, or clothes dryer wheels, or a coil leveler from a beauty shop chair." However, his specially-built equipment frequently works better than equipment for which he paid \$100,000—something employees at the plant, which he sold in 2013, point out proudly. The company is also proud that many of the companies with which it signed

new contracts believed in their products and waived any typically required trial period.

John's company was known for problem-solving. In the week before July 4, 1995, an electrical fire at the Nantahala Dam generator (run by Duke Energy) shut down the water flow that allowed white water rafting on the Nantahala River. Duke Energy contacted ITEC on the afternoon of June 26 for assistance. Duke sent the burned parts to ITEC, and, within 63 hours, ITEC had manufactured new transformers and sent them to the Nantahala Dam to be installed in time for the Independence Day activities. Transformers manufactured by the company John built are now used around the world, everywhere from Switzerland to Honduras to Saudi Arabia and China.

In 2013, ITEC was acquired by and merged into North American Transmission and Distribution Group, for which John remained a member of the board until it was sold. He also serves as Chief Executive Officer of Utility Equipment Consulting.

Through the urging of Lawrence Appley, former president of the American Management Association, John applied for and completed the

"I have an allegiance to Kentucky, and I trust the Honorable Order to find worthy nonprofits."

- Colonel John P. Cochran

Senior Executive Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management in 1991. John considered Appley a mentor and will use a statement inspired by Appley on his tombstone, which will read, "The Bible teaches you what you are to do in life & how well you should live. Then asks how well you are doing it now & shows how you can do it better in preparation for eternity."

John, who has two sons, still owns the family farm in Marion, Kentucky, and returns to the farm and to Kentucky Colonels homecoming regularly. Like John, the nonprofits supported by the Good Works Program find a way to make things work. John said, "I have an allegiance to Kentucky, and I trust the Honorable Order to find worthy nonprofits." 



K is for Kentucky, C is for Colonel, H is for... **HOMETOWN HERO!**

Written by Colonel
Leslie M. Watkins,
Director of Major Gifts

New York Times best-selling author Sue Grafton was commissioned as a Kentucky Colonel by Governor Paul Patton in December 1999. Grafton's alphabet series books, which began in 1982 with *A is for Alibi* and ended (at her death in 2017) with *Y is for Yesterday*, are international bestsellers.

Grafton was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1940 to C.W. Grafton, a municipal bond attorney who also wrote mystery novels, and Vivian Harnsberger, a former chemistry teacher. Her father, a World War II Army veteran, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and, along with Grafton's mother, became an alcoholic. In a 1993 "Saving Stories" interview for the Louis B. Nunn Center for Oral History, Grafton described her childhood as "benign neglect."

Upon graduating from Atherton High School in 1957, she followed a young man she was dating to Western Kentucky University. That relationship soon ended. After marrying during her sophomore year and having a baby during her junior year, she transferred to the University of Louisville. During her senior year, she divorced but was pregnant with another child. She eventually graduated from the



University of Louisville in 1961 with a degree in English.

Grafton's early years in college were tumultuous, but, inspired by her father, Grafton began writing. In the Nunn Center interview, she said that "the writing pulled me through." She finished her first novel by age 22. Of her seven novels, only two, *Keziah Dane* and *The Lolly-Madonna War*, were published.

While married to Al Schmidt, her second husband, whom she met while she was in graduate school at the University of Cincinnati, Grafton moved to California and worked as a file clerk for the Kern County Land Company, where she, ironically, was tested to ensure she knew the alphabet. She also worked as a cashier and in a medical clinic for indigent people.

Because she was in California, Grafton turned to screenplays when her novels were unsuccessful. She spent the next 15 years writing screenplays for television movies, including *Sex and the Single Parent*, *Mark, I Love You*, and *Nurse*. She also wrote for *Rhoda* and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. During this time, she met, collaborated with, and married Steven Humphrey, a professor of physics, who taught at the University of California Santa Barbara and, eventually, the University of Louisville.

Grafton then decided to write a series of mystery novels whose titles would follow the alphabet and began a list of all the crime-related words she knew. Now known as the "alphabet novels," these mysteries featured Kinsey

Millhone, a former cop turned private investigator. Each novel's title, except *X*, combined a letter with a crime-related word. After the publication of *G Is for Gumshoe*, Grafton was able to quit her screenwriting job and focus on the Kinsey Millhone novels. Grafton's novels have been published in 28 countries and 26 languages.

In 2000, Grafton and her husband bought Lincliff, the 1912 estate of William Richardson Belknap, located eight miles east of downtown Louisville on the Ohio River, and began restoring the grounds.

In a 2014 *Garden and Gun* interview, Grafton shared that, as an ambitious young woman, she was determined to leave Kentucky but, years later, said she "felt the pull of home," saying she had "been to a lot of places in the world. Coming back here, I realized Kentucky is quite beautiful. I'm proud to be a resident of this state."

Lincliff was originally designed by Frederick Law Olmsted's nephew, John Olmsted. After years of work, Lincliff now sports an eight-foot-high maze of blue point junipers; an in-ground sculpture of stones carved into a geometrical turf pattern, each segment bearing a different mathematical symbol (such as pi and the Dirac constant); and a koi pond inside a restored greenhouse.

Grafton also had a garden at Lincliff and grew organic asparagus, potatoes, strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries. Grafton told *Kentucky Living Magazine* in a 2007 interview that she loved Kentucky's signature

country ham salad, Derby pie, Benedictine spread, and hot brown.

In December of 2014, Grafton and her family started a new family tradition and "adopted" three families from Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), which protects the rights and well-being of children. The family shopped for and delivered wrapped packages for ten kids in the CASA program. She also supported the Kentucky Derby Museum, the Louisville Free Public Library (which received hundreds of books from G.P. Putnam's Sons given in Grafton's honor), and local literacy programs. Her advocacy extended to mentoring young women writers.

Grafton died on December 28, 2017, after a two-year battle with cancer. Among a host of over 30 prestigious awards and honors, she received the University of Louisville Distinguished Alumni Award in 1993 and the Alumna of the Year Award in 1997. She was inducted into the American Academy of Achievement and was honored as Kentucky's 2007 Distinguished American by the A.B. "Happy" Chandler Foundation. She was named a Grand Master by the Mystery Writers of America and won the Private Eye Writers of America Lifetime Achievement Award, the Ross Macdonald Literary Award, and the Cartier Diamond Dagger Award from Britain's Crime Writers' Association. In 2019, the Sue Grafton Memorial Award was established by G.P. Putnam's Sons and given by the Mystery Writers of America. 🇺🇸



"I've been to a lot of places in the world. Coming back here, I realized Kentucky is quite beautiful. I'm proud to be a resident of this state."

— Colonel Sue Grafton

INTERNATIONAL *Book Project*



Fall 2025

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The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels

Written by Rachel Ray,
Executive Director,
and Marilyn Hosey,
Development and
Communications
Coordinator

Our mission is to develop lasting partnerships with educators in underserved communities to provide books, promote literacy, and advance opportunity. We know that literacy enables people

to seek better employment, have better health outcomes, and live more fulfilling lives. IBP provides educational resources to our partners by putting books into the hands of people who need them most—those who lack access. IBP also provides humanitarian aid through book donations and programs both domestically and internationally.

IBP was founded in 1966 by Harriet Van Meter after she saw a need for books during a trip to India. When

she returned home to Kentucky, she wrote the editor of the *Hindu Times* and offered to send books to anyone who wrote to her. Within weeks, she had received over four hundred letters. Early operations were volunteer-driven, with books sorted and shipped from her home.

Over the years, IBP grew into an organized effort, with thousands of books shipped to schools, libraries, and communities in need worldwide. Since 1966, IBP has

shipped over eight million books to 168 countries.

Worldwide, more than 750 million adults are illiterate, meaning they cannot read simple sentences or write their own names. According to the Appalachian Learning Initiative, almost 60% of Kentuckians read below an eighth-grade level, and nearly 30% read below a third-grade level. Childhood literacy is especially important—early literacy skills directly impact a child’s future academic success. Adding just 75 books to a low-income home enables a child to perform 1.5 grades better than a child living in a home without books.

In many regions of the world, the biggest hurdle to literacy is simply access to educational materials. Many of the partners we serve live in book deserts—areas where the availability of printed books is scarce. Often, these regions are also economically disadvantaged, and those living there may lack

transportation or funds to travel to purchase books. IBP tackles this issue by sending books in creative and unconventional ways. Our books have been delivered to remote areas on the backs of yaks, strapped to motorcycles, and loaded into canoes.

IBP never sends just a random load of books. Our staff of four and dedicated volunteers personally examine each book for quality before sorting them into specific categories. We never send books with water damage, broken spines, or other serious damage. Our goal is for the books we send to last as long as possible, and we believe that those who have the least access to books deserve books of the highest quality since they may not be able to receive more for a long time. Our partners can request specific types of books—for example, a 20-foot sea container full of recent medical textbooks for a medical school in Bosnia and Herzegovina or a 40-foot sea container full of children’s books

for schools in Ethiopia. We strive not to pass on what we call the “burden of disposal.” Our partners don’t need just any books they can get; they need books that will help them serve their communities in a meaningful way.

The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels is a partner in every large shipment we send; thanks to much-needed funding provided by the Colonels in 2016, IBP was able to purchase a Toyota forklift. Since 2016, every pallet we have loaded onto a truck—over 220—has been thanks to the Kentucky Colonels. Additionally, the Colonels’ funding helped purchase our sorting bins and book carts that we use for every donation that comes through our door. Kentucky Colonels’ funding has quite literally made it possible for IBP to do what we do.

Last year, IBP shipped over 156,000 books worldwide, benefitting over 150,000 individuals, from Uganda to Poland to the Philippines to



"Since 2016, every pallet we have loaded onto a truck—over 220—has been thanks to the Kentucky Colonels."

— Rachel Ray and Marilyn Hosey





Mexico—as well as right here in Kentucky, sending over 30,000 books to schools, prisons, senior centers, and other community organizations throughout the state in 2024. We also support our local community through our three literacy and cultural programs, all provided at no cost to participants:

Books in the Bluegrass partners with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, One Parent Scholar House, and Kentucky Refugee Ministries to provide families with a curated home library.

Books as Bridges (BaB) pairs local and international classrooms in a cultural literacy exchange of letters, cultural items, and books. Our BaB coordinator teaches lessons to our local partner schools on the general history, geography, arts, and food of the partner country.

Globetrotters, a weeklong summer camp for students ages 7-13, teaches cultural awareness and understanding by teaching students about the customs and traditions

of regions of the world through immersive lessons that feature food tastings, arts and crafts, dance, music, and more.

As we prepare to embark on our 2025 season of Globetrotters camps, we are grateful to the Kentucky Colonels for helping transform an unusable, overgrown side yard into a paved space for our campers to have lunch, play games, or work on crafts, complete with sturdy picnic tables and umbrellas.

We also operate a bookstore out of our facility on Delaware Avenue in Lexington, Kentucky, that provides revenue to support our mission. Books are priced at only \$5 per hardcover and \$3 per paperback and are in like-new condition, making acquiring quality books more accessible for our patrons and neighbors.

IBP's staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers believe that literacy is the foundation for a more equitable and empowered world. At IBP, every program—from global book

shipments to local educational initiatives—is rooted in our belief that access to quality reading materials can transform lives. Servus Francis Ananda Chipukunya, our partner in Malawi with Going Home Africa Ministries and recipient of a 40-foot container of books that are being distributed throughout Malawi at this writing, extended his thanks to IBP with the words, “We had a dream [of books] and now we have reality.” International Book Project is thrilled that the Kentucky Colonels are a partner in making these dreams come true. 🇰🇪



KENTUCKY HUMANITIES:

Telling Kentucky's Story



Written by
Colonel Marianne
Stoess, Assistant
Director, Marketing
and Public Relations

Across Kentucky's 120 counties, there are myriad stories that make up the tapestry of Kentucky's history and culture. Kentucky Humanities is dedicated to preserving the

stories, voices, and heritage of our beloved Commonwealth. Kentucky Humanities is more than just an advocate for literature and history—it is a bridge connecting Kentuckians to their past, present, and future through storytelling, education, and community engagement.

Kentucky and storytelling go hand in hand. From the front porches of

small towns to the bustling streets of Lexington, Louisville, Paducah, and Pikeville, narratives have shaped the identity of the Bluegrass State. Kentucky Humanities embraces this tradition, ensuring that the voices of all Kentuckians—past and present—are heard and celebrated.

The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels has been a long-time





supporter of one of Kentucky Humanities' most recognized programs, Kentucky Chautauqua®, which brings history to life through historically accurate live performances. These one-person dramas transport audiences to another time, allowing them to experience the struggles, triumphs, and legacies of Kentuckians—both famous and unknown—who shaped our state.

Whether they feature a pioneer, a civil rights leader, or a literary icon, these performances take audiences both young and young at heart on a trip back in time.

Kentucky Humanities doesn't just tell stories—it empowers communities across the state through educational programming. Prime Time Family Reading® encourages literacy by bringing families together to read and discuss

books. This initiative fosters a love for reading while strengthening family bonds, ensuring that the next generation of Kentuckians grows up with a deep appreciation for literature and learning.

Kentucky Humanities at the Schools brings children's authors to classrooms throughout the state, engaging young learners and sparking their curiosity through storytelling, creativity, and interactive discussions. By connecting students with accomplished writers, the program cultivates a love for reading, encourages imagination, and inspires young minds to explore the power of words. Schools receive copies of the authors' books for their library, or students receive personalized copies of the books for their home library. Supporters like the Honorable Order of



Kentucky Colonels allow Kentucky Humanities to bring this program to classrooms throughout the state at no cost to the school.

While Kentucky's larger cities have access to museums, theaters,



"The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels has been a long-time supporter of one of Kentucky Humanities' most recognized programs, Kentucky Chautauqua®..."

— Colonel Marianne Stoess



and a plethora of cultural events, rural communities often struggle to provide similar opportunities for residents. Kentucky Humanities works tirelessly to bridge this gap, bringing Smithsonian traveling exhibits to small towns, organizing Speakers Bureau presentations in local libraries, and sponsoring book discussions at community bookstores.

Whether it's a discussion on Appalachian literature or an exhibit on American history, Kentucky Humanities works to ensure that no community is left behind.

For more than 53 years, the Kentucky Humanities Council has been serving the Commonwealth, all 120 counties. From 2020 to 2024 alone, Kentucky Humanities sponsored nearly 2,500 events, reaching more than three million Kentuckians. These initiatives have strengthened communities, preserved history, and inspired countless individuals.

Kentucky Humanities is more than an organization. It is the voice of authors, the passion of educators, and the curiosity of students. It is the celebration of literature at the Kentucky Book Festival, the awe of a child watching history come to life, and the quiet reflection of a reader lost in a story.

As Kentucky Humanities continues its work, it reminds us all that stories matter. They shape identities, build connections, and inspire change. And in Kentucky, where storytelling is woven into the fabric of everyday life, Kentucky Humanities ensures that these stories will never be forgotten.

Learn more about Kentucky Humanities, its programs, and how you can participate and support its work throughout the state at kyhumanities.org. 



Father and Son COLONELS



Written by Colonel
Leslie M. Watkins,
Director of Major Gifts

"He has been the guiding light for me," is how Colonel Pete Erickson describes his father, Colonel Hub Erickson, who has been a Colonel for 64 years and will celebrate his 100th birthday in a few months.

Colonel Hub Erickson was born in Chicago during the "Roaring Twenties" to a loving home. He said his mother, who had attended school until age 16, was a saint. After leaving school to go to work as a telephone operator, she met Hub's

father, a successful boat builder and designer of marine equipment, who had just opened the first Boat Mart, where all makes of boats were displayed and experienced salespeople showed interested customers around.

Hub said, "We lived the good life until the stock market crashed, and the Depression hit in 1929. We lost almost everything." Fortunately, his parents had nearly paid for their home and had savings, so they were able to get by while his father tried to figure out what could be done to save the Boat Mart and the participating boat builders. Noticing

people still enjoyed looking at the boats even if they couldn't afford them and needing a stimulant to support the Boat Mart and the boat builders until the market opened up, Hub's father closed the Boat Mart, eliminating that part of the builders' overhead for the year, and used the savings to produce a major public event where boat builders could show off their new models and generate new orders to keep them going. That event was the beginning of the Chicago National Boat Show.

Hub said the minimal income generated kept a roof over their heads and put some food on the

table, but his parents still had to scrape by to pay the bills. As Hub and his older sister grew up, they, like most families, learned to “make do” during the depression. In those days, children did not typically receive allowances, so Hub found ways to earn money. He delivered weekly magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post* or *Collier’s* magazine on his bicycle and bought a balsa model carving kit of a plane or boat with the money he saved. Over the years, he amassed a substantial collection of airplanes and boats. His heroes were pilots in the annual air races or drivers in the INDY 500, especially those who participated in both. He loved to play “Piggy Move-Up,” a baseball game, with the neighborhood kids.

When Hub turned 17 and had just entered his senior year in high school, World War II was at its peak, and, with his father’s reluctant approval and an understanding with the high school that he would still receive his diploma when his class graduated, he joined the Navy. He immediately applied for Aviation and Flight Training, eventually received his wings and commission, and, four years later, when the war had ended, decided the Navy would be his lifetime career.

Shortly thereafter, however, Hub learned his father was seriously ill. He took his discharge and went home to help his father settle his affairs and turned the Boat Show over to new owners. Once that was done, he teamed up with his father’s long-time associate, Len Zimmerman, under the name of Exhibition Contractors, to provide all the necessary labor and services needed to move major events in and out of Navy Pier, which was owned by the City of Chicago, unstaffed, and the only major event hall available in the city.

When well-known show manager A.B. Coffman had a massive stroke in the spring of 1950, just before three

major trade shows he had scheduled, Coffman’s longtime associate, Ruth Hall, gathered representatives of those shows, including Hub, to decide what to do—with the temporary solution being that Hub would work with Hall at the shows, and Zimmerman would stay in their home office. After three successful shows, A. B. Coffman Associates was born. Over the years, all five of the Hub’s children worked at the exhibitions during the summers. Eventually, the company rented the Navy Pier, and the Chicago National Premium Show was born. Over 70 years later, the company has been renamed Hall-Erickson, Inc. and is still in operation, with Pete at the helm.

Hub said that he is most proud of the family he and Joan, his wife of 70 years, created. He described her as his strength, leading with a quiet confidence. Their oldest son, John, who is visually handicapped, won the NASTAR National Skiing Championship for blind skiers, graduated from Notre Dame University, and received a master’s degree in business administration from Northwestern University. His twin brother and Kentucky Colonel, Pete, also graduated from Notre Dame University after studying architecture in Italy. Karen graduated from Marquette University; JoAnne graduated from the University of Cincinnati; and Mary graduated from Michigan State and later received a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Chicago.

Hub recalls being stunned when, in March of 1961, during a celebration banquet, an exhibitor announced that Governor Bert Combs had commissioned him and Joan as Kentucky Colonels. Hub said, “It has been one of my life’s greatest honors. I really don’t know what is meant by ‘good works’ or how that differs from just ‘living a good life,’ which to me has always meant... trying your best to be there for ‘the guy next door’.”

Hub said he was fortunate in business and able to start a family foundation in 1985, allowing his family to support wonderful organizations in the Chicago area and elsewhere over the last 40 years. “The foundation is now run by my children and grandchildren and has been one of my life’s great blessings. As the saying goes, ‘We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give,’” he said.

Pete, who was commissioned as Colonel in 2010, said, “My earliest memory of the Kentucky Colonels was seeing the certificate hanging on the wall of our family room when I was in grammar school and thinking that Dad must be pretty important to be a ‘Colonel’ in whatever army this was. Of course, I learned soon after that the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels was a charitable organization with a mission to support non-profits in Kentucky that are impacting millions of lives every year. But it wasn’t until I attended the Colonels Homecoming Weekend back in 2010 that I fully appreciated the fraternal aspect of the organization and the genuine respect and camaraderie that was shared by all Colonels who come together to support and advance the Good Works program in the state.”

Pete said his dad has been an example to their family of the importance of service in their daily lives and of giving back, devoting a good deal of his time, talent, and treasure to support numerous organizations during his 64 years as a Colonel. He said, “I know Governor Combs would be pleased.” 🇺🇸

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

— Col. Hub Erikson





Because a Colonel Gave...

...from Ashland to Paducah, 4 million Kentuckians benefit from the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels' Good Works Program. Children, veterans, people with disabilities, the hungry, and the homeless all find help through the services of 333 nonprofits receiving grants from us this year.

A commission as a Kentucky Colonel is the highest civilian honor a Kentucky governor can bestow. And many Colonels consider annual or monthly contributions to the Honorable Order to be a continuation of the altruistic activity that earned them that commission.

If you are a Kentucky Colonel, please consider a contribution to the Good Works Program. Call us or visit KyColonels.org, today.

2025
\$2.5 Million
333 Grants



The Honorable Order of
**Kentucky
Colonels®**

Since 1951
\$70.5 Million
9,156 Grants