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Alumni Reflect on Public Service

Since graduation, Lena Jantz Heikes (Home Economics Education '54) and Kenneth W. (Ken) Heikes (B. S. Business '55) have been involved in public service. Now retired and living in Billings, MT, they continue their community service, particularly in education. The Heikes are lifetime members of the Idaho State University Alumni Association and regularly contribute to it as well as to the Idaho State University Foundation.

They were married in June 1955 in Boise and lived in Pocatello until 1965 when they moved to Billings. Their two sons, Craig and Brian, were born in Pocatello and both graduated in engineering from Montana State University. They live in Colorado, and each has two children.

Lena Heikes taught home economics at American Falls High School for two years and in junior high schools in Pocatello for two more years. After taking time off to be a "stay-at-home" mother, she then taught fourteen years at a junior high school in Billings. She retired in 1988.

In addition to her teaching, Lena Heikes was involved with professional home economics and education associations. She maintains a substantial and organized button collection and belongs to the National Button Society. As a volunteer, she makes presentations about "buttons" to various community organizations. In Pocatello, she was active in her church. She continued her church and volunteer work in Billings and, in 2000, completed a life long goal of preparing a manuscript about her family's history.

Ken Heikes was the headwaiter (student manager) of the old Dining

Hall (Burton's Beanery) during his senior year at ISU. After graduation, he worked as an internal revenue agent for five years, an accountant in the Bursar's Office at Idaho State University for three years, and a public accountant for three years (during which time he passed the CPA examination). Heikes served as the Administrative Vice President of Eastern Montana College (now Montana State University-Billings) for twenty-six years and was a part-time planned giving officer at the Foundation of Montana State University-Billings for three and a half years. He also worked with former ISU President Carl McIntosh after he became President of Montana State University at Bozeman. Heikes retired in 1995. At the time of his retirement as Administrative Vice President in 1991, an article on the editorial page of *The Billings Gazette* saluted him: "Heikes is an exemplary public servant. We were fortunate he chose to live here. We are pleased that he intends to remain in Billings. We hope he will continue his active involvement in the community."

He began serving his community in Pocatello where he was treasurer and the president of his church congregation, a director for the ISU Alumni Association, and a member of various United Way committees. Heikes continued his active church work in Billings, serving as treasurer of his congregation. He also served many years on the Billings Parking Commission, the last several as its chair, and the Billings Chamber of Commerce, where he chaired the legislative affairs committee. Heikes was a director of the Big Sky Economic Development Authority for six years, including one term as its president. He

was also active in regional and national higher education professional organizations, including the steering committee to rewrite the business officer's "bible," *College and University Business Administration*, published in 1992.

Heikes looks back on his employment in the ISU Bursar's Office and fondly refers to Bill Bartz and Phil Eastman as his mentors. The Heikes travel about sixty days a year to different parts of the world "to see things we've often read about or seen on television. The personal visits add to our perspective of those places the next time we read or see pictures of places we have been."

In addition to sharing insight into their lives of community service, the Heikes related a hair-raising occurrence that will be familiar to some readers, particularly their friends and acquaintances. In May 1966, after Ken Heikes transferred to Billings, Lena Heikes accompanied former ISU faculty member Don Kline and his wife Anne in a small airplane to Billings to attend former ISU Dean of Education Stanley Heywood's inauguration as President of Eastern Montana college. The airplane, piloted by Kline, was forced down by inclement weather on Mt. Two Top, southwest of West Yellowstone, MT. Although friends and family spent anxious hours before the downed craft was found, all survived. Lena suffered a compound fracture of both bones in her left leg.