

Gladys C. Pederson, 92, lifelong resident of Ward County and former longtime county auditor, died Monday, October 13, 2008, in a Minot nursing home.

She was born March 11, 1916, in Minot, a daughter of John and Tilda (Torgerson) Pederson. She was raised and educated in Deering, Surrey and Donnybrook, graduating from Donnybrook High School in 1935. She continued her education at Minot Business College.

In 1937, Gladys began a career in county government that would last nearly 44 years, working first as a typist, then as a stenographer and as deputy Ward County auditor. In 1949, she was elected as the first woman auditor for Ward County, a position she would hold for the next 32 years, retiring in 1981. In addition to her post as county auditor, she served as a technical advisor to the State Legislative Research Subcommittee on election laws revisions. She also was an instructor in a certificate short course for municipal and county finance officers throughout North Dakota. She was a member of the Defense Delivery Project Committee of the North Dakota Bar Association, formulating rules for indigent defense. She also was a member of the Fee Arbitration Committee for the North West Judicial District.

She was a member and past president of the Minot Business and Professional Women's Club, of which she was named Woman of the Year in 1962 and 1981. Gladys was a member and former treasurer of the Minot Status of Women Commission, past member, president and legislative committee chairman of the North Dakota Auditors Association, past president of the YWCA Board, and past president of the City and County Municipal Federal Credit Union, which awarded her its Certificate of Meritorious Service. In 1981 she was awarded the Outstanding Citizen "Genie" Award from the Minot Chamber of Commerce. Her Scandinavian Heritage was a big part of her life and she was a very proud member of the Sons of Norway Thor Lodge and the Scandinavian Heritage Association for over twenty years. She and her sisters, Esther and Ida, donated the clavivova to the Thor Lodge when that organization moved to their new location on Broadway.

Gladys had a passion for county government and may have been the consummate civil servant. She was so remarkable in her prime as county auditor that she often was regarded more as a member of the Board of Ward County Commissioners than as the board's assistant. She sat with the board at all of its meetings. She was very knowledgeable about the laws governing county finances, and so careful in her definition of fiscal responsibility that the board leaned heavily on her skills. She was the ultimate source of information of all things about county governance and always exercised her duties within the bounds of the auditor's responsibilities.

Gladys was a member of Zion Lutheran Church, where she served in various capacities ranging from Sunday School teacher, assistant superintendent to various committees and offices on the church council. She served on the boards of the YWCA, the Souris Valley United Way and the City and County Federal Credit Unit.

In a brief memoir written after her retirement, Gladys noted with particular pride the achievements of women in the history of Minot because of their leadership in countless areas. She acknowledged specific women and wrote of the influence they had and the contributions they made from the earliest days of the region's history. Her modest "claim to fame," as she termed it, was in being the county's first woman auditor.



*In Loving Memory
Of
Gladys C. Pederson
1916-2008*