

## Reflections from a past president

*The 2007 annual meeting included a special tribute to an 18-year commitment*

BY RON LAYCOCK

I attended my first annual meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation in Bozeman, Montana, in 1989. It was my first introduction to the foundation's membership—its "family." One of the people I met was Jerry Garrett, who had come up with the idea of starting to plan for the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Upon his invitation, I agreed to become a member of the Bicentennial Committee. Little did I know that it would be an 18-year commitment!

The Bicentennial Committee started out as a foundation committee but soon spun off into its own 501(c)3 organization we called the Bicentennial Council. The Bicentennial Council had its ups and downs and faced many challenges, yet it was successful in its efforts. When the council closed its books earlier this year, endowments were set up to fund Native American language preservation and trail stewardship. The foundation received \$1.6 million for a trail stewardship trust to support stewardship programs in the spirit of the bicentennial.

In 1992, at my fourth annual meeting, Barb Kubik asked if I would be chairman of the foundation's Chapter Liaison Committee. I saw the numbers grow from eight chapters to nearly 40. During this time, the foundation also grew and matured. In 1992, we didn't have staff or an office, only a post office box. We now have a professional staff and an office in Great Falls, Montana.

I have served as a committee member and chairman,



Ron and Ione Laycock displayed the quilt, hand-made by their daughter LeAnn, with signatures of family members and friends Ron has made during his 18 years as a member of foundation committees and its board of directors.

board member, officer and president of the foundation. These have been wonderful, rewarding years and I've met many fine people and have made many friends in the Lewis and Clark "family."

The annual meeting in Charlottesville was my last meeting as an officer or committee chairman. My family made sure it was a memorable meeting.

Following the annual meeting's opening ceremonies and before the evening's program

began, my son Mike and daughter LeAnn took the stage. Following a beautiful and, at times, humorous tribute by Mike, LeAnn made a special presentation. She is an accomplished quilter and presented me with a beautiful quilt. Each of the 90 squares had the signature of a family member or a foundation friend I have made over the years.

My daughter, my wife Ione, and Carol Bronson had contacted friends to obtain their signatures for the quilt squares without my knowledge.

Many of the signatures came back with notes, letters, photos and anecdotes, so my daughter-in-law Diane created a scrapbook to go along with the quilt. We do have a problem though. So many signatures came back that LeAnn kept adding squares to the quilt. It's queen-size-plus and doesn't fit our bed. It's more than eight feet long and our walls are only eight feet. What a nice problem to have!

I had mixed emotions that night, and still have. I'm very proud and very humbled by what my family and friends arranged that night. It was truly an evening I'll never forget.