

Noel Stratmoen

When Noel Stratmoen signs on, he signs on for the long haul.

He moved to Northfield as a young married man in 1965. He signaled early on that he was willing to do his share of the community's heavy-lifting. He volunteered for public service. He poured his creative energy into the fledgling Northfield Arts Guild. He joined the Northfield Historical Society. He invested his time and talent in his church. He entertained local audiences. He fixed things for family and friends.

More than 45 years later, Noel is doing the very same things.

Longtime friend Myrna Johnson attributes Noel's community involvement to his small-town experience, growing up on the plains of South Dakota. She says working for community benefit is buried in his DNA.

"He has more energy than anyone I've ever come across." She said.

Noel served on the Northfield Planning Commission and the city Design Advisory Board.

Since joining Bethel Church, he's taken his turn serving on every major committee and served as steward, trustee, council member, and congregational president. He still serves as a lay assistant.

As a member of the Northfield Arts Guild, he has performed in plays and musicals – all six 'Jesse' productions as a member of the 'Jesse' quartet – and when he hasn't been on stage, he's volunteered his time building sets.

Noel's most prominent contribution to the community has been his more than 30 years of service on the Northfield School Board. Since being elected in 1980, he has been a thoughtful, passionate advocate for public education, a steady guiding force, helping seven different superintendents negotiate the uneven financial terrain of public education. He has served as vice-chair and chair during a remarkable tenure.

And when he's not been shaping public policy for our schools, he continues to entertain as part of a Barbershop quartet.

Swr/3/27/11