Lon Clair “Clair” Christensen, former University of Nevada Extension employee, died Nov. 16, 2009 in Davis, Calif. Born June 26, 1926 in Thatcher, Utah, he was the great-grandson of Danish “hand cart” Mormon pioneers of the 1840s. He served as part of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints mission to California, where he met his future wife. The couple married in 1952. He raised 5,000 turkeys from year to year to put himself through school at Utah State University, then went on to enlist in the agricultural extension program in Nevada where he had a 20-year career. Raised on a farm, he retired as a community development specialist for UC Davis working with small farms.

He was loyally committed to his church and family, and admired his colleagues at UC Davis. The family is thankful to the many friends and health professionals who helped their Dad in his final years.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Verona Christensen; three sons, Lynn, Keith and David; and a daughter, Carla (Andy). He is also survived by 20 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Philip J. Gillette, emeriti employee, died Jan. 4, 2010. Philip was the financial officer of the medical school when it was chartered in 1969 and served as assistant to the dean and as health systems administrator until 1987. He was a lecturer in the College of Business Administration, a member of the task force that developed the Master of Public Health program at the University, secretary to the School of Medicine/Washoe Medical Center Liaison Planning Committee, consultant to medical school clinical chairmen, and faculty council secretary for the School of Medicine. He is considered one of the founding officers of the University of Nevada School of Medicine.

Gillette also chaired the Governor’s State Health Plan Development Committee and was a board member officer of the Washoe County Asthma Coalition, the Crisis Call Center, the Northern Nevada Cancer Council and the National Medical Care Seminar Group. He was regent for the American College of Healthcare Executives for Nevada and served as editor of Health Coalition News.

Phil, as he was known to all, loved his family, his faith and working. He appeared to be tireless, remaining engaged with many organizations well into his 80s even as he dealt with mounting health issues from cancer.

In the last few years, he served on the HealthInsight advisory council for Nevada and Nevada Board of Directors, chaired the Angel Kiss Foundation Advisory Board, served as a Sanford Center for Aging community advisory board member and chairman, and gave his time as coordinator of the Resident Physician Practice Management course.

After Hurricane Katrina he was instrumental in his church, Trinity Episcopal in Reno, becoming involved with Episcopal Relief & Development, an organization that provides disaster relief and works to combat poverty.

Among other honors, in 2008 he was given the Sanford Center for Aging’s Living the Legacy Award, which recognizes long-time commitment to improving the lives of Nevada elders.

He was preceded in death by wife Geneva (Petersen) Gillette; they were married Sept. 1, 1946. He is survived by children Richard and Denise; and grandchildren Jennifer, Allison, Ryan, Sean, Paul, Alex and Joel.

David J. Morrow, School of Journalism business chair, who came to Reno last August after spending eight years as editor of TheStreet.com, died Feb. 1. The 49-year-old was diagnosed with a fast-progressing cancer in early January.

Morrow was the first Reynolds Endowed Chair in Business Journalism at the Reynolds School of Journalism and Center for Advanced Media Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. “Although he began work only in August, it feels as if Dave had been here for years,” said Jerry Ceppos, Reynolds School dean. “His gregarious nature, his enthusiasm and his desire to move quickly made him an important part of the faculty from his first day here.”

Before TheStreet, Morrow worked for The New York Times, SmartMoney and Fortune. “Dave ran his classes the way you run a good newsroom: high energy, lots of ideas — really good ideas — and most of all fun,” Ceppos said.

A sentiment echoed by Jim Cramer, analyst and founder of TheStreet.com, who recalled Morrow’s practice of singing “We’re having some fun, at TheStreet.com” while at work.

“Dave Morrow would sing that phrase, his phrase, every day around these halls,” Cramer writes. “He’d sing it first thing in the morning, sing it as he came by our desks, to check in, to see if all was good, to see if there was anything that needed doing, to see if he could do anything better. Sing it to see if we could do anything better. Together.”

Reynolds School faculty and staff recall hearing Morrow singing to first-year journalism students—as they were writing on deadline.

Dr. George T. Smith, founding dean of the University of Nevada School of Medicine died March 20, 2010 in Florida after a brief battle with lung cancer. Dr. Smith was instrumental in gaining support from Governor Paul Laxalt and Nevada’s medical community to establish a medical school in the state.

After gaining the governor’s support for the fledgling school, he solicited funding from large foundations on the East Coast. He met with administrators and medical staff of Nevada’s hospitals to persuade them to allow medical students to interact with patients and recruited physicians to be teachers. When the School of Medical Sciences opened, he had gathered 14 full-time faculty and more than 200 community physicians committed to giving their best for the school and its students.

He left the School of Medicine in 1977 to become dean of the medical school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and later advised the Shah of Iran and served in the Veterans’ Administration. He held faculty appointments at Tufts University and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, along with administrative and advisory positions for several medical centers and associations. He returned to the School of medicine in 2009 to celebrate its 40th anniversary. Donations in Dr. Smith’s honor can be made to the University of Nevada School of Medicine by contacting Stefanie Scoppettone, (775) 682-9143 or scops@unr.edu.

Rachel McNeil Ebet ’47 (arts and science), died Jan. 18, 2010 after a long battle with Alzheimer’s. Rachel was born in Virginia City, Nev., to a long line of Nevada pioneers on Dec. 9, 1925. Rachel was the younger of two daughters of Harry and Ethel W. McNeil.

She graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno, in 1947 and was president of the Gamma Phi Beta sorority. On June 24, 1951, Rachel married her college sweetheart, William H. Ebert, and they moved to San Jose, Calif. The couple later settled in Saratoga, Calif. Following in her mother’s footsteps, Rachel taught school in Nevada and California.
Rachel, a devoted Christian, was dedicated to her family and the care of others. A scholar of the Bible, she taught women’s Bible study for a number of years. Devoted wife of the late William H. Ebert, Rachel is survived by her children, James (Sarah), Thomas (Nancy) and Cathy (Lois Ann Porter); sister Harriet (Paul); nephew Jeff; and five grandchildren, Daniel, Robert, Christine, Shane, Shannon (Matt); and three great-grandchildren, Briana, Trevor and Cassidy.

Andrea (Ginnocchio) Pelter ’50 (business administration) died Jan. 25, 2010. Those who knew Andi know her hallmark was her unwavering principles, entrepreneurial spirit, enthusiasm for life, propensity for hard work, directness, balanced by a deprecating humor, positive thinking and all-consuming optimism; and devotion to her husband of 52 years, family, friends, Reno Iron Works, the University, our Reno community, a student needing a scholarship or encouragement, and her lifelong, consummate faith in God. Andi died in the comfort of her home after returning from a typical day at Reno Iron Works. She had been ill with a heart condition for several years.

A third generation Renoite, Andrea was born on Feb. 21, 1929, to Andrew and Viola (Chilton, Barnes) Ginocchio. Her maternal grandfather was a master car builder for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Her paternal grandfather was a master car builder for the Southern Pacific. Her great-grandfather was a steel works worker at the Southern Pacific Railroad. Her great-grandparents were among the first wave of immigrants from Italy to California. Andrea attended Catholic schools in Reno through the 8th grade. In 1946, she transferred to the University of Nevada, Reno, where she received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business administration in 1947 and 1949, respectively.

They went through Reno schools together and received their bachelor’s degrees from the University of Nevada. Upon graduation, Andrea, with the sponsorship of Senator Pat McCarran, was accepted in the U.S. Department of State, spending a year in post graduate work in Washington D.C. followed by two years assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Lima, Peru. The Pelters were married at Trinity Episcopal Church in Reno, in 1954, establishing a relationship of unparalleled love and devotion for the following 52 years.

Andrea Pelter is the only woman in the U.S. to hold the highest level of certification from the American Institute of Steel Contractors. Reno Iron Works is the only company to hold such a license in Nevada’s history. As an appointee of both Governor List and Governor Bryan, Andrea represented management on the Nevada State Industrial Insurance System for many years. She served over 26 years on the U.S. 9th District Court judicial selection panel. She has served on selection committees from Washoe County School Superintendents to college presidents. Both she and her father served on the board of the Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce.

Andrea met her future husband, Bill Pelter, met in Marcela Barkley’s 4th grade class at Mount Rose School, the class that launched the Junior Ski Program, in 1939. Andi died in the comfort of her home after returning from a typical day at Reno Iron Works. She had been ill with a heart condition for several years.

John D. “Jack” Mackey, Sr. ’53 (business administration) died March 4, 2010 in Marin, Calif., after a brief battle with leukemia. He was a founding member of the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation in 1981 and served two terms on the Foundation Board of Trustees (1981-89; 1997-2002). Jack graduated from Reno High School in 1948 and from Nevada in 1953. From 1954-55, he became an Army artillery officer in Japan before moving to Southern California to begin his investment career. Because of his passion for literature, he earned a master’s in English in 1965 from the University of Southern California.

Andrea was predeceased by her parents, brothers and sisters. She is survived by her children, James (Sarah), Thomas (Nancy) and Cathy (Lois Ann Porter); sister Harriet (Paul); nephew Jeff; and five grandchildren, Daniel, Robert, Christine, Shane, Shannon (Matt); and three great-grandchildren, Briana, Trevor and Cassidy.

Memorial contributions may be made to the College of Engineering, University of Nevada Medical School, or the Orvis School of Nursing at the University of Nevada, Reno, NV 89557.

LOOK ONLINE
For the full text of Remembering Friends visit: www.unr.edu/silverandblue

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In his more than 50 years in the stock and bond business, he served as an investment advisor for the State of Nevada Public Employees Retirement System, a member of the California State Commission on Corporate Governance, president of the Board of Trustees of the College of Marin, Chair of the USF Center for the Pacific Rim, and other offices. In 1996 he was named “San Francisco Investment Banker of the Year,” an award he greatly prized. Jack is survived by his wife, Mamie Mackey, and his children Sheila Mackey, John and Cheri Mackey, and Lisa and Rick Parsons; and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and step-children. His son Brent predeceased him in 1983.