

## The 2019 MGFA Community Service Award

The Minnesota Grain and Feed Association annually recognizes a member of the association who has demonstrated exceptional community service and leadership. Past recipients have provided good examples of community leadership and commitment, in the form of community, church and civic group volunteerism, serving as mayor, fire chief or county commissioner, serving on the school board, etc.

### The recipient of the 2019 MGFA Community Service Award is Valerie Ahlers.

Agriculture has always been part of Valerie (Breuer) Ahlers life and if she has her way, it always will be. Growing up on an “all-purpose” farm as the oldest of 4 girls, she got her start driving a John Deere G at age 5 and went on to calf chores, milking, hauling grain, etc. Her dad, Russell Breuer, was a tremendous example of an ag and civic supporter and taught by example.



After earning a degree in Home Economics Education with a specialization in Extension Education, she married Dave Ahlers and farmed about 700 acres and milked cows on his family farm. For 10 years Valerie taught half days in the Lake City and Wabasha-Kellogg School Districts. The other half she worked part-time filling positions at the FSA office, Extension Office and as the bookkeeper at Dill Company. At Dill Company, she loved the challenge of never knowing what the day would bring (no matter what was planned) and working with farmers. This led to full-time employment and eventually the assistant manager position. When working at Dill Company, she and John Evers started attending Southeast Grain & Feed Dealers Assn. meetings to keep updated on industry topics and meet with fellow elevator companies and business partners. Following Les Burch’s retirement from the secretary/treasurer position, Valerie was elected to that position and has held it for nearly 20 years.

During her 14 years at Dill Co., the company installed AgVantage Software, which led to another opportunity when Dill Co. was sold to Gerken’s. Valerie went from one end of the phone line asking for help to the other end offering help. Now as an employee of AgVantage Software for over 15 years, she gets to work with customers in over 20 different states with her customer service job and she loves it.

Some of her volunteer activities include: Wabasha County Fair Board (past secretary/treasurer for 5 years) Open Class Co-chair for the last 7 years; Wabasha County Extension Committee, including chairman; 4-H parent, leader and volunteer; Wabasha County RIM committee member; Numerous Church activities; W-K Citizens Curriculum Committee; W-K Booster club-secretary/treasurer, Concessions manager; involvement in Farm Bureau and NFO; involved in Wabasha County and Regional ADA; Lake City American Legion membership coordinator; and Lake City Sportsman’s Club.

**Congratulations to Valerie Ahlers, the very deserving recipient of the 2019 MGFA Community Service Award, acknowledging her impressive record of leadership, dedicated service and volunteerism!**