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Longtime professor dies at 85

By Kevin Bottrell

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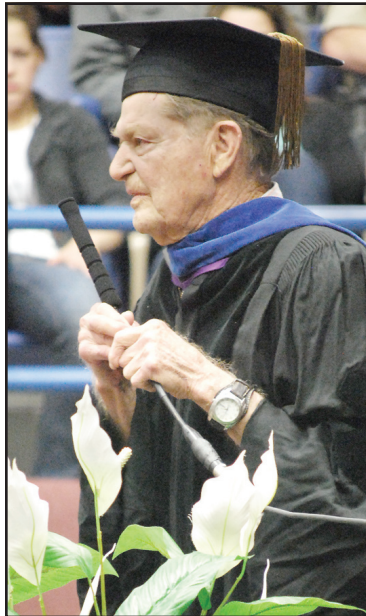
Iconic Colby Community College professor Dr. Max Pickerill died Monday at Logan County Manor in Oakley at the age of 85.

Pickerill taught math and science at Colby for 36 years – beginning in 1974 – and even after his retirement, he remained involved in the college. Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Friday at the Colby United Methodist Church. Visitation will be from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday at Harrison Chapel.

Pickerill had spend the last year in and out of hospitals and care centers. Roger Hale, a friend and former Colby College teacher, said Pickerill slipped into a coma in his final days, speaking intermittently to visitors.

Pickerill was born in 1925 in Parsons to Earl and Inez Pickerill. He and his eight siblings grew up during the Great Depression. His mother died in 1936 and his father spent three years unemployed. Pickerill had six children, three boys and three girls. Daughters, Cynthia England and Beverly Grabel, both live in Colby. He had eight grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren.

In 1943, Pickerill enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He was trained as



FILE PHOTO
Dr. Max Pickerill spoke at last year's Colby Community College graduation ceremony to much applause from the audience after being named professor emeritus.

a radioman and served on board the U.S.S. Blue Ridge, the command ship of the 7th Fleet. He was honorably discharged in May of 1946.

While in the Navy, he earned the Asiatic Pacific Area Campaign Medal, the Philippine Liberation

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Lawmakers claim progress on budget

By John Milburn

The Associated Press

TOPEKA – Legislators said they were making progress on lingering issues that prevent resolution of the 2012 Kansas budget, as private discussions resumed Wednesday on the \$14 billion spending package.

Talks broke off shortly after midnight Tuesday when the last offer from the Senate fell short of House demands for an ending balance.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Marc Rhoades said he and his Senate counterparts have cut the list of remaining sticking points to fewer than a dozen.

"I think we're making progress," said Rhoades, a Newton Republican. "The whole issue with the Senate is the ending balance."

Rhoades said remaining issues include judicial branch funding, resolving a shortfall in special education funding to satisfy federal requirements and funding for the state's KAN-Ed program that provides high-speed, broadband

Internet access to more than 400 schools, colleges, libraries and hospitals.

Three members each from the House and Senate met throughout the day Tuesday and agreed on a number of items on the budget, which covers government operations beginning July 1. However, progress stalled after a final Senate offer turned out to have a smaller ending balance than previously thought.

Senators believed their package would match a House stipulation that the budget produce \$50 million in savings. But double-checking the figures revealed the package is \$20 million short.

The House is insisting on the \$50 million in savings even as the state faces a projected shortfall. The budget is likely to cut overall state spending between 5 percent and 6 percent. Schools would take the biggest hit, but almost every state agency would see some spending cuts.

Legislators need a budget agreement to bring the 2011 session to a

See "BUDGET," Page 3

Briefly

Fitness class planned for moms

"Mommy and Me" baby fitness class will have a free opening class from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, at Fike Park. Pre- and post-natal mothers and their children can come for the free fitness class. Dads are welcome too. Signup sheets will be available for the full class. For information, call Jennifer Kramer at 443-5527.

Help plant veggies on Saturday

The Thomas County Coalition is looking for volunteers to help plant vegetables in the Community Garden starting at 9 a.m., Saturday at the K-State Experiment Station. Anyone interested should call the Regional Prevention Center at 460-8177.

College plans fishing derby

Colby Community College and the Kansas De-

partment of Wildlife and Parks will hold a Kids Fishing Derby from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, May 21, at Villa High Pond. There is no charge, but parents should register by next Wednesday. Officials from the department will be assisting and providing information on fishing topics. The college will provide bait. A drawing will be held for several prizes. For information, call Barry Kaaz at 460-5429 or Kathy Britton at 460-5550.

Red Cross wants your blood

The American Red Cross will have blood drives from noon to 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 25, and from 7:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 26, at the Colby Community Building. Go to redcrossblood.org or call (800) 733-2767, to make an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome. Donors will be entered to win one of 12 sets of tickets to the Country Stampede on Sunday, June 26, and will be entered in the national

drawing to win two passes and backstage tours to the Grand Ole Opry. For questions or to volunteer as a helper, call (785) 462-3861.

Selden car show coming in June

The Selden Community Foundation will have its 17th annual Selden Antique Tractor and Classic Car Show starting at 10 a.m. Sunday, June 5. Admission is free. Classic motorcycles and small engines are welcome. Bring your own lawn chairs. For information call Judy Rogers at (785) 386-4231.

Swedish Singers to perform here

The Young Swedish Singers will hold a free concert at 7 p.m. Monday, June 20, at the Frahm Theatre at Colby Community College. The 34-member gospel singing group from Sweden performs gospel, hymns and Swedish folk music, though most of their

program is in English. For information, contact the Trinity Lutheran Church at 462-3497.

Register teams now for Relay

The Thomas County Relay For Life will be at Dennen Field from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Friday, June 17. If you would like to have a team or be a part of one, call Irene Hartwell at (785) 443-0974.



EVAN BARNUM/Colby Free Press

Colby firefighters and Red River Commodities personnel ground outside the company's elevator on Monday so that the dumped burning sunflower shells and excess material onto the firefighters could safely put out the smoldering material.

Seeds catch fire at Red River

By Kevin Bottrell

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The Colby Fire Department had a long night Monday, battling smoldering sunflower seeds at the Red River Commodities elevator.

Fire Chief Bob McLemore said a hot bearing in a machine designed to get rid of the sunflower shells and other excess materials likely started the fire. The fire wasn't widespread, he said, staying mostly confined to two trash and dust collection bins.

When firefighters arrived on scene about 8 p.m., Red River personnel were in the process of emptying the bins into trucks, which could then dump the smoldering material on the ground where firefighters could spray it with water. It took two semi-trailers to unload the material.

There were still hot spots and some smoldering material in the "cyclone" filters on the exterior of the building. McLemore and his firefighters went to the third and fourth floors to get water on the material. The firefighters used a thermal imager to scan for hotspots in the bins and the surrounding ductwork.

McLemore said there was not a lot of room to maneuver around



Firefighters scaled the side of the Red River elevator to get water to smoldering sunflower seeds in the cyclone filter machines on the exterior of the elevator.

the cyclones, and the firefighters which was barely tall enough – ended up using a ladder truck – to shoot water into the top of the

cyclones.

McLemore said there was very little active flame. Firefighters initially had the power cut off so that there was no risk of getting entangled in active machinery. The power was turned back on at 9 p.m.

Fires in sunflower elevators are different from other grain elevators, McLemore said, because the oil content in sunflowers tends to make the dust and excess material clump together more. Because there are fewer dust particles in the air, he said, the risk of an explosion is less.

McLemore said he's seen several sunflower elevator fires, including some at an old plant that used to be in Mingo. The Red River plant is far safer, he said, because it was built specifically to process sunflowers, and the equipment is well-maintained.

"A lot of the times they take care of the fires themselves," he said.

McLemore said there was water damage to an office below the cyclones and some cut ductwork.

Both fire companies, three engines and one tanker were dispatched to the scene. The firefighters left around 2 a.m.

State swelters under unusual heat wave

WICHITA (AP) – A wave of unseasonable heat is keeping much of Kansas in its grip, and it's not expected to let go until rain and thunderstorms move into the state.

The National Weather Service reports Monday's high temperature hit 100 degrees on Monday at Wichita Mid-Continent Airport.

That's the city's earliest triple-digit reading since records have been kept.

Wichita's previous record high for May 9 was 95 degrees, set back in 1895.

Records also fell Monday in Russell, at 100 degrees, and at Salina with 101 degrees.

Authorities are investigating if the heat con-

tributed to Monday's death of a Wichita man on a roofing job in nearby Butler County. Co-workers said the 30-year-old man complained of feeling ill and passed out. He was pronounced dead at a Wichita hospital.



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