

# Reunion helps family deal with plane crash

SALINA, Kan. (AP) — Judi Mayne knew her father only from pictures.

She was only 18 months old when his life ended in a fiery plane crash on a July night in 1956.

“I was too young to really know what had happened,” Mayne said. “I never got a chance to grieve.”

He was 26 when he died. She’s now 45, a United Methodist minister in Kerrville, Texas — and finally able to make a deeper connection to her father, thanks in part to the memories of an Iowa man.

This past week, Mayne and her mother came to Salina for a reunion of the 45th Bomb Squadron.

More than 40 members of the group met Thursday through Saturday to swap stories, visit remnants of the former base, eat at their old hangouts and remember their days of flying through the blue and often windy Kansas sky.

Mayne said she began to think about meeting the men who flew with her father after her mother received an invitation to the reunion earlier this year.

After talking about it at length, they decided to attend.

Mayne, who was born at the base hospital, said it was time for her to make the connection.

“I’m 45 and those people who knew my dad aren’t getting any younger,” she said.

One of the former fliers she spent time with was Wilbur Davis of Newton, Iowa.

“He asked me if I wanted to know what he’d witnessed,” she said. “I

said yes.”

Davis, now 70, hasn’t forgotten that night: Friday, July 13, 1956.

“I can remember it as if it was last night,” he said.

Davis was 26, the same age as 1st Lt. Marion Stallings Stallings.

He knew Stallings well, because both had been assigned to the same plane.

“He was just a down-to-earth person,” he said.

“You would never have thought he was an officer.”

Davis was supposed to be flying with Stallings, Maj. Ernest Sharp and Capt. Walter Carnes that night, but at the last minute gave his seat to another flier, Lt. Carl Pattison, who recently had arrived at the Salina base and needed flight hours.

Davis said that on that particular night, B-47s were taking off every 60 seconds to perform routine training missions.

Crews were competing against each other to determine who would represent the 45th in a Strategic Air Command Bombing Competition the next month at Lockburne Air Force Base in Ohio.

After Davis gave up his seat, he said, he watched the plane taxi down the runway.

When he noticed smoke and saw the pilot had deployed the plane’s chute, he jumped into his car and drove to the end of the runway.

By then, the plane had slid along the runway and exploded when it hit an irrigation ditch in a nearby field.

“Then I got out and ran to the

scene,” he said, “The heat was tremendous. I knew there was no hope.”

Though Davis almost quit flying after that, he did return to the air and continued to fly until he left the Air Force in 1958.

Walter Wicks, another retired flier from Queensburg, N.Y., served at the air base from 1954 through 1957.

He said his wife, Deniece, was one of many who saw the flames.

He said he called her soon after the crash to tell her he had completed his flight.

“Our house was near the end of the runway.

She was sitting on our front porch and saw it,” Wicks said. “It did a job on her.”

Another frantic wife who saw the flames and smoke was Mayne’s mother, Leslie Stallings-Collier.

Five months pregnant, she was home with her daughter that night.

“I saw the flames, and I just knew,” she said, wiping away tears.

For Stallings-Collier, returning to the town where she lived as a newlywed from 1953 through 1956 was bittersweet.

“It’s been a long time, but it still hurts,” she said. “I came mostly for my daughter.”

Davis said he was was glad to see the name Stallings-Collier on the reunion roster.

“I was hoping it might be her. I was sure that she never knew what happened,” Davis said.

“I really feel great now that she knows.”

# Elderly drug costs to explode

**By Greg Toppo**  
*Associated Press Writer*

WASHINGTON — In the past eight years, Americans age 65 and older have watched their prescription drug costs double, with prices expected to more than double again in the next 10 years, a health care advocacy group said.

Without prescription drug coverage by Medicare, fewer seniors will be able to afford the dozens of prescriptions they must fill each year, said Families USA, which lobbies for universal health coverage.

A study commissioned by the group and released Monday said Americans 65 and older pay an average of \$1,205 a year for prescriptions — up from \$559 in 1992 — and will shell out \$2,810 apiece by 2010.

Prescription drugs now account for about 10 percent of seniors’ health costs — and will likely rise to 13.3 percent in 2010, the report said.

Older Americans account for only 13 percent of the nation’s population but pay 42 cents of every dollar spent on prescription drugs, it said. They also pay more per pill because their purchases account for only 34 percent of total prescriptions.

“When they go to the pharmacy, they

pay higher prices for their drugs than anyone, because there’s no one bargaining on their behalf,” said Ron Pollack, Families USA executive director.

The study said the average senior’s cost per prescription has risen dramatically, from \$28.50 in 1992 to \$42.30 now, and is projected to jump to \$72.94 in 2010.

What’s worse, Pollack said, seniors also are buying more prescriptions than ever.

He said the elderly got by on about 20 prescriptions per year in 1992. Now they buy about 29 annually, and are expected to buy about 39 by 2010.

The study was based on data gathered by Medicare, the federal health plan for the aged and disabled. Projections for future costs were developed by the PRIME Institute, a consulting group at the University of Minnesota.

Families USA is urging lawmakers to expand Medicare to cover prescription drugs. It hopes the move will provide fuller drug coverage for low-income Americans while giving the government more bargaining power to force drug manufacturers to lower their prices.

President Clinton has urged Congress to strengthen and modernize Medicare with a voluntary prescription drug benefit to all 39 million Medicare beneficiaries regardless of income.

Republican congressional leaders say the drug coverage should be reserved for the most financially needy. Their plan calls for private health plans

to offer drug benefits and government subsidies to pay drug costs for the neediest seniors.

The administration contends that would leave out 6 million Medicare beneficiaries with incomes above the poverty line.

Alan F. Holmer, president of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, or PhRMA, said much of the increase in seniors’ drug spending is driven by advanced drugs that are more effective.

“That’s good news for patients, for whom medicines are the most cost-effective form of health care,” he said. “They keep patients out of the hospital, off the surgery table, on the job and in the home.”

PhRMA spokesman Jeffrey L. Trewhitt said the report’s figures belie the hidden benefits of advanced drugs. New cardiac medications, for instance, may cost an elderly patient \$1,200 annually, but far less than a \$42,000 heart operation.

PhRMA supports expansion of drug coverage through private-sector insurance. Judith H. Bello, the group’s executive vice president, told Congress in June that lawmakers should allow free-market competition and consumer choice to contain costs.

On the Net: Families USA site: <http://www.familiesusa.org>; Medicare site: <http://www.medicare.gov>; Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America site: <http://www.phrma.org>

# Republicans vying for House seat

CAMPAIGN, from Page 1

of in-kind contributions — mostly from his wife for the \$80 filing fee and \$52 for lists of voters in Sherman and Thomas counties — while Morrison claimed none.

Morrison had \$6,760 left as of July 24 — when the reports were due to the state — while House had \$2,248. That means, the incumbent spent \$7,602, more than three times what his opponent, who ran for U.S. Senator in 1972, spent at \$2,532.

Besides the loans, House’s contributions came from farmers and a banker, Larry McCants, president of First Na-

tional. Morrison’s campaign is being financed in part by other optometrists, doctors, and prominent statewide groups and associations, including the Kansas Bankers Association, the Kansas-National Education Association (the state’s largest teachers’ union) and the Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association.

While statewide groups helped support Morrison’s campaign, they did not approach the state’s maximum contribution of \$1,000 — most were in the \$100 to \$250 range.

“I am endorsed by darn near all of the PAC groups,” said Morrison, a Colby native, adding that he thinks that’s be-

cause he is fair and honest.

House said in an earlier interview that if anyone is going to beat out Morrison, it’s going to be him because of his experience in politics and knowledge of water laws and issues.

Neither candidate got a \$1,000 contribution, though Morrison received three \$500 donations, including the Kansas Trial Lawyers and the Kansas Society of Certified Public Accountants and the teachers union. House had two for \$500, from Linda Franklin of Goodland and the Freda House Trust.

Morrison said he was surprised to have an opponent in the primary election because he doesn’t feel he has done anything to upset Republicans or Democrats in the 121st District.

“When you have someone in the same party run against someone,” he said, “usually it’s divisive.”

# Final days until election

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mal campaign.

Sherman County resident Harlan House will be running against Rep. Jim Morrison of Colby for the 121st District seats in the state House.

Both House and Morrison are Republican candidates facing off in the primary. There are no Democratic candidates for this position.

Morrison has stressed his previous service, saying that he feels he has done a good job communicating with the people he is representing.

House’s slogan is he stands for “kids and roads.” He says he wants to work with the Kansas Department of Transportation, the state Division of Water Resources, and the Department of Wildlife and Parks to get a fair representation for northwest

Kansas.

The Senate race for the 40th district seat has been a hot one from the beginning, with current Sen. Stan Clark, an Oakley photographer, facing Steve Mangan, a Tribune farmer and rancher.

Mangan says he wants to be open to the public’s concerns, and spent a good deal of his campaign touring the counties that he would be representing. Clark focused on his experience, stressing that he has served longer than two-thirds of the current senators.

Billie Flora is running in the November elections as a Democratic candidate. Flora, a life-long resident of northwestern Kansas, says she wants to make a better life for generations to come out here, focusing on schools and health care.

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