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of the towns around here are named after people we are studying they are always interested. We also learn about the Sioux tribes and the fact that Yankton has such a great historical significance (as the Dakota Territorial Capital)."

Weydert and her husband, Nick, have a blended family of five daughters: Danielle, Kacey, Brittany, McKinsey and Jill. Weydert, who grew up in the Fort Dodge, Iowa, area has two sisters, who are also teachers and two brothers.

Weydert's grandmother was a one-room schoolhouse teacher and an inspiration to her granddaughters.

"She had all kinds of fun things at her house like construction paper and reader books and fancy writing pens," she said. "We used to have so much fun writing with those pens and playing school."

Weydert also babysat, was a 4-H camp counselor and a religious education teacher when she was younger and she enjoyed being around children.

"Teaching is such a great vocation," she said. "There's never a dull moment, for me at least, some of my students might disagree, but every day there is something new to learn."

Over the years technology has enriched the teaching field with so many tools to make the classroom interactive, Weydert said.

"Who would have imagined SMART boards 30 years ago," she said. "Computers in the classroom have changed so much. We have Scholastic Weekly Readers and there are integrated links within the stories for the SMART Board so we can read about something and then watch a short clip about it or listen to what it sounds like."

All that instant information can lead to some tough choices for teachers though, Weydert said.

"We spend so much time nowadays deciding what to use because there is so much you can do," she said. "When I'm checking papers at home at night my husband asks why I didn't do that at work. There's no time to check papers at school because I'm busy during our free periods planning."

Weydert said she couldn't imagine doing anything else but teaching.

"Some people ask me if I think about retiring, but I don't know what I would do," she said.


She also wouldn't want to be teaching anywhere else.

"The Yankton School District is a jewel," she said. "Unless you've been other places you might not realize how great it is. I feel we all tend to take it for granted but I see it every day. I'm surrounded by such capable, dedicated and high functioning people every day, which makes it a great place to work."




**Teacher of the year nominees (from left): Stacy Ryken, Faydra Christensen, Becky Tasa, Paula Weydert, Todd Carr, Angela Haffner. (Courtesy Photo)**

■ by Tera Schmidt




## Simplifying Life's Most Difficult Decisions

"Dying is one of the events in life certain to occur, yet one we are not likely to plan for." We spend more time getting ready for two weeks away from work than we do for our last time on Earth" (*Time Magazine*)



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