

# Northern Lights Region 6

## Shining Star 2019



### Mary Lou Kudela

It is a great honor for our chorus [Minnesota Valley] to nominate a woman for this year's Shining Star Award whose life truly embodies the Sweet Adeline motto of "Harmonize the World." Mary Lou Kudela's tireless energy and enthusiasm, and her warmth and caring for those around her has benefitted not only our chorus and community, but also the greater Sweet Adelines community in Region 6 and beyond.

Mary Lou's Sweet Adeline journey really began with the birth of the Minnesota Valley Chorus. A charter member, her leadership and interpersonal skills were immediately put to good use, as she and the other charter members set about creating a local organization that has brought music and friendship to so many women in our community. Throughout the history of our chorus, she has held virtually every office and completed virtually every job, official and not-so-official. Among her official duties, she has served as President twice, been show chairman, and was instrumental in changing our chapter

governance from the traditional “board” model to the management “team” style. She has served on the vocal warm-up team and served as assistant director for several years under our founder, Carol Grimmer. She has worked to bring Barbershop music to young people and has been instrumental in working on our Girl Scout musical outreach program. This successful program has helped introduce Barbershop harmony to as many as 50 young girl scouts at a time. During the daylong event, which Mary Lou created, young girls get to sing, have fun with costumes and perform for their parents at the end of the day. They even enjoy the banana cream pie that is used to demonstrate the 4 parts of barbershop harmony. She has been instrumental in working with our local Men’s Barbershop chorus to produce a Christmas show featuring both the women’s and men’s groups. In the not-so-official job category, Mary Lou has often been a welcoming presence to new members, and a friendly ear for our “not so new” members. She has a positive and upbeat outlook on life and brings that positive energy to our chorus rehearsals and performances, week after week. She seeks to see the best in people, and the possibilities in every situation.

While her leadership and organizational skills have been great assets to our organization, it is her love of music that brought her to Sweet Adelines and has kept her coming back for forty-plus years. Mary Lou has been a member of several competing quartets during her years in Region 6.

She is currently the baritone for “Sunday Punch,” performing in the Rochester, Owatonna and Mankato area for the past 11 years. Mary Lou’s contributions to our organization don’t end at the local level. She has worked tirelessly for Region 6, as well, helping to spread the love of singing and Barbershop music. She served on the Region 6 Board of Directors, and was Regent for several years in the 1980s, and is an active member of the Region 6 faculty today. She has written and facilitated many classes for the region and has gone on chapter visits to many choruses to share her expertise. She also served as an International Faculty member.

Through her years in the Sweet Adelines Organization, Mary Lou has attended countless International Competitions. Over the past 4 years, she has found time to sing with the City of Lakes chorus through dual-membership and has competed on the International stage with them twice.

In short, Mary Lou Kudela’s list of accomplishments, offices and titles, and activities for the Minnesota Valley Chorus, Region 6 and Sweet Adelines International really could go on and on. But in truth, her contribution to our organization goes much deeper than that. You see, many people are able to hold positions, and get things done, but not everyone is able to impact those around them the way she does. Mary Lou’s greatest gift is her ability to make others see the possibilities in themselves. Her warmth and genuine interest in those around her are contagious, as is her positive attitude and enthusiasm. She is a fine example of a true leader, leading others by inspiring them to be their best every day. And that really is “harmonizing the world.”