



Maynard Koenen was born March 29th 1933 and has made 90 trips around the sun. Maynard is pictured with son Matthew Koenen and two others. Photo credit Jen Kottenbrink.

Happy Birthday to Maynard Koenen who turned 90 on April 29. Friends surprised him by showing up at his Club View drive home at 5 am and surreptitiously hanging a banner wishing him a happy birthday in his lawn. They reportedly had to go that early in hopes that they could pull it off and not be seen!

Maynard is a veteran and former Farm Bureau employee. To go with the banner, friends and family also threw him a party on Sunday, April 30. Maynard still drives, lives independently, goes to the senior center, and is a cribbage champion. Hats off to Maynard!

Latimer Grocery Under New Ownership

MATT GROHE,
HAMPTON CHRONICLE

The Latimer Community Grocery located at 104 N Akir St. has changed hands. To commemorate the occasion an open house and product sampling was held May 5 from 4 to 7 p.m., with guests treated to "Italian grinder/chopped sandwich, sliders, sweets, Moonshine and more." There was also a drawing where two gift bags of "goodies" were given away.

According to store manager Gina Blau, the new owners are a consortium of "local people that want to make sure the community has a store." The grocery was formerly co-owned by local residents Landon and Dr. Anne Plagge, and Darwin and Travis Pralle, who stepped up to purchase the Corner Market when it faced closure years before in 2014.

The Corner Market predecessor to the Latimer grocery was located at 110 N Akir St, and was, as former owner Anne Plagge remarked "a big old historic building that eventually had to be taken down because there was just no option to renovate that one." Franklin General Hospital eventually bought the building and put up a new medical clinic there in 2022 after a nearby clinic closed in Dows. Franklin General Hospital CEO Kim Price said at the time the new clinic was, "necessary to accommodate the current patients and welcome new ones," so out of the Corner Market's demise came progress in a fashion for Latimer.

According to Blau the ownership group is incorporated as an LLC and won't be making any big changes but did advise that the store will now be offering lunch, an expanded meat section and some new product offerings.

The new store hours will be Monday - Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., according to Blau.



The Latimer Community Grocery at 104 N Akir St. in Latimer has passed to new owners and will be offering some new items and be serving lunch.

Hampton-Dumont Reverses Course on Principal Position

MATT GROHE,
HAMPTON CHRONICLE

In a move that stunned many, the Hampton-Dumont School District backtracked on the planned hiring of Leslie Pralle Osborn for the position of Principal at North and South Side Elementaries in a special



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meeting of the board held April 24.

The district rescinded its offer to Osborn, and instead retained the firm of Grundmeyer Leader Services on April 24 to find a candidate to fill the position. The Grundmeyer Leader firm, founded by Trent Grundmeyer, was also hired by the district last year to conduct the search for a new HD superintendent after Todd Lettow announced his retirement in July of 2022.

The action came as a surprise to parents and colleagues, as the District had issued a letter on April 21 naming Osborn to the position after having been selected by "Hampton-Dumont School district stakeholders" for the role on April 20th, according to the letter. An author was not listed on the document and the announcement had come before a formal board vote on the hiring. Ultimately no vote was made, and the offer was allegedly withdrawn one hour prior to the meeting, according to an unconfirmed source.

In the district letter it stated Osborn, "was with the Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency serving as a Consultant for Emerging Bilinguals & Social Studies along with being a Technology & Innovation Consultant within the Leadership & Learning Department. She has also taught as a 6-12 Social Studies and Technology teacher at Northeast Hamilton CSD." and that "Osborn holds Iowa PK-12 Principal Licensure and a Masters of Education in Curriculum & Instruction. She is a graduate of CAL-Dows High School...and is currently a 7-12 Instructional Coach for Innovation and Differentiation at Hampton-Dumont," Osborn was set to start in the new role in July of 2023.

The board sent out notice of the April 24 special meeting and an agenda on Friday April 21st at 4:06 pm, but did not specifically mention the principal position on the agenda, or Grundmeyer Leader.

In what may or may not have been a coincidence, the board decision on April 24 to rescind the offer was made after a district

parent, Jacob Swieter, had created a since deleted post on his Facebook page April 23rd, naming the H-D CAL Board members, posting their phone numbers and urging parents to contact them and tell them to vote no on Osborn.

Swieter's post included the board members' photos and a link to a YouTube video Osborn had made two years prior for the OER Project, an educational organization that says it, "empowers teachers to better serve their students through innovative curricula and a variety of teaching tools....Aligned to state standards and easily adaptable."

The 13:06 minute video entitled; "What My Biracial Daughters Taught Me - Leslie Pralle Osborn" and posted August 4, 2020, was allegedly made prior to an OER conference which Osborn had attended, and in it Osborn related anecdotes from her experiences growing up in Franklin County, the zeitgeist of the racially charged times she felt America was experiencing, and her observations as a parent of a bi-racial children.

In the video Osborn related some of her views on race relations, inclusion and diversity, and her feelings on its relation to pedagogy and her personal teaching philosophy. She also included a paraphrasing of a quote from author Ta Nehisi Coates and anecdotes from the lives of civil rights icons MLK Jr and Rosa Parks. Near the end of the video Osborn held up some book titles she recommended on the subjects she discussed.

The post by Swieter asked Hampton-Dumont elementary parents to tell the board to vote no on Osborn's appointment, adding that, "we don't need this woke agenda in our small community." The YouTube video and Swieter's post with it can still be viewed on YouTube and Facebook respectively, though the post with board members' names and photos had been removed by Swieter.

In response to an inquiry from another

Facebook user on why he removed the post, Swieter remarked, "I didn't think it necessary to leave the board members' numbers up," perhaps reflecting the fact the board had met, though Swieter's original post was made from the board members profiles on the school's website, Meet The Board page, and are still visible there.

Superintendent Aaron Becker released the following district statement to the Chronicle regarding the change:

"While Hampton-Dumont CSD doesn't discuss specific matters regarding personnel or hiring we can generally advise that when engaging in the hiring process we look at and review a variety of information and sources, prior to a recommendation to the Board, to help us determine who will be a successful candidate in our district and community.

"The Hampton-Dumont CSD is partnering with Grundmeyer Leader Services to conduct a search for a 2023-24 elementary principal. This process will be completed in May."

The position is now posted on the Grundmeyer firm's website, Grundmeyerleadersearch.com, with a salary range of \$95,000 to \$105,000. The hiring timeline given by the firm is: April 24-May 20: Application period, Week of May 22: Screen semi-finalists, Week of May 29: Formal interviews. The required qualifications are posted as: Holds Iowa elementary principal licensure, Holds an evaluator approval certification. Building leadership experience preferred.

The Chronicle reached out to Swieter, who declined to comment for the story, and Osborn, who the Chronicle was not able to connect with. According to the district's website "Hampton-Dumont Schools uses Teach Iowa for all certified teaching, administrative, coaching and classified staff job postings and applications," and a check of the site on May 8 listed 31 openings from Anticipated District Librarian to Middle School Weight Room Supervisors.



Deadlines

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