

# Pavlicin Forms Foundation In Memory of Late Husband

Foundation to  
Benefit Medical  
Research,  
Impoverished  
Communities

By Jeremiah Papineau

Tribune assistant editor

WOODBURY, Minn. — It took a little more than three years, but author Karen M. Pavlicin feels she's made a major step in continuing her late husband's mission to make the world a better place.

The sense of pride Karen feels stems from the creation of the Andermax Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization which, among its programs, will provide grants to find cures for major illnesses, such as the cancer which claimed the life of her husband Robert W. Pavlicin in February 2003.

The Andermax Foundation actually began with a song, said Karen. Although she is a professional writer, after the death of her husband, the ability to transfer the words in her mind to pen and paper in hand seemed to be lost.

"I couldn't even write in a journal," Karen said. "There seemed to be no words to describe how I felt. But one day, I was at the stove cooking and this song came into my head."

The lyrics reminded her that through telling their stories, Bob's memory would continue on in their lives. Karen then wrote other inspirational songs and this year began collaborating with a record producer to record her songs on a



**Karen M. Pavlicin pictured with her late husband Robert W. and their son, Alexander M. Pavlicin, in a 2001 family Christmastime photograph. Robert died of colon cancer 14 months later.**

CD.

Since the album won't be released until next year, Karen then began pursuing other avenues to celebrate her husband's life.

"Every time I would tell someone Bob's story, they would tell me I needed to start a foundation," said Karen. The Andermax Foundation was born on June 26, with a mission to provide grant funding to "find cures for major illnesses, to use nature and the arts to help people heal physically and spiritually, and to make fundamental changes in communities in order to eliminate poverty."

Applicants which align with the Andermax Foundation mission may download a grant request form from the foundation's Website, [www.andermaxfoundation.org](http://www.andermaxfoundation.org).

Individuals may also donate online or by mail. Being a smaller organization, said Karen, there is less financial overhead. That, paired with the cost of the foundation's operating expenses being paid for by a private donor, made it possible for 100 percent of the money donated to the Andermax Foundation to go directly to funding grants — something very important to her, Karen added.

Grants may be requested in any amount, with requests being reviewed by a board of directors. Grants may also be given in full or partial amounts if awarded. Karen has her sights set high, with her first goal to raise \$1 million for "The Fightin' Bob Fund," a special

FOUNDATION, continued, 12

**FOUNDATION, continued from page 1.**

fund within the foundation that focuses on finding better diagnostics and a cure for cancer. While the foundation's coffers are small at this point, they are growing and the commitments the foundation has received so far are encouraging, said Karen.

"It's been a little overwhelming, but it's been really nice to see the warm reception we've gotten," said Karen. "There are so many individuals who are looking to support a cause and everyone in our community seems to feel ours is filling a need and that's very reassuring."

If her husband were alive today, said Karen, she believes he would be proud of the work she's done to help others through the Andermax Foundation. Helping others get the chance to "live their life to the fullest" is something Bob would be very supportive of, said Karen.

"He really loved life," Karen recalled about her husband. "You know that saying 'carpe diem,' seize the day? That was him. He was my best friend, a great husband and an amazing dad. He had a great sense of service to his country and to the world. He really loved people."

One way Karen said she best recalls a demonstration of that love was during her husband's service to the U.S. Marines in the first Gulf war. During that time, she said, Bob traded military-issued self-contained meals, known as MREs, for grenades he found in

the possession of young Kurdish refugee children in Northern Iraq.

"Bob knew many of those grenades were booby-trapped and he didn't want anyone, especially those kids, getting hurt. So he worked to gain their trust," said Karen. "While he was serving in Somalia, he also helped rural families with their chores and carving animals for food. He just really connected with people." But the humanitarianism didn't stop overseas. Even when Bob was home, Karen said, he would take time to stop to talk with the homeless.

"He didn't just walk on by. He actually stopped and would ask them their names and talk with them," said Karen. "I had a very deep respect for that and felt very privileged to be his wife. He was just an incredible person."

While the foundation may have been based around Bob's humanitarian efforts, the name of the foundation itself is drawn from the Pavlicins' seven-year-old son, Alexander Maximilian Pavlicin, utilizing the end of his first name and beginning of his middle name. The qualities Karen admired in her husband are the same she sees when she looks into the eyes of their son.

"Alexander was very involved in Bob's care. He was three and a half at the time but he was a very mature three and a half," said Karen. "He was very much aware of what was happening. And now he wants to help people just like his fa-

ther. One thing he wants to accomplish is to give books to less fortunate children because he says that every child should have a book."

Bob was originally diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer in October 2000 at age 35. At that time, doctors estimated he had less than a year to live. He outlived that prognosis by just over a year, vowing for it to never get him down, said Karen.

"Bob kept living life. I would keep asking him if there was something else he'd want to do, something different, and he would tell me there wasn't anything," said Karen. "He told me he'd done everything he wanted to do and that he had no regrets. He just wanted to live for today."

While writing and talking about her husband is very cathartic for Karen, it's also very difficult at times, especially since the couple would have celebrated their 15th wedding anniversary Oct. 5 — the same day "The Fightin' Bob Fund" was launched and the foundation began its official public campaign. "I love telling his stories but when I do it makes me miss him even more," said Karen. "But I really do love helping people, which makes everything we do worth it."

For more information about the Andermax Foundation, log on to [www.andermax-foundation.org](http://www.andermax-foundation.org) or Karen's personal Website, [www.karen-pavlicin.com](http://www.karen-pavlicin.com).