leaving a legacy

Thank you to those who have chosen the community foundation as a way to enhance the community for future generations through a planned gift. Leaving a gift to the community foundation allows individuals to support the causes that they are most passionate about—forever.

Traditionally, our annual Legacy Society Event has been a time to remember and honor the legacies who were realized since the last time we gathered. Out of an abundance of caution, we cancelled our 2020 event due to COVID-19, and we are dedicating the following space to memorialize and show our deep appreciation to the following legacies who have been realized this past year.

Gary Baas

Gary graduated from Grand Haven High School and attended Hope College for his undergraduate degree in psychology. After earning his master’s degree in Behavioral Science from MSU, in 1964 he gave the family business a try and never looked back, joining his father Ed at the family store, Baas’ Store for Men. After marrying Paula in 1969, together they grew the business, Baas’ Inc., to include two Baas’ Stores for Men and two Country House women’s apparel shops in Grand Haven and Holland. They had two children and three grandchildren, and his family was very important to him.

Gary was very active in community leadership, something he learned by example of his parents, as his father was one of the first donors and incorporators of the GHACF. Gary served as a board member of the Association of Commerce and Industry, GHACF (Vice President), GH Central Business District Development Authority (Chair), GH Downtown Unlimited Incorporated (President), Holland Downtown Development Association, Michigan Retailers Association, Muskegon Museum of Art, and Old Kent Bank. He was also a member of the GH Rotary Club and the GH Planning Commission and served as an elder of the First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven.

Edward F. Bushouse

Edward Bushhouse earned a two-year Business Degree at Maher's Business College before serving in the Army Corps on the Island of Saipan. After the war, Ed married Phyllis, the love of his life, and they lived together in Grand Haven for nearly seven decades. Ed was very passionate about and dedicated to God, his family, his church, his community, and his country. He was involved in the banking industry for 41 years. Ed began his career as a teller at the People’s Bank & Trust Company, which later became NBD of Grand Haven and now is Chase Bank; he retired in 1987 as President, CEO, and Chairman of the Board.

Throughout his life, Ed was very active in the Tri-Cities area. He served as an elder, deacon, and treasurer at Second Reformed Church, and treasurer of the Christian Reformed Conference Grounds, Haven School for Handicap (Kandu), and the Ottawa County Citizens Mental Health Council. He was a secretary for the American National Red Cross, and served on the Salvation Army Advisory Board, the Economic Development Corp. Board, and Northwest Ottawa Industrial Development Corp. He had a heart for helping families, which motivated him to co-found the Tri-Cities area chapter of Habitat for Humanity, where he served as chairman for 12 years.

Robert Bytwerk

Robert “Bob” Bytwerk graduated from Muskegon High School and served in the Army Air Corps during WWII. Supported by the GI Bill, he graduated from Calvin College in 1950. He and his wife Ruth had four children, one of whom died in childhood. Ruth Bytwerk died in 1999.

After some years of less than ideal jobs, he bought the Manpower franchise in Grand Rapids, financed through generous terms from his mentor Robert Sneden, and by teaching at Davenport Institute in the morning and Dale Carnegie courses in the evening. The business flourished and he gradually reduced his time at the office to enjoy his many interests.

He relished his family, the company of friends, boats that kept getting larger, travel, woodworking, his dogs Shannon and Buddy, Lake Michigan, and Charlevoix. He read widely and had well-founded opinions. He gave in many directions, saying that he had found his mother's words to be true: “You will never become poor by giving.”
Leslie Cassis-Withun

Described by some as one of Grand Haven's greatest ambassadors, Leslie Cassis-Withun was born in Grand Rapids and graduated from Muskegon Community College. Leslie worked for WGHN for over 30 years and was looking forward to retirement at the end of the 2020. She was a former president of Grand Haven Schools Foundation, a Rotarian of the Year with the Grand Haven Rotary, Tri-Cities United Way Volunteer of the Year, and she had just joined the board of directors for The Tri-Cities Family YMCA. Leslie enjoyed snow skiing, traveling, and our Grand Haven beaches. A long-time community activist, she will be greatly missed by all who had an opportunity to know her.

Leslie's husband Paul, and friends and family who knew her well, would say that Leslie believed in—and, acted out—the idea of "Leaving it better than we found it."

Garry L. Mesler

Garry Mesler graduated from Midland High School in 1956 and went on to earn his Master's Degree in Industrial Engineering from Central Michigan University. Upon graduation, he was commissioned into the United States Army as a Second Lieutenant, serving until 1969. After serving, he taught at Central Michigan University in the Industrial Engineering Department for 33 years.

Garry served as an elder at the First Presbyterian Church in Mt. Pleasant. He spent many years refereeing NCAA Division II College Football as well as high school football. Garry and his wife Jean enjoyed many years of sailing the Great Lakes in their beloved boat, “The Escape.” They were blessed with wintering in Florida for 20 years, dodging the Michigan weather. Garry filled his retired years woodworking, making beautiful pieces of furniture for his family that will be treasured for years.

Garry's memory will be cherished and kept alive by his wife of 47 years and their five children and eight grandchildren. Family time was very important to him, and his greatest pride and joy were his children and grandchildren near and far. All were equally close to his heart and loved deeply.

Richard A. Rhem

Richard received his first call into the ministry for the First Reformed Church of Spring Lake on the day his son David was born. He also served at Midland Park Reformed Church in New Jersey before studying under theologian Hendrikus Berkhof at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands.

In 1971, Richard returned to the First Reformed Church, which was soon renamed Christ Community Church and became the third largest Reformed church in the RCA. Richard was an early supporter of the interfaith movement in West Michigan, actively participating in the Jewish-Christian dialogue in the early 1980s.

In 2014, Richard received the first annual Sylvia Kaufman Interfaith Leadership Award from the Kaufman Interfaith Institute at Grand Valley State University. Richard and his wife, Nancy, celebrated 47 years of marriage together. Together they had six children, 11 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.
Robert Whitney was a project engineer for Union Carbide for 11 years, Clarke Floor Machine for 24 years, and EBW for four years, retiring in 1991. Bob was a member of First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven, where he formerly served as a deacon. He was a member of Phi Gamma Delta at the University of Michigan and loved playing the digital piano, woodworking, photography, sailing, camping with his family, and watching University of Michigan and Detroit Tigers games. Over the course of his nearly seven-decade marriage to his loving wife Annette, they were blessed with three children, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Clifford Taylor attended school in Spring Lake and Grand Haven before graduating from St. John's Military Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1945-1947 in its pilot training program in Virginia and graduated from Michigan State University in 1950, where he was a three-year member of their golf team. He was a C.P.A. for forty years, and a retired partner of BDO Seidman, LLP, a former board member and past president of the Muskegon Rotary Club, and former board member and president of the Spring Lake Country Club. He was also a lifetime member of the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accounts.

A lifelong avid golfer, he won many local and Club Championships. He played in seven U.S.G.A. Championships, seven British Senior Amateur Championships, and was the first amateur golfer inducted into the Greater Muskegon Area Sports Hall of Fame.

Cliff and his wife, Hope, were active community members, and their legacy will live on in the scholarship that they established.

Donald Sikkema

Dr. Donald “Don” Edward Sikkema graduated from Grand Rapids Christian High School and then Calvin College. After receiving his Medical Doctor degree from the University of Michigan Medical School, he served as a Captain in the US Army and as medical missionary in Nigeria. After specializing in internal medicine and cardiology, he practiced medicine in Grand Haven from 1967 until his retirement in 2001.

Don headed up the ICU at North Ottawa Community Hospital and started the “Nurse of the Year” award. He was a member of the Second Christian Reformed Church where he served as an elder. Don was also a member of the Luke Society and board member of Christian Reformed World Missions. He was a member of the Grand Haven Rotary Club and past board member of the People’s Bank and Trust (NBD) for many years.

Don will be lovingly remembered and missed by his wife of 64 years, Dorothy, and their five children, 12 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

Cliff Taylor

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Cliff and his wife, Hope, were active community members, and their legacy will live on in the scholarship that they established.
The following people have committed to leaving a gift to the foundation after they pass. If you would like more information about joining the Legacy Society, please contact Chris Riker.

Tom & Mary Kay Alguire
Donald & Cindy Anderson
Len & Wanda Anderson
David Baas
Paula B. Baas
William & Mary Baker
Steven & Kathryn Bandstra
Sue Barrett
Charlie & Mary Jo Bassett
Charles (Chad) Bassett II
Paul Bedient
William & Carolyn Benes
Carroll & Dottie Bennink
Patrick S. Berg
Jeff & Tammy Beswick
Susan & Mark Blauvelt
William & Katherine Blessing
Mary Jane Boettcher
Norm & Carolyn Boeve
T. Arnold & Lynne Boezaart
Calvin & Evelyn Bosman
Barbara Boyer
Tom Braciak
Janet R. Briegel
Richard Carl & Patricia K. Briegel
Bud & Melinda Brink
James & Jane T. Brown
Fred Bruhn
John & Claire Bryson
Cheri & Ron Butije
Kevin Carberry & Carol Alexander
Nancy Carlyle
Cyndi Casemier
Stacey Cassis & Arianna Morales
Joe & Cheryl Clark
Margaret Coffey
Harold "Pete" & Cindy Crane
Kennard & Wendy Creason
Mary Creason
Thomas & Michelle Creswell
Scott Curtis
David & Carol DeBlay
Terry & Sandi DeGroot
Daniel & Brenda DeVeau
Barbara DeWitt
Ralph DeYoung
Virginia Dornbos - Rolstone
James A. & Dulce Doss
Megan & Jamie Doss
Joyce Draft
Dennis & Barbara Dryer
Dwight & Gloria Durkee
Myrna Duthler
Jim & Maria Dykstra
Robert & Nancy Dzierzawski
David & Mary Eain
Martha Erickson
Jon & Glenda Eshleman
Steve & Mary Jane Evink
Wallace & Jane Ewing
Patricia Fisher
John & Kathryn Fortino
Patrick & Robin Fraker
Barbara Fugazzotto
Edward "Tony" Gage
Gretchen Garrison
Rob & Jill Garrison
Tom Gifford
Edward & Laura Grafton
Randi & Nancy Grevel
Edward & Nancy Hanenburg
Janet A. Harestad
Steve & Tami Harvey
Shirley Hipwell
Andy & Alice Hoban
Bud & Charyn Hoffman
Stephen & Joy Hohmeyer
Judith W. Hooyenga
Jim & Deb Hovinga
Paul & Diana Hugo
Sherry Jackoboice
Tom & Barb Jackoboice
Mary Jacobson
Nelson & Lana Jacobson
Nancy Jacobson Bueche
Bari S Johnson
Holly & Erick Johnson
Dorothy "Dottie" Johnson
Roger & Susan Jonas
Jeff & Kellie Jullie
James & Mary Keating
Katherine L. Keck
J. Gregg & Mary Keeton
Jack & Joanne Kelley
Sanford "Mark" & Kristine Kelley
Barbara Kelso
Phil & Jane King
Thomas & Kimberly Kitchen
Dave & Sandy Klaassen
Kurt & Jennifer Klaassen
Mark A. & Elizabeth Kleist
Raymond & Betsy Komray
Scott & Madonna Kramer
Ken Lahey
Keith & Bernice Lamkin
Tom & Jackie Laughlin
Philip M. & Betty J. Leech
Jane E. Leonard
James & Nancy MacLachlan
Angelo & Laura Marasco
Michael McKeough
Nina McKeough-Reed
Larry & Anne McLaughlin
Damon & Kim McLaughlin
Douglas McNeil
Sandra & Frank Mercurio
Muriel Mersereau
Robert J. & Donnell S. Mersereau
Jean Fisher Mesler
Nancy E. Middlebrook
Dr. James Moore & Patricia Eddington
Phyllis A. & Darell L. Moreland
Steven & Sandra Moreland
Evelyn Morford
Donald & Nancy Moss
Peter & Sheila Murdoch
Nancy & Charles Nagtzaam
John and Kathryn Nash
Raymond F. & Barbara J. Nelson
Matthew M. & Kathryn E. (Jerovek) Olds
Greg Oleszczuk & Jeanine Taghon-Oleszczuk
James & Ruthann Olthoff
Roy & Joyce Overway
Jill & Tim Parker
Pearl E. Patterson
Dan & Eileen Paul
Elizabeth Peel
Thomas C. Pegg
Anita Pellegronom
Matthew & Joyce Pellegronom
Marsha Peterson
John Planteroth
Larry Poel
Craig & Coreen Porter
Edward & Barbara Post
Shirley A. & Ted A. Poulton
Joseph & Nancy Prinzi
Bill & Alleen Redeker
Field Reichardt
Rosanne M. Reiss
Gerald Retzlaff
Nancy Rhem
M. Gary & Pennie Robertson
Lloyd Rotz
Sylvia & Ron Ruscett
Robert & Bobbi Jones Sabine
Dan & Carol Scanlon
James Schmidt
Richard & Carol Scholler
David & Jinny Schultz
David & Sharon Seaver
Kenneth & Sandra Sharkey
William & Susan Shattuck
John & Patricia Shears
Budge & Marilyn Sherwood
Gary & Karen Sherwood
Karen Shields
Dorothy Sikkema
Gerald & Linda Slagel
Robert E. & Janice D. Sluka
Gary & Jorri Smith
Julie Smydra
Linda S. Shores & R. Michael Snodgrass
Rick & Mary Ann Snyder
Larry & Stephanie Staab
Tyler M. Stafford
James J. & Sheila G. Steffel
Peter & Carolyn Sturrus
Kent & Bonnie Suchecki
Ruth Suchecki
Dennis & Carol Swartout
Dan & Ann Tabor
Philip & Mary Kay Taylor
James & Mary Teitsma
Ken and Mary Terpstra
Guy & Alisha Terrill
Peter & Judy Theune
Joseph & Carol Uridil
Edith VanBurgal
Rick & Donna vandenBerg
John & Marianne VanEenenaam
Dale & Susan VanZantwick
Elinore "Norna" Verplank
L. J. "Midge" Verplank
Toni & Monica Verplank
Margot L. Van Dis & Jeffrey R. Miller
John F. Waanders
Robert & Deborah Wagenmaker
David & Patricia Walborn
Ruth Wallinga
Walt & Daphne Weber
Amy L. West
Andrew Wheeler
Curtis & Terri Whiting
David & Mary Whiting
Annette Whitney
Nancy & Warren Wildeman
Leslie Wills
Paul Withun
David & Karen Young
Rosemary A. Zink
Michael & Sasha Zolik
Douglas & Janice Zuidema
Marian Zupin

* indicates new member

Sept 2019-Aug 2020