

FOR RELEASE

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- **Editors:** *Photos of David and Rita Nelson and their immediate family are available, along with a video interview with one of their sons. Details and photos of initial grantees are available.*
- **News Release Attachments:** *List of initial grant recipients, biographies of David and Rita Nelson.*

Community Foundation receives \$100 million estate gift

KAUKAUNA, Wis. -- An estate gift of more than \$100 million arranged by former media executive David L. Nelson and his wife, Rita, to the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region will generate millions of dollars in grants annually to benefit causes important to the couple and their family, primarily in the Fox Cities and Green Bay areas in northeast Wisconsin.

The couple lived in De Pere, Wis. David was born in Kaukauna, Wis., and Rita in Janesville, Wis., and both lived in Wisconsin nearly their entire lives. He helped manage the companies that published newspapers in Appleton and Green Bay before investing in radio stations and other businesses. She became a teacher after raising the couple's three sons. They were married for 73 years and died within five months of each other – Rita on Feb. 16, 2017, at age 93 and David on July 18, 2017, at age 96. *(See bios for more detail.)*

"This is the most generous gift ever for our region, and it is a game-changer," said Curt Detjen, Community Foundation President and CEO. "It will be a catalyst for addressing community needs today, but also for investing in exciting opportunities for future generations."

At more than \$100 million, the gift is among the largest in Wisconsin's history and large enough to have ranked among the top 20 gifts nationally reported by the Chronicle of Philanthropy in 2017. The bequest is by far the largest gift to the Community Foundation in its 32-year history, surpassing an estate gift of \$16 million in 2004 from Donald and Violet Himebaugh of Appleton, Wis.

The Nelson gift established the *David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund* within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, a permanent, donor-advised endowment that will award grants to charitable organizations reflecting the charitable interests of David and Rita Nelson and their family.

The Community Foundation will support an advisory committee comprised of people who know the Nelson family to award grants from the fund.

(more)

Detjen made the announcement during a news conference on Tuesday, May 1, at the 181-

year-old Grignon Mansion, a national and state historic site in Kaukauna, Wis., that David's father fought to preserve when he was Kaukauna's mayor in the early 1940s.

What will benefit from the fund?

The David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund will benefit the couple's interests, including parks, recreation and waterways; education; health care; community services and community centers; and historic preservation, including lighthouses, museums and historical societies. Other areas of family interest may be considered, as recommended by the fund's advisory committee.

The first grants, totaling \$3.5 million, have been awarded from the fund and were approved by the advisory committee and the Community Foundation. Eight grant recipients were announced during the news conference. *(See attached grant list.)* Additional grants will be awarded annually beginning in the summer of 2019, and will be determined by the fund's advisory committee working closely with the Community Foundation staff. There will be no application process.

Detjen said the \$100 million-plus fund is expected to award \$4.5 million in grants per year by 2021, based on the Foundation's endowment formula that up to 4.5 percent of a fund's balance be distributed as grants each year to assure the fund's giving capacity and permanence.

"This gift to the Community Foundation provides us and our area with a tremendous opportunity that we enthusiastically embrace," Detjen said. "We are humbled and incredibly grateful for the trust that the Nelsons have placed with us to ensure that the family's legacy will be part of creating the exciting chapters ahead for this region."

"This is a breathtaking gift the Nelsons have given to help shape the future of the community," said Community First Credit Union President Catherine Tierney, who chairs the Community Foundation Board of Directors.

Who were David and Rita Nelson?

(See bios of David and Rita)

Younger son Richard Nelson described his father as "very much a large personality." Known to his boating buddies as "the Admiral," he was generous with his friends, Richard said, but kept his charitable interests largely to himself. History and boating were clearly passions for him.

Thomas Nelson said his parents didn't live extravagantly. His father never flew first-class, didn't wear designer clothes and stayed at Super 8 motels. He said they were always known to have a lot of money, but acquaintances "will be shocked by the amount of money."

Charity was never a big topic of conversation when he was growing up. However, his mother volunteered for years translating reading materials into Braille and working at St. Vincent Hospital and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. After raising the three boys, Rita returned to school at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, graduating with a teaching degree in 1974. She taught for 18 years in the

De Pere School District.

Thomas said his father's main pleasure was "Davey's Locker," a 41-foot, custom-made cabin cruiser. "That was his big escape. He went to Door County nearly every weekend."

Tough but fair in business

David Nelson was described as a tough, honest businessman.

"He was firm but fair. If you did your job, you didn't have any problem with Dave," said M. Keith Jones of Chippewa Falls, Wis., his business partner in 10 radio stations. "He was a guy who would take charge."

Jones said the initial list of grants would please his old partner because he liked anything involving history or the water.

David's brother, retired Calumet County Judge Hugh Nelson, said even he didn't know the extent of his brother's wealth, though he always was attentive to saving.

"Even as a kid, if he got a dollar, he'd save 90 cents of it," Hugh Nelson said. "He was strictly honest. I don't think he ever kept a dime that he didn't earn. There was no flimflaming."

Why the Community Foundation?

The Nelsons connected with the Appleton, Wis.-based Community Foundation through one of their advisors, attorney Derek N. McDermott of Burnett, McDermott, Jahn, King & DesRochers, LLP, in Chilton, Wis. McDermott said he has a high level of trust in this Community Foundation based on experience with the staff and having served three years on its volunteer Board of Directors.

McDermott said David Nelson had the intention to leave money to charity and was particularly interested when McDermott explained how creating a donor-advised fund within a community foundation provides the opportunity for creating a lasting legacy.

The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, an Appleton, Wis.-based nonprofit founded in 1986, helps people provide long-term support for favorite charities through endowments and other charitable funds. The second-largest community foundation in Wisconsin, its donors have allowed it to award more than \$267 million in grants to nonprofit organizations from more than 1,500 charitable funds. The Community Foundation is certified as meeting National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations by the Council on Foundations. This accreditation demonstrates commitment to accountability and excellence to its donors, its community, policymakers and the public. Affiliated regional families of funds operate in Brillion, Chilton, Clintonville, Shawano and Waupaca areas of Wisconsin. To learn more, go to www.cffoxvalley.org, subscribe to The Loop at www.cffoxvalley.org/loop or connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.

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See page 4 for the list of initial grants from the David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund

See pages 5 and 6 for biographies of David and Rita Nelson.



Initial grants from the David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund

The David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund was established within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region with an estate gift of more than \$100 million. The donor-advised endowment fund will benefit David and Rita Nelson's primary interests, including parks, recreation and waterways; education; health care; community services and community centers; and historic preservation, including lighthouses, museums and historical societies. Other areas of family interest may be considered by the fund's advisory committee, which will work in partnership with the Community Foundation. The first grants from the fund, totaling \$3.5 million, reflect David and Rita's personal interests and these eight recipients were announced May 1, 2018:

<p>Grassy Island Range Lights: Stabilization of two historic lighthouses near the Green Bay, Wis., Municipal Boat Landing known as the Grassy Island Range Lights, a project David supported financially and with volunteer labor.</p>	<p>\$2.62 million</p>
<p>Little Chute-Kaukauna Boardwalk: A challenge grant to raise the local share of a pedestrian/bicycle boardwalk across the Fox River from the combined lock below Heesakker Park in Little Chute, Wis., to a trail along a former railroad bed in Kaukauna, Wis. David grew up in Kaukauna.</p>	<p>\$650,000</p>
<p>Grignon Mansion: Reconstruction of the summer kitchen and enhanced signage at the a 181-year-old national and state historic site in Kaukauna, Wis., which David's father fought to preserve when he has mayor of Kaukauna in the early 1940s.</p>	<p>\$50,000</p>
<p>Friends of High Cliff State Park: Restoration of the upper park pavilion at the state park in Sherwood, Wis., and support for a summer naturalist position. David's father was involved in the acquisition of the park.</p>	<p>\$50,000</p>
<p>Divine Savior Holy Angels High School: An endowed fund for tuition assistance at the all-girls Catholic school in Milwaukee, Wis. Rita attended Holy Angels Academy, renamed after its merger with Divine Savior in 1970.</p>	<p>\$30,000</p>
<p>Kaukauna High School: An endowed scholarship at David's alma mater in Kaukauna.</p>	<p>\$30,000</p>
<p>St. Vincent de Paul Society: Support for those in need at the nonprofit in Green Bay, Wis., where Rita Nelson volunteered.</p>	<p>\$25,000</p>
<p>St. Norbert College Parish: Construction of a prayer/reflection garden at old St. Joseph Church on the campus of St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wis., a parish of special significance to Rita.</p>	<p>\$15,000</p>



Biographical Information on David L. Nelson

David L. Nelson was born July 5, 1921, in Kaukauna, Wis. He was the third-oldest in a family of four girls and two boys. David Nelson's father, Lewis, managed Badger Tissue Mills, a converting mill in Kaukauna, for 35 years, and was president of the Farmers and Merchant Bank in Kaukauna. Lewis Nelson served as mayor of Kaukauna 1937-40 and 1942-46.

David L. Nelson:

- Attended parochial and public schools in Kaukauna, Wis.
- Graduated from the Marquette University College of Business Administration in Milwaukee, Wis., in 1943 and became a certified public accountant in 1951.
- Met Rita Randall while attending college in Milwaukee.
- Married Rita Sept. 6, 1943, while he was serving with the U.S. Army at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif. They were married for 73 years.
- Served three years in the U.S. Army including with the 103rd Infantry Division in Europe during World War II.
- Worked for 3 ½ years in marketing at Western Condensing Company, Appleton, Wis., which turned cheesemaking waste into livestock feed.
- Raised three sons – Thomas, Richard and John.
- Son John preceded him in death.
- Served as an investigator for the Internal Revenue Service from 1950-53 in Green Bay, Wis.
- Entered the communications business in 1953, becoming chief financial officer for both the Post Corporation, publisher of the Appleton (Wis.) Post-Crescent, and the Green Bay (Wis.) Newspaper Company, publisher of the Press-Gazette, owned by the Minahan and Torinus families.
- When the two companies split in 1962, he became chief financial officer and chief

operating officer of the Post Corp., taking it into electronic media with the purchase of WLUK-TV in Green Bay, Wis., in 1965, WLUC in Marquette, Mich.; and stations in Eau Claire, Wis.; and Rochester, NY, along with several radio stations.

- Left the newspaper when the company was acquired by Canadian communications company Thomson Corp. in 1984.
- Formed partnerships to acquire radio stations WAXX, WAYY, WECL, WIAL and WEAQ in Eau Claire, Wis.; KIRX, KTUF and KRXL in Kirksville, MO; KFJB and KXIA in Marshalltown, Iowa; and KVOX-AM & FM in Fargo, N.D.
- Through partnerships, acquired Holiday Travel Service in Eau Claire, Wis., and Winnebago Color Press in Menasha, Wis. Served as an officer and director of both until his death.
- He was a longtime member of the Green Bay (Wis.) Yacht Club and avid supporter of lighthouse restoration and historic preservation in the Fox Valley region of northeast Wisconsin.
- David died July 18, 2017, at age 96, in De Pere, Wis., leaving an estate gift exceeding \$100 million to the family's donor-advised fund within the Appleton, Wis.-based Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region.



Biographical Information on Rita E. (Randall) Nelson

- Born in Janesville, Wis., Oct. 17, 1923, to Harry and Mabel Randall.
- Graduated high school from Holy Angels Academy in Milwaukee, Wis. (now Divine Savior Holy Angels High School).
- Met David Nelson while he was studying at Marquette University College of Business Administration in Milwaukee.
- Married David Nelson Sept. 6, 1943, while he was serving with the U.S. Army at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif. They were married for 73 years.

- Raised three sons – Thomas, Richard and John.
- Son John preceded her in death.
- Returned to school at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, graduating with a teaching degree in 1974.
- Taught in the De Pere (Wis.) School District for 18 years, including serving as the district’s first computer teacher.
- Retired from the De Pere School District in 1992.
- Volunteered with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, St. Vincent Hospital Auxiliary and the Green Bay Yachting Club Auxiliary, all in Green Bay, Wis.
- Rita died Feb. 16, 2017, at age 93, in De Pere, Wis.