

The SCCF's 20th Anniversary Series

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History of SCCF Part I

Margaret Mead, an American cultural anthropologist, said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

The idea that the contributions, large and small, of community-minded people who believe in their cause can make an immeasurable impact is really at the heart of the Starke County Community Foundation (SCCF).

You'll hear it from us time and time again: Whether you give \$5 or \$5,000, it makes a difference. Our founders were devoted community members who believed that they could make a difference in Starke County with the help and support of the community. One thing they would learn is that personal contacts were key.

As Barbara McLaughlin, a founding member of the SCCF, said, they quickly learned that "if you want to get milk from a cow, you sit down beside her and you milk the cow. You don't send her a letter."

The original founders of the SCCF were Frank Alan, June Binkley, Cheryle Ferch, Cherry Gumz, Jim Hardesty, Barbara McLaughlin, and Arlowa Vorm.

The founders of the Community Foundation were individuals with diverse experiences and backgrounds. Each brought something unique to the table and benefited the Community Foundation in different ways. Aside from the variation in the group, these original founders had these commonalities: Each of them wished to see Starke County thrive, each understood the importance and benefits of community foundations, and each believed that they could succeed in the establishment of one in Starke County.

Frank first heard of community foundations when he was on the Board of Directors for the Starke County Economic Development Foundation. The manager of the Winamac branch of the Fifth Third Bank said that the bank had some small trusts it wanted to let go of, and he recommended that they set up a community foundation with the help of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Nothing came from this initial suggestion, but it sparked curiosity in Frank about the notion of community foundations.

Frank began discussing the idea with individuals from Pulaski County who also were interested in creating a community foundation of their own. Bob Hamilton of Starke County was another individual who was aware of the opportunity to establish a community foundation and what it would mean for Starke County.

Interest spread as community-minded individuals made phone calls to friends who they thought would be an asset to the founding group.



*Frank Alan founder
and first President of
The Starke County Comm.
Foundation.*

Frank's wife, Eliene, was not from Starke County, but moved there with Frank in 1992. She soon developed a deep sense of the community and the people living there. She suggested several individuals for the involvement in the Community Foundation, including Jim Hardesty and June Binkley, both of whom would play key roles in the Foundation's inception and success.

Frank, Jim, and June were all discussing the possibility of a community foundation. Cherry, too, was interested, and called Barbara, who then called Arlowa. Barbara, Arlowa, and Cherry clicked quickly and worked together very well. They came to be known as the "Three Muses."

Soon, the team of seven community members were meeting and discussing how they could succeed in establishing a community foundation.

Of course, they faced much doubt when telling people, "We need to raise a million dollars." Join us next week to find out about the scrutiny they faced and how they gained community support.