

Two new to the Selkirk and District Community Foundation Dewar, Knoll join Foundation board



SDCF's Newest Board Members – Greg Dewar and Barbara Knoll

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 20, 2018

Two new faces have joined the ranks of the Selkirk and District Community Foundation Board of Directors, and while the paths that brought them to their new positions are different, there's a common thread that makes them, like all other board members, quite uniquely suited to their roles.

Greg Dewar is a familiar name and face in the Triple S region, having served as the region's MLA for a whopping 25 ½ years. That alone makes him well suited for a seat on the SDCF board but so too does the fact he's a lifelong resident and he has a very personal connection to the Foundation.

Dewar's niece, Kristin Sutherland, passed away tragically following a 2014 car crash when she was just 27 years old. Her parents, Rick and Laurie, created an endowment fund and an annual fundraising event called Kristin's Walk For Kids.

"The unfortunate circumstances led to a chance for the family to honour her memory and to raise money for the Foundation," Dewar said, noting his niece worked with children.

"That was her brief life's work, working with young people, and though I don't want to speak for her parents, I know they're thrilled to be able to work with the Foundation, the Foundation has a great reputation in our community and they know the funds they raise will be put to good use."

It was Selkirk Mayor Larry Johannson who asked Dewar if he would allow his name to stand for nomination for the SDCF board. The two worked together in their respective political positions, and have become good friends.

"I was asked by the Mayor of Selkirk if I would agree to have my name put forward and I was honoured to be asked and then I was quite thrilled to be appointed to what I consider to be this very important and very trusted community organization," Dewar said.

“I think it’s a natural step for me to be on the board, I’ve worked with many of the organizations that the Foundation supports. As the former MLA I think I have a good understanding of their needs, I also know the community very well and I know the community leadership, so I’m quite happy and thrilled to be a part of this group.”

While Dewar thinks his entire political career has helped prepare him for this role, his tenure as Finance Minister during the final stages gave him added insight that he believes will translate well to his role on the board.

“At that particular role you’re at the highest level of decision making and (because of that) I have a better understanding of all the different roles of different government departments and just the thought making that happens at that level of decision makers, so hopefully I can contribute the experience I gained there to the board as well.”

Dewar is particularly excited about the Foundation’s Vital Signs Report, released earlier this year and essentially a revealing of the community’s strengths and weaknesses and a road map to what can be done to make the community stronger. He said it’s invaluable information for anyone hoping to make a difference in their community.

“The great thing about the Vital Signs Report is that it highlights the many strengths, and some weaknesses, in the community, and I would think it’s a great building block for the Foundation, but for all community leaders. I think every individual and elected official could find this as a useful guide for future decision making,” he said.

“It’s a great report card.”

While Dewar has known of the Foundation since its inception, his new colleague, Barbara Knoll learned of it in recent years and immediately became involved, through a gift that will be delivered at a future date.

“Four years ago, when I was revising my Will, I noticed that my residual beneficiaries were all Winnipeg based charities. Since I had lived and worked in Winnipeg for most of my life, that made sense, but after moving to St. Clements in 2006, I felt I should establish a stronger connection to my more immediate community here,” said Knoll, who was nominated by St. Clements Mayor and Council.

“Living in a rural area with few neighbours, I had no knowledge of local charitable organizations other than the Gaynor Family Regional Library, the Gwen Fox Gallery and the Gordon Howard Centre. My husband suggested the Selkirk and District Community Foundation. I had never heard of it and neither had my lawyer. Looking back, it was an excellent decision to name the Selkirk Foundation as one of the residual beneficiaries in my Will.”

An accountant who's worked in the private sector and most recently with Revenue Canada as the assistant director Legislative Policy and Regulatory Affairs for the Prairie Region, Knoll brings a wealth of experience to the board. And while her skillset no doubt will be an asset, her understanding of the role volunteers play in the success of the world is likely every bit as crucial.

"We all need to find ways to give back to our community. Manitobans paid for my university education through bursaries and scholarships. I learned to swim as an adult at the YM/YWCA. My swimming instructors were volunteers. My accounting instructors were part-time lecturers. I owe much to the community to making me the person that I am. I have made a point of giving back," Knoll said.

"After learning to swim, I became a volunteer swimming instructor at the Y. After obtaining my accounting designation, I became a part-time lecturer in the accounting program. Even though I am now retired, I don't think it is time to stop contributing where I can. Based on my knowledge and experience as a tax accountant and federal government executive, I feel that I can make a contribution to the Foundation as a Board Member. Being a Board Member is a way for me to give back to the community and being a donor is a way for me to give forward."

Knoll sees the Foundation's role increasing in the coming years, as government funding grows smaller and organizations' needs grow larger, and she's looking forward to working alongside the people who strive to help the vital sectors that make our community what it is continue to flourish.

"In an age of 'it's all about me', the Foundation promotes, 'it's all about us', as a way to make our community a better place to live," Knoll said.

"The Foundation connects people: people who are donors, people who provide services, and people who need services. Whether a donor has a few dollars, a few hundred dollars or a few thousand dollars, the Foundation has the resources to invest the money and to allocate funds to those organizations in the Community who will use it to the best advantage.

"Would you like to help a student go to University or Red River College? The Foundation can help you do that. Would you like to support seniors? The Foundation can help you do that. Do want to help homeless people? Whatever your concern, the Foundation is there to assist you."

Dewar agreed, and said it's an honour for both he and Knoll to take their place in what has become the long and storied history of a successful foundation, that currently has assets totalling \$9.8 M and every year they give out more grants, most recently a total of \$311,034.

"The Foundation brings together individuals with a wide variety of skills and experiences and I look forward to working with these people. They really are

building upon the fine work of men and women who've served on this board in the past and we want to continue with their great work," he said.

The Selkirk and District Community Foundation is a charitable organization that provides financial support to charitable causes and agencies in their region, which includes Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements. Gifts from donors enable the Foundation to support countless groups and individuals in our community. The Foundation has given in excess of \$2.1 million to more than 125 local charities and community organizations over its 22+ years. For more details contact SDCF Executive Director Bev Clegg at 204.784-0547