

Marine Museum gets a lift with newly created trust fund



Sutherland Family - Kelly Lewis, Wayne, Reed, Paul and Scott with Marine Museum staff and volunteers - Shaylene Nordal, Duane Nicole and Lacey Darvill

For Immediate Release – February 7, 2020

The Sutherland family didn't have to float the idea of donating to the newly created Marine Museum of Manitoba Trust Fund very long – it was an opportunity they jumped at and the entire family embraced it.

The family – Wayne Sutherland and his children – sons Scott, Paul, Reed and the late Parker, along with daughter Kelly Lewis – were thrilled to be one of two original donors to the fund in memory of their wife

and mother, Helen, who passed away four years ago on Jan. 29

Kelly says the Marine Museum was near and dear to her mom's heart. The daughter of a fisherman, Steve Stephanson, she knew the history of the lake and the boats and the importance they had to the people who made their living on them.

"This opportunity (to donate) came up. My mom was an Icelander through and through and her father was a commercial fisherman on the lake back in the '40s and into the mid '50's and he was a very successful fisherman," Kelly said.

"That's where her roots were, on the lake, anything to do with the lake, the Marine Museum, she held it dear to her heart."

Kelly said her brother Scott inherited their mom's Icelandic features, while the rest of the siblings took after their dad and his Scottish heritage. When Helen passed, Scott began donating through his work to the foundation and the Marine Museum in memory of his mom.

So when the opportunity arose to contribute to a fund that will ensure the museum can continue to tell its stories for generations to come, Kelly said it just seemed appropriate.

"Of course my dad was very supportive and my mom, she loved the Marine Museum, she had a deep affinity for it," she said.

Kelly said some of her mom's cousins have donated artifacts to the museum and the Jackie S is named after a family member as well.

"I know that my mother would be very happy with it."

The other original donors are Bud R.S. Oliver and his wife Doreen. As a former councillor and mayor of the City of Selkirk, Bud has a demonstrated commitment to the city and its history. Doreen, a member of several historical associations over the years, shares that devotion to capturing history and ensuring it is available for future generations.

“I’ve felt all along that the Marine Museum is the jewel of Selkirk. It’s an outstanding example, the only example, of the kind of commerce that took place on Lake Winnipeg and Selkirk at the time was the port that serviced that whole commerce,” Bud said.

“It’s really quite unbelievable the kind of traffic that was going on, on the river.”

Doreen echoed those sentiments and said the numbers of people that used to be down at the Waterfront during the boats’ heydays was “phenomenal”.

“There are pictures of the boats that came down in July and they were just recreation trips...companies in Winnipeg would sponsor them so it was not only good for the town to have all that commerce it was spread much further than that, going into the city or coming from the city. It was not just the boat commerce, it became the railway commerce too. One just sort of grew into the next,” she said.

“I think it’s important for people to know their own history and their family history and the boats certainly tied into many families’ livelihoods here.”

For the Olivers, the donation has gone full circle – Bud bought a ticket for one of the Marine Museum’s \$1,000 prize draws and when he won, he turned around and donated the money back to the newly created fund.

Duane Nicol, Chair of the Marine Museum’s board of directors, says the initial gifts are representative of the support the museum has received over the years.

“This museum was built and has been sustained by folks who have deep connections to our maritime history. We exist because of families like the Sutherlands and the Olivers and we are so appreciative of their ongoing support,” Nicol said.

In 2020 the museum is launching a new campaign to make use of the Manitoba Heritage Trust Program and help grow the museum’s perpetual care endowment fund that provides funds each year to pay for the maintenance and upkeep of the ships and exhibits.

“Our goal is to raise \$50,000 by March of 2021. Leveraging the matched funding offered by the program, we’ll have \$75,000 to add to our existing endowment with the Selkirk & District Community Foundation. With our initial gifts, we’re more than a quarter of the way there,” Nicol said.

The donations, Nicol says, are really permanent investments into a critical piece of the region's cultural infrastructure.

"We want to make sure that the story of our marine history is told for generations to come. We want to ensure that our children and our children's children have the opportunity to touch, smell, and see what life was like in early Manitoba."

The fund was made possible through the Manitoba Heritage Trust Program and the Marine Museum of Manitoba, and besides the two initial donations from the Sutherland and Oliver families it has received stretching dollars from the Province of Manitoba.

The Manitoba Heritage Trust Program provides support for museums, archives, and supporting organizations to establish and grow endowment funds providing long-term sustainable revenue for their organization. The program, initiated by the Manitoba government, is administered by The Winnipeg Foundation with support from the Association of Manitoba Museums and the Association for Manitoba Archives. After a period of three years, the fund will be transferred to the Selkirk and District Community Foundation.

Selkirk & District Community Foundation is one of 50+ Community Foundations from across the province. SDCF *creates* different ways for people to give back to their community, *connects* donors with community wishes and dreams and *provides grants* that touch a lot of people. This means the Foundation works with thoughtful community minded donors, who believe in the power of endowment, that provides financial support to other charitable and non-profit community organizations. In its 24th year the Foundation has given in excess of \$2.4 million to more than 125 local charities and community organizations. This volunteer board and staff along with donors from all walks of life - work together so the community is "Here for Good". For more details contact SDCF Executive Director Bev Clegg at 204.785.0547.