



Saskatoon Community Foundation Receives \$2.9 Million Donation

Saskatoon, Thursday, January 28, 2010: The Saskatoon Community Foundation (Foundation) has been surprised and amazed by the generosity displayed by a new \$2.9 million donation to the endowment fund. The donation has been made by Vernon (Vern) O. Welker and Clara Madeline (Clara) Welker (formerly Wilson). The Foundation was notified about the bequest after Clara's death in 2009. Vern and Clara were both modest individuals, who owned and operated Vern Welker Men's Wear on 2nd Avenue from 1948 to 1970.

Their bequest creates the **Vern and Clara Welker Fund** at the Saskatoon Community Foundation. Annual disbursements from the fund will be shared equally to benefit five local charities: Habitat for Humanity, Ronald McDonald House, Saskatoon Community Clinic Foundation, Saint Paul's Hospital, and the YWCA. Annual disbursements will depend on the amount allocated, but the fund should provide approximately \$20,000 every year beginning 2011.

"Saskatoon has a history of people connected to community," explains Trevor Forrest, Executive Director of the Foundation. "The generosity of this gift and the manner in which it was left reveals the underlying humanitarian thread that stitches the social fabric of this community together. We are honoured that the Welkers recognized our organization's role in building a strong community."

Born and raised in the Saskatoon area, Vern and Clara were active members of their community, volunteering their time to such groups as the Lions Club, the Kinsmen Club, and the Chatelaine Club of the YWCA. The Welkers' lives reflect quiet strength and compassionate character, and their ultimate gift to the community is also their greatest testament to their love of the community we all call home. The leadership embodied in this gift will forever improve the quality of life for the people of Saskatoon.

About the Saskatoon Community Foundation

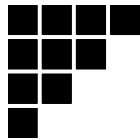
The Saskatoon Community Foundation's mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community by building its endowment and strategically making grants to local charitable organizations. The Saskatoon Community Foundation supports hunger programs, community theatre, adult literacy programs, summer environmental camps, programs for seniors, and many more. Community foundations are one of the world's fastest growing philanthropic movements, with more than 1,100 Foundations in 42 countries. To learn more about the Foundation, go to www.saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca.

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SASKATOON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Media Backgrounder

- Clara Welker passed away in hospital after a short illness. She was 97 years old and was predeceased by her husband Vern Welker in December of 1996 while they were at their winter residence in San Diego. They were married for 63 years and were survived by numerous nieces, nephews and friends in both Saskatoon and San Diego. Upon Clara's passing, the Saskatoon Community Foundation (Foundation) was notified of the Welkers' bequest of \$2.9 million to the Foundation's endowment to benefit five Saskatoon charities equally with the interest earned from the donation. They are: Habitat for Humanity, Ronald MacDonald House, Saskatoon Community Clinic Foundation, Saint Paul's Hospital Foundation and the YWCA.

History on Vern and Clara Welker

- Born in Sutherland, SK in 1907, Vern Welker was the youngest of 12 children. He was the son of James Marion Welker, who ran the Broadview Dairy Farm in what is now the Erindale district of Saskatoon. His parents were pioneers of Sutherland in 1905 and Welker Crescent in Brevoort Park is named after James. Vern worked at Caswell's Men's Wear while he attended Nutana Collegiate. A sports enthusiast, he was a member of the Senior Boys Nutana Baseball team and graduated in 1927.
- Clara Welker was born in 1912 to Arthur and Annie Wilson. Her family farmed for many years in the Wiseton district and had been part time residents of Saskatoon since 1920. Clara graduated from Nutana Collegiate in 1929.
- Vern and Clara were married in 1933 and built their life together in Saskatoon. Vern continued to work for Caswell's Men's Wear, while Clara became a very active member of the Chatelaine Club (affiliated with the YWCA). Self described as *The Keeper of the Keys*, the Chatelaine Club was a group of young married women with interests in home life, marriage, citizenship and advocating equal pay for equal work. Through social service activities they donated to the Red Cross, the field comforts committee of the War Services Auxiliary, and, local charities.
- In 1948, the Welkers bought Hearn's Clothing Store beside the Capitol Theatre on 2nd Avenue and created Vern Welker Men's Wear. Clara was very active in the operations of the business.
- Vern was a member of the Kinsmen Club and volunteered every year to work the "weight-guessing" concession at the Kinsmen Karnival. He was also a member of the Saskatoon Lions Club until 1960. Both Vern and Clara loved to dance and were charter members of the Cotton Capers square dance club – in fact Vern Welker Men's Wear carried a large line of square dancing clothing.
- Vern Welker Men's Wear operated for 22 years and in 1970, Vern sold the business and retired. By then, Clara and Vern had become frequent travelers. They had already toured most of Western Canada and hot spots in the United States. In the winter months of their retirement they resided in San Diego with their friends while staying active with the Cotton Capers and playing golf.