

WACF: Finishing its 40th year with gratitude

By Julianne Endres

Watertown Area Community Foundation

It's hard to believe that the 40th year of the Watertown Area Community Foundation will soon be its 41st. It seems only right that the "40th story for 40 years" should be more of a thank you than an actual story.

We began the year by looking back at the first board members, first donors and first grants, all of the above molding and shaping the Foundation and our community into what it is today.

It has been an honor to dig through the Foundation's archives, resurrecting old articles and photos and learning more about those who came before along the way. We thank former board members Dr. Edwin W. Harper, Dorothy and Ruby Antritter, Velma Vincent, Kenneth and Myrtle Way and so many more from yesterday who are still making a difference through the Foundation.

We thank just as many who are so generous with their time, talent and treasure here and now: the Foundation's current Board members, Laurie Benson, Milt and Chris Carter, Dale and Diane Christensen, Al and Connie Fannin, Joy Nelson, Chuck Olson, Lee and Jan Schull, Jo Vitek — the list goes on.

It's not possible to name all of you, but know we are grateful for you and "greatful" because of you.

There are even some youths in our midst that we are inspired by, former and present Youth Council members included. One young man — actually age 7 — walked into the Foundation office recently because he wanted to support the new park planned for the downtown district. Leo has learned early on, thanks to his parents, that "Looking Forward & Giving Back" is the right thing to do. Thanks Leo.

Our nearly 200 nonprofits in the area join the Foundation in investing in our community every day. Sometimes challenges



40 Years ... 40 Stories: The Watertown Area Community Foundation celebrates 40 years of "Looking Forward and Giving Back", in 2019. The Foundation used this opportunity to not only celebrate, but also to look back with gratitude over the past 40 years.

abound for all of us, but together is how all of this works and we succeed as an organization and a community 40 years ago, today and 40 years from now.

A 1984 Public Opinion editorial, written when the Foundation celebrated its fifth anniversary, concludes with, "What is the future of the Watertown foundation? Our prophecy is that it will continue to bring to Watertown a greater unity in community philanthropy if we

continue to have enough faith in our future to keep on giving..."

Thank you for having that faith in our future! Again, whether you're a past or present donor, a nonprofit, past or present board member, past or present Youth Council member, or other partner, volunteer: thank you. You are our story. We at the Watertown Area Community Foundation look forward to starting the next 40 years — a new chapter — with you.