

The Cedarburg Community Foundation

How it came to be. What it has accomplished. Where it wants to go.

A History

Jim Coutts proposes a foundation.

It was only natural that as mayor of Cedarburg in 1999 Jim Coutts would be aware of trends in other southeastern Wisconsin communities. Therefore he would have noticed that community foundations were organizing in places such as Mequon, West Bend and Oconomowoc. Coutts began to explore the idea of a charitable foundation for Cedarburg.

He asked the city clerk to do a search of Wisconsin Foundations and he contacted the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, which, he said, was eager to supply information and help, he recalled.

"I put together a list of Cedarburg people whom I thought might be interested in forming a Foundation, asking them to come to City Hall for a meeting on Dec. 1, 1999."

After a presentation by Douglas M. Jansson, executive director of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and other Milwaukee Foundation staff members, Mayor Coutts introduced those among the 32 attendees who had agreed to his request to serve on a steering committee. He named H. Robert Fuller as chairman.

Because he didn't want a Cedarburg Foundation to be associated in the public's mind with local government or politics, Coutts stepped out of the picture for the time. He joined the Foundation as a board member after his term as Mayor ended in 2004.

Bob Fuller's steering committee forges a vision.

The first meeting of the steering committee was held in City Hall on Jan. 28, 2000. Original members other than Fuller were Thom Brown, Shirley Decker, Dick Dieffenbach, Paul Dimick, Carl Edquist, David Fritz, Patty Gallun Hansen, Layton Olsen, Merlin Rostad, Pat Thome, Marilyn Vollrath and Bill Wernecke, Sr. Over the next few months, some members left the committee and others joined.

An early discussion, said Dick Dieffenbach, was where to meet. Since the committee consensus was that a Cedarburg foundation, if one should be organized, should not be associated with government, City Hall was abandoned as a meeting place. Early meetings were held at the Washington House and at the Cedarburg Cultural Center.

The committee studied community foundations serving Hartford, West Bend, Shorewood, Green Bay, Fox Valley, Watertown, Mequon, Oconomowoc and others, quickly learning that foundations differ in important ways: Some such as West Bend's began with big endowments, the gifts in West Bend's case from two major donors. Others such as Mequon's had no endowment but raised money for specific community projects as needs were perceived.

"We weren't going to be like either of these," Fuller said. "We wanted to build an endowment but we didn't have a parallel in other community foundations." Since no seven-digit gifts were immediately evident in Cedarburg, Cedarburg's foundation would not follow the West Bend model, he said.

After 10 meetings, it was decided that a Cedarburg Foundation was feasible, a decision, he said, that was based as much on faith as anything. The Cedarburg foundation would have an endowment, "but we couldn't quantify how much we'd get from whom," Fuller said. A board of directors reflecting diversity in age, gender, vocations and attitudes would guide it. It would be independent of politics and government.

The steering committee tackled two other issues: A formal name and a mission statement.

"Should it be the Ozaukee County Foundation?" Fuller said. "The Cedarburg Foundation?"

A countywide foundation would have to serve an area that was not only too large but was urban on the south and rural on the north, Fuller said. "We didn't want to be too restricted," Fuller said, "so we settled on The Greater Cedarburg Community Foundation." This is still its formal name although it has become popularly known as The Cedarburg Foundation.

Shirley Decker and Marilyn Vollrath sat on a subcommittee that brought in proposed mission statements that evolved into the mission statement that guides the Foundation today:

"The Foundation provides support for artistic, cultural and community service projects that contribute to Cedarburg's civic vitality."

Finally, members of the steering committee compiled a list of names of potential board members and screened the attributes of each. Fuller coordinated the process. "I said I would not sit on the first board so I could be objective," he recalled.

On Sept. 29, 2000, the foundation's charter board held its first meeting at the Cedarburg Cultural Center. Fuller announced the new board members: John Armbruster, Thom Brown, Donald Buettner, Shirley Decker, Richard Dieffenbach, Carl Edquist, Mal Hepburn, James Meinert, Dennis Nourse, Layton Olsen, Sandra Pape, John Stevens, William Taylor, Marilyn Vollrath and William Wernecke, Sr.

According to the minutes: "A motion was made by Richard Dieffenbach, seconded by Robert Fuller, to dissolve the present steering committee, and organize the Greater Cedarburg Community Foundation, Incorporated. Motion passed unanimously."

Here are the complete minutes from that important meeting:

THE GREATER CEDARBURG COMMUNITY FOUNDATION CHARTER BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 29, 2000

A meeting of The Greater Cedarburg Community Foundation Charter Board was held at 7:30 a.m., Friday, September 29, 2000, at the Cedarburg Cultural Center.

Members Present: Thom Brown, Shirley Decker, Richard Dieffenbach, Robert Fuller, Layton Olsen, Sandra Pape, John Stevens and Marilyn Vollrath.

A summary statement compiled by Shirley Decker was distributed to committee members.

Robert Fuller reviewed the summary with the members. Richard Dieffenbach shared information he gathered from the attorney, accountants, and money managers focus group meeting, and Shirley Decker shared the feelings of the various organizations attending the non-profit group meeting.

Robert Fuller announced the following new Board Members: John Armbruster, Thom Brown, Donald Buettner, Shirley Decker, Richard Dieffenbach, Carl Edquist, Mal Hepburn, James Meinert, Dennis Nourse, Layton Olsen, Sandra Pape, John Stevens, William Taylor, Marilyn Vollrath,

and Wm. Wernecke, Sr.

Richard Dieffenbach volunteered to handle filing for 501Z{c}{3} status. John Stevens agreed to handle the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

A motion was made by Richard Dieffenbach, seconded by Robert Fuller, to dissolve the present Steering Committee, and organize The Greater Cedarburg Community Foundation Incorporated. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Marilyn Vollrath, seconded by Sandra Pape, to appoint Shirley Decker, Richard Dieffenbach, and John Stevens to the office of Transitional Chairpersons. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by John Stevens, seconded by Richard Dieffenbach, to name Carl Edquist, Mal Hepburn, and William Wernecke Sr. as Initial Directors, for the purpose of the legal filing for the organization. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Thom Brown, seconded by John Stevens, to name the Ozaukee Bank as the depository for the organization. Motion passed unanimously.

The date for the Organizational Meeting was tentatively set for October 20, 2000. A written notice will be sent to all board members.

A motion was made by Marilyn Vollrath, seconded by John Stevens, to thank Robert Fuller for all of his work and contributions as head of the Steering Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Richard Dieffenbach, seconded by Layton Olsen, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 a.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Burmeister, Acting Secretary

John Stevens, First President, 2000-2002.

At its next meeting, Oct. 20, 2000, the board elected these officers: John Stevens, president; Marilyn Vollrath, vice president; Dick Dieffenbach, treasurer, and Thom Brown, secretary. By-laws were approved and board members donated \$100 each to pay initial expenses, including filing fees with the Internal Revenue Service to establish a tax-exempt charity.

"I think I became president because nobody else wanted it," Stevens joked later. "There were a couple of major issues facing us. One was whether to affiliate with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. I believe a subcommittee of the steering committee looked into it. I recall going to the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and discussing it with their staff.

"We were divided. Some board members felt we should have complete autonomy, that we could solve issues on our own."

Stevens believed that busy volunteers would be hard-pressed to invest the hours required to accomplish detailed work. There were legal obligations to be met, accounts to be kept and other demanding tasks for which local volunteer board members had little or no experience.

"I had practiced law in Wausau for 20 years and knew about the Wausau Foundation. It was successful beyond imagination due to very large grants. It had a full-time director and three full-time assistants. I felt we weren't going to get there, so I supported affiliation with Greater Milwaukee Foundation."

The venerable, nationally respected Milwaukee foundation could provide essential services in helping to oversee funds and lay out newsletters, guidance in fund raising and oversight in legal requirements. Treasurer Dieffenbach also supported affiliation with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

"The Milwaukee Foundation brings credibility to our Foundation," Dieffenbach said. "We don't have to make investment decisions. They keep us informed. Without them we'd have to have a full-time administrator and paid staff."

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation holds and invests the Cedarburg Foundation's endowment. The Cedarburg Foundation treasurer manages a smaller checking account from which annual grants are paid, as well as day-to-day expenses. Dieffenbach also oversees a money market account and one special project account.

"Obviously the first job after affiliation with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation was to raise some money," Stevens said. The board set its first goal at \$50,000 to \$55,000."

"We also had to organize as a non-profit, a 501[C][3] tax-exempt charity," Stevens said. "Dick (Dieffenbach) did that, achieving our certification with the Internal Revenue Service."

It was during Stevens' presidency that the board also decided one of its important policies. It would not initiate community projects. Instead, it would provide seed money for projects deemed worthy that were proposed by others. It also would not provide operating funds for established organizations, but apply its money to encourage and support innovative programs and projects designed by others.

Although the foundation's first grant would not be made until 2002, (a grant of \$2,000 to the Cedarburg Cultural Center for enhancement of the Kuhefuss House Gardens), this policy has been the guiding principle for subsequent foundation grant making.

Under Stevens, the board was expanded and organized into committees. Marilyn Vollrath chaired the communications committee, Bill Wernecke development, Thom Brown the project committee, Sandra Pape the grants committee, Mal Hepburn and Dick Dieffenbach shared responsibilities on the investment committee. President Stevens headed the committee on by-laws.

After his one-year term, the foundation was ready for action. It had approved by-laws, it was on a sound legal footing, its board was organized and focused, it had a small but growing bank account and it had a mission.

"We really had a terrific board and got a lot of different people involved," Stevens said. "It was not just a one- or two-man band."

Mal Hepburn, Second President, 2002-2004:

"I first heard about the Cedarburg Foundation in 1999 when Mayor Jim Coutts called and posed a question. Did I think a community foundation could be established here? He believed, given Cedarburg's well-known community spirit, something like this was reasonable. He was right on target, of course," said Mal Hepburn.

Hepburn, then president of Ozaukee Bank, said he attended only a few of the earliest organizational meetings, sending in his stead bank employee Dave Fritz to the first meetings of the steering committee. In September 2001, after the foundation was chartered and organized, "Marilyn Vollrath called me and said we could really use you at these meetings and I agreed to come out."

"At my second meeting in October of that year I talked privately with Bill Wernecke and said if I put \$10,000 into an effort to endow the foundation and brought the bank along for that amount, would the Wernecke family do the same. Bill responded positively and based on that I proposed at the November meeting that we launch a campaign to raise an endowment of

\$250,000. In December 2001 we sent an announcement to the papers that we were getting a fund-raising effort underway.

“John Stevens was president then and he championed the idea of affiliating with the Milwaukee Foundation, a very good move for our group. At the point when our endowment drive was up to \$200,000 and I was getting comfortable, Doug Jansson (executive director of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation) called me and said that if we raised an additional \$200,000, the foundation would match it with \$100,000. This spurred us to raise the fundraising goal to \$500,000.

“As part of that campaign, we published our first newsletter, ‘Cedarburg. Now and Forever.’ Using good grade paper and color, it set a standard that helped us start to build an image of the foundation in people’s minds. The newsletter has since expanded from two to four pages and appears twice a year, spring and fall.

“By the end of the summer of 2002, after a lot of letters, phone calls, and pressing the flesh, I could see that we would likely achieve our full fundraising goal. Ultimately some 40 donors signed on. They are listed as Foundation Founders on the bronze plaque that we placed in City Hall late in the summer of 2003. These people are the real heroes as far as I am concerned and it would be nice if any history of the foundation could include them.”

These are the Founders:

Armbruster’s Jewelers
 Dave and Vicki Bergstrasser
 C.J. “Bud” and Kay Beverung
 The Biegert Family
 Don and Helen Buettner
 Todd Roberts/Calibre, Inc.
 Jim and Sally Castle
 Cedarburg-Grafton Rotary Club
 Cedarburg Light and Water Utility
 Brian and Cathy Collins
 Chris and Deanna Doerr
 David and Marilyn Doerr
 Carl and Rita Edquist
 Dean and Francine Fitting
 5 Corners GMC Truck
 The Freeman Family
 Jack and Susan Hale
 Paul and Philia Hayes
 Gordon and Jean Hepburn
 Jill and Mal Hepburn
 The Wirth Family.
 Jim and Laura Kacmarcik
 Pat and Nancy Kennedy
 Koehler Insurance Agency
 Sharon and Bill LaMacchia
 The Levy Family
 M&I Foundation
 Greater Milwaukee Foundation
 Newman Chevrolet
 Layton and Barbara Olsen

Hepburn Bootstrap Foundation
 Ozaukee Bank Foundation
 Merlin and Gladys Rostad
 Duey and Laura Stroebel
 The Tillmann Family
 In Honor of Paul Trappe
 Tri-Par Kwik Stop
 U. S. Bank Foundation
 The Wernecke Family
 Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek, S. C.

This was an intense effort by Foundation leaders. Hepburn made a special point to emphasize the work of Dick Dieffenbach, who looked after finances from the very beginning, freeing the president to concentrate on raising the endowment. "He's so respected in this community. His presence was important to our credibility. Dick was the backbone of the numbers side of our organization."

"After the endowment drive," Hepburn said, "the first thing I did was solicit a number of community-focused people – 'doers' – to build the board."

Again with an eye towards raising the Foundation's visibility, the Foundation inaugurated the annual Cedarburg Civic Award in the spring 2003 by honoring outstanding citizens or organizations in a free public meeting at the Cedarburg Cultural Center. The first award in 2003 went to former Cedarburg Mayor Merlin Rostad, retired industrialist and accomplished metal sculptor.

The 2004 Civic Award went to the retired industrialist and philanthropist Carl Edquist. Carl, instrumental in founding the Cedarburg Cultural Center, and his late wife, Rita, an artist and early member of the Cedarburg Arts Guild.

In early 2003, Karen Rogers of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation began attending Cedarburg Foundation meetings, acting as liaison and facilitating the relationship between the two organizations.

In the summer of 2003, also under Hepburn's tenure, Dale Stevens constructed a handsome website for the foundation located on the web at www.cedarburgfoundation.org. Stevens used photographs taken by her and her husband John. She contributed work, time, talent and design in between trips to Scottsdale, Arizona, where John had opened a second law office.

The high point of Hepburn's tenure as president came in August, 2003, when the Foundation agreed to launch a fund drive to pay off the beleaguered Cedarburg Cultural Center's mortgage of \$337,000. After an intensive campaign, the money was in hand and delivered in October 2003, putting the Cultural Center on a firm financial footing.

Duey Stroebel, Third President, 2004- 2006:

Under Duey Stroebel, the Cedarburg Foundation entered an era of maturity. Stroebel brought a long-term view to the foundation. He believed that its permanence, stability and effectiveness depended upon the growth of the Legacy Society, which in its first year attracted 10 members. Legacy Society members make outright gifts of \$10,000 or they name the Foundation as a recipient in a number of deferred gift options, including wills, IRA's and other retirement plans, charitable remainder trusts, pooled income funds, life insurance or annuities.

"The Foundation's major achievement has been to establish a sound organizational infrastructure that will lend itself to stability and growth in the future," Stroebel said. "Our main challenge will be to keep an energized board that remains grounded in our mission statement.

"As for our opportunities, we need to recognize the strategic giving opportunities that can maximize the Foundation's impact on the community. People should know that the Foundation is

an independent, autonomous group. It has no affiliation to government or politics. They should know that the foundation acts as a catalyst to jump-start good things in the community that otherwise might not happen."

By late 2005, the foundation had distributed almost \$44,000 in grants, from as small as \$250 for a Cedarburg Players musical theater production to \$10,000 for the extension of the Cedar Creek walkway from City Park to Bridge Street.

In 2005 the Foundation named lawyer and philanthropist Ralph Huiras as its Civic Award winner and in 2006, Robert Armbruster, the third generation of Armbrusters to operate the family jewelry store on Washington Ave., a Cedarburg landmark. Bob was an important keeper of Cedarburg history.

In March 2006, Attorney Donald B. Rintelman was elected to become the fourth president of the Cedarburg Foundation, effective in June. Rintelman announced that his goal would be to expand the Legacy Society to a total of 100 members and to have the foundation recognized as the "go-to" resource to help other community organizations accomplish their major projects.

The community was shaken however, when, on May 13, Don Rintelman; his son Brian, a student at Cedarburg High School, and a friend of Brian's, were killed in a traffic accident.

James (Jim) Coutts, Fourth President, 2006 – 2008:

Former Mayor Jim Coutts, who had been president-elect was elected President of the foundation at its June meeting, two years earlier than expected due to Rintelman's death. One of first orders of business under Coutts was to adopt Rintelman's goal of 100 Legacy Society members.

By the end of the 2006, through the efforts of Board Member Ben Levy, 14 new members of the society were secured. These became members of a subset of the Legacy Society called for a time the Don Rintelman Memorial Legacy Society.

Operating with an endowment that now surpassed \$700,000, the foundation made a grant of \$25,000 to the Cedarburg Landmarks Preservation Society to help buy and renovate the Rivoli Theater, the last single-screen theater in Ozaukee County. It also gave \$9,000 to the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fabric Arts, the "Cedarburg Quilt Museum," to help with fund raising. In early 2007, the foundation approved a grant of \$25,000 to be paid out at \$5,000 a year for five years to expand and renovate the Boy Scout House in Boy Scout Park.

A major fund-raising event, the first annual President's Gala, was held on the grounds of Joe and Nancy Messinger's property on Keup Road. It was attended by 163 people who enjoyed a catered meal, danced and bid on choice donated items in a verbal auction. The gala brought in \$18,000. Board member Vicki Capadona served as chairman of the gala committee. The gala was now envisioned as an annual event.

On February 1, 2007, the foundation honored Edward A. Rappold as its fifth annual Civic Award Winner at its annual Civic Event at the Cedarburg Cultural Center. For 70 years, Rappold, a professional photographer, sought out antique photographs of Cedarburg, some dating from the 1850s, until he had a priceless collection of more than 2,200 images.

The best of these are published in two volumes and many have appeared in other publications. They have been used to guide builders and remodelers in ensuring that new buildings in Cedarburg's national historic district are historically consistent. Rappold donated his entire collection to the Cultural Center for safekeeping.

During this time, Dale Stevens, who had created the foundation's website, found the press of business in commuting between Milwaukee and Phoenix to be too much to keep the website up to date. Dick Dieffenbach recommended that the foundation turn to Carole Blaney, who managed her own software consulting business out of her home.

Blaney agreed and quickly brought the website up to date, adding new features such as copies of the newsletter in a format that can be downloaded and printed. Blaney, who also has had experience on newspapers, was elected to the board, and agreed to take over the editorship of the newsletter from Paul Hayes, whose term on the board ended in spring 2007.

In 2008, the Foundation named Don and Janet Levy as the recipients of the annual Civic

Award for their years of service to the community. They had led campaigns for a new city library, the Performing Arts Center, and in forming the Landmark Preservation Society, which bought and restored the Hilgen-Schroeder grist mill, the Hamilton Turnverein Hall, the Rivoli Theater and much else.

Robert Chmielewski, fifth president, 2008-2010.

Bob (Chimmy) Chmielewski, an Illinois native, graduate of Marquette University, Northwestern Mutual Insurance professional, and a Cedarburg resident since 1969, became president of the foundation in June 2008. Chmielewski sought to grow the foundation's endowment and increase the Legacy Society's membership through what he called "friend-making." Membership in the Legacy Society was conferred onto donors who gave a one-time gift of \$10,000.

When Chmielewski became president, the society had 41 members. Under Chmielewski Vice President Ben Levy, who also was chairman of the development committee, continued his work to attract Legacy Society members. It was a success. By the spring of 2009, the Legacy Society numbered 63 members.

All of that was in addition to the receipts from the Fall 2009 fourth annual gala at the Ozaukee Country Club, which raised more than \$40,000, roughly the same amount raised by the gala the previous year. Now the Cedarburg Foundation's endowment, managed by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, rose to \$750,000.

In 2008, the Cedarburg Foundation approved six grants amounting to a total of \$15,000. In 2009, it approved nine grant requests amounting to \$30,000.

The 2009, the Civic Award honored Mal Hepburn, who recently retired as founder and president of the Ozaukee Bank and was a key founder of the Foundation and its second president.

In September 2009, the Foundation Board created the Roundtable Committee, composed of former foundation board members, to serve in an advisory capacity regarding fund raising, donor development and special events. Jim Coutts, founder and past president, served as its first chairman.

In June 2010, Layton and Barbara Olsen, operators of Olsen's Piggly Wiggly supermarket, were honored as the annual civic award winners. Civic event chairman Jim Coutts said that the store had become a center for enriching the lives of high school students by becoming "a place of opportunity not only as a part-time job, but as a place to earn scholarships and public recognition for academic achievement."

Ben Levy, Sixth President, 2010-2012

As the chair of the Greater Cedarburg Foundation Development Committee for two years, Ben Levy was a natural to become President in June 2010. As he had under Bob Chmielewski's term, Levy continued work on bringing in 100 members to the Legacy Society, the goal of the late Don Rintelman when he died in an automobile accident just days before he was to become president.

By November 2010, Levy presided over a gathering at the Cedarburg Cultural Center where he introduced Katie Rintelman Pipkorn, Don Rintelman's daughter, as the one-hundredth member of the society. Her \$10,000 membership was made possible by members of the Cedarburg community. One hundred members of the Legacy Society brought one million dollars to the foundation.

A graduate of Marquette University Law School in 1988, Levy joined Levy & Levy law firm founded by his father, Don Levy, and uncle, Lowell Levy. Among his several interests, over time he served as president of the Ozaukee County Bar Association, Ozaukee Economic Development, Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce, Forward Cedarburg and Ozaukee Family Services.

Levy made a point of expressing his admiration of those civic leaders who conceived of the foundation and got it up and running.

By spring 2011, the foundation's endowment had increased to \$1,250,000, the amount needed to become a supporting organization of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (GMF). The GMF now provided accounting and auditing services to the Cedarburg Foundation. It invests its assets, oversees the grant-making process and issues the checks. It allows Cedarburg's area family foundations to make donations through the Cedarburg Foundation.

"This means people and organizations with their own funds who have an interest in the greater Cedarburg community can use the expertise and assistance from both the GMF and our foundation," Levy said.

In March 2011, the foundation honored Jim and Sandy Pape with the annual civic award, which was presented before 200 people at the Cultural Center. The Papes were responsible for saving much of the original pioneer architecture of Washington Avenue, now a national historic district. The Papes bought and restored the Wittenburg Woolen Mill, reopening it as a community of shops, galleries and a restaurant. Later, they restored and furnished the 1883 Washington House hotel as an inn. Sandy, an artist herself, joined with David Eitel, a potter, to initiate the first Cedarburg-centered Plein Air competition in 2001. The plein air event became an annual tradition.

The fall 2011 gala at the North Shore Country Club was attended by 200 people. The event and its auction brought in \$55,000, then a record. A highlight was a raffle in which fifty keys were sold for \$50 each. Shirley Krenzke, GCF board treasurer at the time, bought the key that opened a case containing a diamond and sapphire bracelet donated by Dorothy Gallun Fine Jewelry. By this time, the Foundation's assets had risen to \$1,900,000.

In February 2012, former Cedarburg Mayor Jim Coutts was honored as the civic award winner. The idea for a Cedarburg Community Foundation was his and he served as its fourth president. "Levy said that the Foundation distributed \$60,000 in grants to local nonprofits in both years of his tenure.

Peg Edquist, Seventh President, 2012-2014

When Peg Edquist became the first woman to take over the leadership of the Foundation in 2012, she made it her mission to increase public awareness of what the GCF does for the community. Edquist, a former business reporter for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and a freelance writer and columnist, brought those communication skills to the board.

During her presidency, the GCF entered its first float in the Cedarburg July Fourth parade. "We utilized local artwork for the design and handed out cards along the parade route explaining what our organization does," Edquist recalled.

She also worked closely with leaders of the West Bend and Oconomowoc Community Foundations to share ideas and knowledge. Like the Cedarburg Foundation, they also were supporting organizations of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. "We called ourselves The Ladies President's Club," Edquist said. "It was so cool that we had three female leaders at the same time. We learned a lot from each other."

The Cedarburg Foundation's annual gala continued to be its major fundraiser. In the fall of 2012, the gala theme was "My Kind of Town" and was held at the Wisconsin Country Club in Brown Deer. Party goers were treated to a variety of "Rat Pack" era offerings, including "mini-tinis" and a cigarette girl selling raffle tickets for chances to win a 50/50 cash raffle. The event raised nearly \$60,000.

In her second year, 2013, the fall gala was held at the Watermark by Shully's in Thiensville with a '60s "Magical Mystery Tour" theme. Guests were entertained by "The Britons", a Beatles tribute band. More than \$45,000 was raised through a silent and live auction.

Paul and Philia Hayes were honored by the Foundation as the recipients of the 2013 Civic Award for their "generous spirit who constantly give back," Edquist said during the ceremony at the Cedarburg Cultural Center. "Both Philia and Paul have made contributions which have improved our city, memorialized its history and they continually seek ways to make Cedarburg even better."

In 2013, the Foundation awarded its largest grant to date: \$100,000 to the Friends of the Cedarburg Library for a new facility scheduled to open in spring of 2014. A Community Room in the library was later named after the Foundation in honor of its contribution. Another \$76,500 was awarded in grants that same year to eight other organizations. Edquist said there were more major requests for grants that year than ever before.

As a result, in 2014, the Foundation adopted an annual grant cycle, allowing the grant committee to review requests all at one time and make recommendations based on available funds. An informational session was held for non-profit organizations in Ozaukee County to familiarize them with the process and encourage them to apply. A representative from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation vetted all of the applications to make sure they were in compliance with GCF guidelines. Twelve grants were awarded during the first grant cycle totaling \$46,000.

In February 2014, community volunteer and army veteran Jim Lee received the annual Civic Award at the Cedarburg Cultural Center. Lee was particularly known for his involvement with the Cedarburg Peter Wollner American Legion Post, where he had served in nearly every position at the post, including commander. He also started the youth basketball leagues for boys and girls in Cedarburg and coached Little League baseball. He was hailed as a "true example of what volunteer civic participation is about."

Under Edquist's tenure, the GCF settled in as a supporting organization of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. The new status enabled local Donor Advised Funds to be administered under the GCF umbrella. "We suddenly had money managers who were world-class," Edquist said. "It gave us confidence that the people who trusted their money with us were getting world-class service."

Christopher Smith, eighth president, 2014-2015.

Chris Smith was installed as the eighth president of the Greater Cedarburg Foundation at its annual meeting at the Cedarburg Cultural Center on June 3, 2014. Smith, an investment consultant, said that he would focus on "making Cedarburg the best place to call home. Cedarburg's rich history has kept families here for generations, but it is the ongoing cultural, economic and civil efforts that will attract 'the next Cedarburg' to establish their roots here."

As a sixth generation grandson of Cedarburg's founder Johann Friedrich Hilgin, he would know about old Cedarburg families. Smith bridged the gap between the rural, German-speaking, pioneer settlement of the 1840s to the younger, modern, diverse suburb that was being absorbed into the greater Milwaukee metropolitan area..

In an obvious appeal to a younger crowd that was moving into Cedarburg, the gala, which heretofore had been a sedate and semi-formal event at country clubs, was held in October 2014 at the Milwaukee Curling Club, which had recently moved into a new building at the

Ozaukee County Fairgrounds in Cedarburg. Members of the club gave curling lessons to participants, and the evening raised an estimated \$40,000.

In May 2015, Smith presented the annual Civic Award to Dick Dieffenbach. A Cedarburg resident since 1980, Dieffenbach, a Certified Public Accountant, had volunteered his financial advice and services to the city and many local non-profits from the fire department's annual Maxwell Street Days to the Cedarburg Light and Water Commission.

Also in 2015, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, in celebration its 100th year of service, made generous gifts to improve public spaces in the four counties it serves. The gift in Ozaukee County amounted to \$200,000 to support a new and enlarged and shell in Cedar Creek Park. The band shell is the site of the regionally-popular, free Friday night "Summer Sounds" concerts, as well as festival events. The Milwaukee and Cedarburg foundations cooperated in choosing the project as that which would have the greeted positive impact in the community.

On October 17, the tenth annual President's Gala was held at the Cedarburg Cultural Center with a picnic theme, carried out in both games and a menu featuring burgers and beer. It was attended by 155 people and raised \$35,000 for the Foundation's mission. The newsletter, in announcing the annual fund drive, said that the Foundation had distributed more than \$1,000,000 in grants since its founding in 2001.

On May 11, 2016, the Cedarburg Volunteer Fire Department was named the Civic Award Winner, the first time the award was conferred on an organization rather than an individual. The Fire Department was observing its 150th year, having been organized by 31 men in 1866, the year after the Civil War ended. At the time of its award it had 65 active members, of whom 16 were female.

Joe Fazio, Ninth President, 2016 - 2017.

Cedarburg banker Joe Fazio was installed as president of the Greater Cedarburg Foundation on June 1, 2016. The co-founder and CEO of Commerce State Bank from 2005 until its sale in 2022, he had been a Cedarburg City Council alderman and served on the boards of non-profits such as St. Francis Borgia School, Walker's Point Youth and Family Center and the Cedarburg Athletic Booster Club.

He went right to work on the 11th annual President's Gala, which was held In September in the Ozaukee Pavilion at the County Fairgrounds. He obtained more sponsors, added more auction items, and featured the Di Cristo Quartet of local musicians, a paint-to-music performance by artist Shelby Keefe and a buffet dinner catered by Out & Out of Cedarburg. Keefe's painting produced before the audience brought \$2,700 in the auction. A Keefe painting of the Rivoli Theater, commissioned earlier for the event, sold for \$5,500.

The gala earned \$70,000, the most successful to date, due in part to a greater number of local sponsors.

As a businessman, Fazio aimed to "standardize and professionalize our processes, particularly grant-making." He worked to sharpen the purpose and focus of the Roundtable Committee, composed of former board members, and to engage current members in the foundation's plans and events. He broadened board membership beyond the founding members to focus on younger people whose children had graduated from high school and thus could move their time and talents from school-based organizations to the entire community.

The largest grant award for the year, \$85,000, went for the development of the Cedarburg History Museum in the restored 1856 Hilgen & Schroeder Mill Store across Columbia Road from the 1855 mill. The museum was the result of a collaboration of Mal Hepburn, who bought and

restored the building; Don Levy, president of the Cedarburg Landmarks Preservation Society and museum founder, and the Cedarburg Cultural Center.

Another \$56,000 in foundation grants was spread among thirteen other non-profit organizations.

In May 2017, the Foundation named Cedarburg native, businesswoman and civic volunteer Patty Gallun Hansen as the year's Civic Award winner. Hansen was active in Rotary, Cedarburg Scholarship Fund, Cedarburg Cultural Center, Advocates of Ozaukee County, Volunteer Center of Ozaukee County, Forward Cedarburg and many others.. She had served as executive director of the Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce. She co-founded Dorothy Gallun Fine Jewelry with her late mother Dorothy.

For years, she and her husband Michael Hansen reviewed Cedarburg's annual July 4 parade, broadcasting descriptions of each parade unit to the curbside audience as the parade moved between crowded curbsides on Washington Avenue and passed the reviewing stand in front of the Cedarburg Community Center.

"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy," she said in accepting the Civic Award. "You vote in elections every year or four years, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in."

Almost 200 people attended the twelfth annual President's Gala held on September 2017 at the Ascension Columbia St. Mary's event center at the Ozaukee County Fairgrounds. The gala raised more than \$60,000 for the Foundation. During Fazio's tenure, the Foundation passed the \$1,000,000 mark in grants for community projects, arts and social service agencies.

The 16th annual civic award was presented to Jack and Susan Hale in May 2018. Jack Hale was the CEO of T.J. Hale Company, manufacturer of retail interiors, and served on the boards of the Cedarburg Foundation and the Cedarburg Cultural Center, where he oversaw the design and completion of exterior improvements to the building. Susan was a founding member of the Cedarburg Artists Guild and has won many awards for her joyful paintings of outdoor Wisconsin and Cedarburg scenes.

John Cordio, Tenth President, 2018-2020.

John Cordio, a Certified Public Accountant and Cedarburg civic volunteer, brought new life to the role of Cedarburg Community Foundation president. He served a total of nine years on the Board. He was president from mid-2018 to mid-2020. Cordio is president and CEO of Answerport, a management and technology consulting firm that he founded in 1999.

His primary goal as President of the Foundation was to continue to strengthen the practices and structure put in place during Joe Fazio's term. He believed that it was important to involve younger people in the foundation but retain the mission of the foundation's founders. Working on this transition was important to him.

When it was time for the annual Gala, Cordio had a fresh idea. Guests boarded a rubber-tired trolley at the Cedarburg Cultural Center and traveled to the Cedarburg Art Museum, the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts and the Cedarburg History Museum for tours. Beverages and appetizers were served at each. They then returned to the Cultural Center for dinner, live and silent auctions, and music. "It was great to see people having so much fun throughout the evening while raising more than \$50,000 for the Foundation," Cordio said.

The format was such a success and so well received by the participants that the trolley ride and museum tours were repeated in 2019, this time raising more than \$60,000, even more than before.

In the early summer of 2019, Jerry and Alice Voigt were named Civic Award recipients.

Both graduates of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, they met while teaching at Steffen Middle School in Mequon. They married in 1964 and moved to Cedarburg in 1969. In 1992 they accompanied twenty teenagers on a church-sponsored service project to Appalachia where they worked to improve housing in poverty-stricken communities. Inspired by this experience, they organized twelve similar missions for the next twelve years followed by ten missions leading teenagers to a small city in Brazil. After Jerry completed fourteen years as chairman of the town of Cedarburg, he and Alice took over the management of the newly-restored Rivoli Theater, where they do everything from hiring to selling tickets to vacuuming.

.. In the spring of 2020, Bill Wernecke, Sr., received the 18th annual Civic Award. Wernecke took over as head of Cedarburg Lumber Company from his father in the 1960s after earning a business degree from Northwestern University. Among his many contributions to the community, Wernecke helped provide new windows and a roof for the 1855 Hilgin-Schroeder mill, an architectural treasure, and he was a key leader in raising \$700,000 for Cedarburg's new library. As the COVID-19 pandemic was worsening, the annual Civic Awards Celebration at the Cedarburg Cultural Center was cancelled. A fine article about Wernecke in the Foundation's biannual newsletter served as a community tribute.

Under Cordio's leadership, the foundation passed the \$1.6 million mark in total giving.

As he said at the 2019 annual gala, "We all have an opportunity to continue investing in our community through the Foundation. Whether it's attending the annual gala, participating in the annual fund drive in December, or becoming a member of the Legacy Society, we can all make an impact for generations to come."

Mark Langholz, Eleventh President, 2020-2022

Mark Langholz, a graduate of Marquette Law School, was an assistant district attorney in Waukesha County from 1998 to 2006 before joining the Cedarburg Law Firm of Levy and Levy. He has served as president of the Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce, president of the Cedarburg Cultural Center, a board member of Advocates of Ozaukee County, worked with Festivals of Cedarburg, and coached various youth sports teams.

He was named president of the Cedarburg Community Foundation on June 9, 2020. His goals were to work with organizations that received foundation grants to identify projects both completed and those that needed more time. Langholz wanted to help groups still in need of stability by approving more foundation grants. He also worked with past board members on the Roundtable committee to find not only new board candidates, but also donors and volunteers with useful skills.

But the COVID pandemic was still with us and strengthening. Aware that the annual President's Gala had been the major source of income since 2006, Langholz was determined even in a time of social distancing to find a way to raise money. That was accomplished with the Foundation's first and so far only virtual gala held in 2020.

The board prepared videos which were posted over three separate days highlighting recent grants and encouraging people to make donations through the Foundation website. The event turned out to be a success. The foundation raised \$30,000, less than previous galas but sufficient to cover the needs of the foundation and bridge the gap caused by the epidemic.

On November 30, 2020, former Cedarburg Mayor James W. (Jim) Coutts died just days before his 85th birthday. He was the first to see that a community foundation would be good for Cedarburg. As mayor, Coutts didn't want citizens to associate a foundation with politics so he quietly spread the idea among some leading citizens who laid the groundwork that evolved into the foundation. After Coutts left office in 2004, he joined the foundation board and later served as

its fourth president. After his death, the foundation under President Langholz renamed the annual civic award "The Greater Cedarburg Foundation's Civic Award in Memory of James W. Coutts." In March 2021, the Foundation awarded almost \$30,000 to eight area non-profit organizations.

In the summer of 2021, with COVID in a seasonal decline, planning began for an in-person gala to take place in October. Attracted by a theme of "Celebrating Cedarburg's Heroes," 130 participants rode rubber-tired trolleys from the Cultural Center to the Cedarburg Fire Department and the Peter Wollner American Legion Post before returning to the Cultural Center for dinner, live music and live and silent auctions. A painting by artist and board member. Robb Helf, called "Down By the Old Wadham's Pagoda," sold to a high bidder of \$15,000.

Because of COVID, the annual Civic Award was not presented in 2021. In April 2022, the Greater Cedarburg Foundation Award in Honor of James W. Coutts was awarded to retired journalist and magazine publisher Gail Ostermann. Ostermann moved to Cedarburg in the mid-1980s after five years as state editor of the Janesville Gazette to become advertising director of the Ozaukee County News Graphic. She volunteered her skills in writing, marketing and public relations to the local Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Cultural Center and the Foundation, among other non-profits. She retired in 2015 as publisher of M Magazine, a lifestyle publications for the Metropolitan Milwaukee Area.

Joe Rintelman, Twelfth President, 2022–2024.

Joe Rintelman was a senior at Cedarburg High School when community leaders created the Greater Cedarburg Foundation. "It's still dumb-founding that I have been entrusted to lead," said Rintelman.

Rintelman is a fifth-generation member of a large Cedarburg family and a first cousin of the late Don Rintelman, who was expected to become the foundation's fourth president when he lost his life in an automobile accident in May 2006.

"The success of GCF demonstrates the deep affection that people hold for our community," Joe Rintelman said. "Cedarburg's distinctiveness is built on the vision, dedication and generosity of our predecessors. This heritage informs us as we strive to ensure GCF remains a vibrant organization. It's a privilege to gather together individuals, businesses and families who wish to enhance the quality of life in Cedarburg. I'm grateful for the trust placed in the GCF board to be financial custodians in achieving great things for Cedarburg."

Rintelman assumed the position of president two years into the Covid-19 pandemic. He credited his predecessor, Mark Langholz, for navigating fundraising during that challenging time. Emerging from the pandemic, Rintelman sought to build a strong board of directors, reinvigorate the annual gala, expand awareness of GCF and strengthen internal systems.

Rintelman also initiated planning for GCF's 25th anniversary, which would occur in 2025. He pointed out the growth of gala attendance to pre-pandemic levels as one of his major accomplishments. In his first year, gala destinations included the Cedarburg Public Library and Interurban Railway Depot. In his second year, the theme was "It's Showtime in Cedarburg!" and included a cocktail hour at the Rivoli Theatre.

Rintelman also introduced "Trips of a Lifetime," sponsored by the American Fundraising (AmFund) Foundation, as exciting new auction items in the 2023 gala. The gala raised more than \$77,000, which put \$53,000 into the foundation's accounts. By end of the third quarter of 2023 the foundation directly controlled almost \$3.25 million.

In his first year, a total of \$58,000 in grants were distributed to seven local organizations. Grants included \$5,000 to re-brand a vintage Airstream trailer for Summer Sounds, the popular Friday evening concert at Cedar Creek Park's bandshell, and \$15,000 to help purchase and

install outdoor playground equipment at the Portlight homeless shelter operated by Family Promise of Ozaukee County.

The 2023 GCF Civic Award in Memory of James W. Coutts was presented to The American Legion Peter Wollner Post 288. The event was held at the Post and many Legionnaires were in attendance. Rintelman credits the success of GCF over the preceding two decades to the perseverance, commitment and generosity of many individuals, families and businesses.

In looking forward to the future of GCF, Rintelman said, "If the foundation is to perpetuate itself, we can't rely solely on the work of our founders and their successors. A new generation must carry the torch."