

Giving Back

with the Battle River Community Foundation

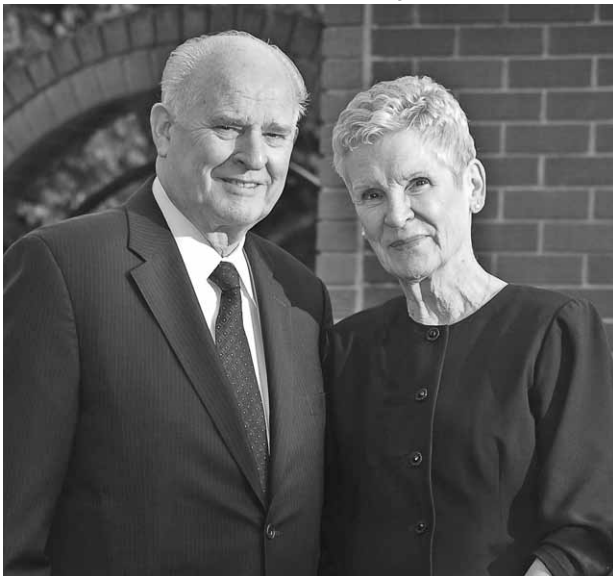
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Celebrating two very dedicated community builders

The Battle River Community Foundation is very pleased to announce that on Friday, October 21,



Norm and Betty Mayer

Norm and Betty Mayer will be honoured at the annual Community Builders' Dinner.

The Mayers, who have been in Camrose since 1963, are well known for their generous contributions and dedication to the community. You can learn more about their history and philosophy on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter.

A number of Camrose residents will be participating in the evening to honour Norm and Betty, including Ron Pilger (Master of Ceremonies); Doug Johnson (Auctioneer); Wayne Thronson and James Mayer (both of whom will be speakers); along with others yet to be announced. The event, taking place at the Norsemen Inn, will include a delicious meal, live auction and words of tribute. All proceeds from the night will be added to the Mayer's Battle River Community Foundation fund, and used to support projects in east central Alberta.

Tickets can be purchased through any Battle River Community Foundation board member, listed on the back page, or by calling the office at 780-679-0449.

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Two copies of the newsletter?

If you received *Giving Back* in the mail, you will have received two copies. It is hoped that you will share the second copy with someone who may be interested in the work we do. If you feel that the Foundation is worthy of support, perhaps they will too.

We appreciate your assistance in helping to raise awareness of the Foundation throughout east central Alberta.

Camrose couple has given a lifetime

Each year the Battle River Community Foundation celebrates the contributions of individuals and couples in east central Alberta who have made a long-term difference to their community, by celebrating them at Community Builder tribute nights.

The Foundation seeks to honour those who believe in making their world a better place, and actually do what it takes to make positive change happen.

Long-time Camrose couple Norm and Betty Mayer are a stellar example of what it means to be community builders. Since their very early days they've given to their community freely, with both their time and resources. As a family and through their business, the Mayers have been generous supporters of a wide range of community causes.

"We never tried to pick and choose," says Norm. "We believe in communities and we believe that there are lots of small groups whose work makes communities stronger. We've always tried to support as many organizations as we can, in as many ways as we can."

In addition to their individual support, the Mayers have established funds through the Battle River Community Foundation, and also give directly to the Foundation's Reading University project. Betty likes the concept that, through the Foundation, the couple's support to the community can carry on even if they're not here, and will continue to benefit a variety of projects. "We can't sit here today and predict the needs of the future," she explains. "The Foundation has the flexibility to change over time, to meet needs that might arise."

"We're no different than anyone else – each generation wants to make things better for those who come after them."

Norm and Betty were both born in the 1930s and raised in Manitoba. Despite their common roots of origin, the two did not actually meet until after they had each moved to Edmonton.

Now married for 53 years, the duo's eyes still twinkle as they recall that first meeting, at a roadside bus stop where Norm offered Betty a ride after they exited a transit bus.

"It's not as bad as it sounds," Betty reassures. "He knew the girl I was with and, in those days of fewer busses and long waits at bus stops for connections, it wasn't uncommon on a cold day for someone to offer a ride. I wouldn't encourage anyone to accept a ride now, but I'm glad I did it then."

The Mayers came to Camrose as newlyweds in 1958 when Norm accepted a job at a local insurance agency. A year later they moved on to Calgary, where sons Bruce and James were both born before the family of four returned to Camrose in 1963. Six months later Central Agencies was born.



Betty and Norm's wedding

The new insurance business began in the dining room of the Mayers' home, with the agency phone on the kitchen counter. Norm was the sole agent and Betty managed the "office" – creating files and keeping things organized while also supervising the two toddlers.

Eventually Central Agencies found a home of its own on 49 Street and, after a couple of

of community service and support



Norm Mayer and Alderman Berdie Fowler hold the ribbon as Mayor Rudy Swanson cuts it to officially open the Mayer building on 51 Street.

moves, settled into a brand new three-storey brick building in 1976. The business, which has expanded to include real estate, now employs thirty people.

Despite being very busy in the business, the Mayers, Norm particularly, have also managed to be active in the community. He was a member of the Lions Club, the Chamber of Commerce and helped with the Cubs/Scouts. Betty, says Norm, made it her priority to ensure things ran smoothly behind the scenes, so he could continue that community role. She worked in the business and oversaw their household, which for 16 years included Norm's father Matyes, in addition to the couple's two sons. But she was usually at Norm's side for public events and fully encouraged his public role.

Norm served three terms as a city councillor, from the mid-70s to 80s, then after a one-year hiatus became Mayor of Camrose in 1989 – a position he held for 15 years. During that time, among many other contributions, Norm played an instrumental role in the formation of the Battle River Community Foundation. “I could really see the value of having a vehicle for ensuring there was continuity in funding for some of our community's important organizations,” he says.

Both in their 70s now, Norm and Betty have slowed down some, but not that much. They both go to the office (though son James is more at the helm these days) and Betty also coordinates volunteer Meals on Wheels drivers for the United Church. They still attend a wide range of events regularly and are still strong financial contributors to many causes.

“It's like that old saying,” Norm explains. “We can't cure all the problems of the world, but we can help someone. So we do.”



The Norm and Betty Mayer family



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Why should I give to the Foundation?

Community Foundations across Canada (and around the world) exist for the benefit of communities and causes that are important to donors.

So how can you help make a difference to your community?

Board members from the Battle River Community Foundation recently received this description of how a community foundation exists to give back, compliments of the Banff Community Foundation. It's a great description of how a community foundation such as ours can help – and how you can help make it happen.

When you first see the orchard, you notice the strong fence and large sturdy gates that open onto a perfectly maintained garden. Just inside the gate is a sign featuring the community foundation's name and the year it was established. As you step further into the orchard, you see rows of apple trees. of all different ages and sizes. Most of the trees have been planted by families, organizations or individuals who don't want their tree to ever be cut down. But they do want the annual harvest to be shared through their community.

Every year, the ripe apples are gathered and distributed throughout the community, to those who need them. Keeping a close watch on the community to determine who has the most pressing need is part of the foundation's work.

It doesn't matter if your gift is large or small; if you give once or give often; if you create a fund or give to a fund that already exists; if you give in your own name, in memory or celebration of someone else; every contribution has the power to make a difference. Call one of our Board of Directors or the Battle River Community Foundation office to talk more about how you can "share the harvest".

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