

# The Builder

## Stoops Estate boosts three local foundations

### Charles Stoops never forgot his Butler County childhood home

The annual salad luncheon at Hruska Memorial Public Library in April was hushed when Larry McPhillips stepped to the microphone.

The crowd of about 70 members of the Friends of the Library didn't know what to expect.

McPhillips, chairman of the Butler County Area Foundation Board of Directors, talked about the gift of 154 acres that had been given to local foundations by the estate of Charles and Grace Stoops. The sale of the farmland benefited three local foundations.

"Some of you may have known the Stoops family," he reminded them.

Then he dropped the bomb: The David City Library's Foundation's part of the gift was \$95,770, McPhillips said.

The reaction buzzed through the stacks.

"Ninety-five thousand?" guests uttered as they applauded the gift. "Is that what he said?"

And that was just 20 percent of the gift.

The Stoops' generous gift amounted to \$483,162.88 for the future.

Joining the library foundation in the benefit was the Future Generations Health Care Foundation with \$95,770, and the BCAF Fund's Stoops Endowed Scholarship Account, \$97,202, and the BCAF unrestricted endowment \$194,414.

The gift is the second made by the Charles and Grace Stoops estate. They started a scholarship fund with the foundation, then known as the David City Area Foundation, in 1997 when Charles passed away at the age of 83.

Grace Stoops, a Lodi, Calif. native, passed away in 2008 at the



Grace and Charles Stoops paid tribute to Charles' home of his youth, Butler County, by donating two farms to benefit local foundations. After he moved to California, Charles made annual visits to Nebraska.

age of 81, said the Stoops' only son, Charles Albert Stoops of Santa Barbara, Calif.

The senior Stoops wanted the second farm to help support Grace, their son said, and when she died, it was the Stoops' intention to help the Butler County area once again.

### Roots in Butler County

Charles Stoops grew up in the David City and Surprise areas. He moved west with two friends after high school and attended UCLA. He settled in Whittier, California, and owned his own insurance business.

About once a year he would return to Nebraska to see family and friends and also to witness the spring migration of the Sandhill Cranes through the Platte River flyway.

"He always talked about David

City," his son said. "He had fond memories."

Charles Stoops was an outgoing person, but tooting his own horn wasn't his style.

Some donors have the goal of leaving their family name on building or a lasting legacy in the town where they lived and worked all their lives.

For Charles Stoops, giving was low key.

"It was something that he was able to do," his son said. "He didn't need any praise for it. That was where he was born and he tried to go back and see some of his people. It was part of his roots."

McPhillips, the BCAF president, said he got to know Charles Stoops

in the 1990s.

"We used to go to lunch when he came back to town. He told me he liked to help people, and that's what he did," McPhillips said.

### Major local boost

The injection of nearly half a million dollars into three foundations carries great value for Butler County's future.

The gift pushed the BCAF's total fund value past the \$1 million mark, with much of that dedicated to local scholarships.

The unrestricted endowment enables the BCAF board to respond to future needs and opportunities in the community that are still unknown.

Future Generations Healthcare Foundation supports the county-owned Butler County Health Care Center. Ed Meysenburg, director of the foundation, said such a gift brings out the appreciation for the hospital and its key part of the community.

"The inherent beauty of the gift from the Stoops is the fact that although the family members are no longer inhabitants of Butler County, there is still a love and a willingness to share a part of themselves and what they have in giving back to the community that shaped and formed who they were and who they are today," Meysenburg said.

The David City Library Foundation supports Hruska Memorial Public Library, which replaced the former Carnegie library building in 1996 after a local fundraising campaign.

"It's a gift that will enable the town to keep on giving back. It allows the community to do things it otherwise wouldn't be able to do," McPhillips said. "It will be wonderful for the youth of the community. The extra scholarships will come in handy, especially with the cost of education."

As for the library the Stoops gift

is a difference maker.

"This puts the library in a tremendous position," said McPhillips, who also serves on the library foundation board. "This is going to be well on the road to getting it paid for."

The BCAF encourages gifts of all sizes to help build its endowment for the future. Members of the Builders Club commit to giving as little as \$10 per month toward the \$1,000 requirement.

The foundation, affiliated with the Nebraska Community Foundation, has many options available to help people with their giving. NCF advisors can help donors explore all the possibilities, some of which can benefit the donors in their lifetime.

"Hopefully the Stoops gift will be a spark and maybe others will think about doing the same thing for their community," McPhillips said. "With the state of the economy, this is going to be needed more than ever."

Larry Peirce, secretary of the BCAF board, agreed.

"Nobody cares about this place as much as people who live here or have lived here in the past," Peirce said. "The Stoops gift is a great example for all of us."

Meysenburg said he hopes that others follow the Stoops' example.

"Thank you Stoops family for helping us pop a couple of proud buttons. We have a lot to be proud of. Sometimes it takes a gift such as this to rediscover some of the treasures that surround us and the possibilities that others could find a little spot in their heart to do the same," Meysenburg said.

Charles Albert Stoops contacted the foundation in late 2008. He worked with McPhillips and Bob Bierbower, a David City attorney and longtime member of the BCAF board.

"The foundation board appreciates the time and effort that Bob put forward to help with the Stoops gift," McPhillips said.



Stoops in 1931

# BC Chamber Banquet hosts BCAF grant celebration



## Bone Creek Museum of Agrarian Art, \$2,000

Amanda Mobley and Mark Moseman pose with BCAF Member Carol Fuxa at the award presentation in January.

Already a significant draw of visitors to David City, the Bone Creek Museum has big goals ahead. Dale Nichols, a native of David City, is famously known for his iconic Americana paintings of red barn scenes.

The Bone Creek Museum is planning the first major retrospective exhibition and catalogue encompassing the life of this great artist. The traveling exhibition is scheduled for May 2011 through November 2012. The exhibit will premier in David City, and travel to two other museums in non-adjacent states. This will bring national exposure and tourist dollars to Butler County. We are glad to help.



## Ridin' on Faith Ministry - \$700

Michelle Jakub and her husband Marvin pose with BCAF board member Bob Bell, right.

Michelle has created a new organization, Ridin' on Faith Ministry. This ministry is committed to individuals and families by bringing people and horses together in a safe environment, allowing the opportunity for enrichment of lives through building relationships, training servant leaders, improving communication, and providing hope. Jakub needs to present her vision for her ministry to area groups to help the non-profit organization grow. The grant of \$700 helped her purchase computer Power Point technology to prepare her presentations.



## Butler County Arts Council - \$1,500

Mistyn Koizisek of the Butler County Arts Council stands with BCAF board member Carol Fuxa.

The Butler County Arts Council continues to provide quality entertainment and a significant enrichment to Butler County through the various programs it schedules throughout the year. If you haven't taken advantage of these opportunities, I encourage you to do so.

The enrichment of community life with the arts and the eventual restoration of the Thorpe Opera House as a center of community cultural events are among the goals of the Butler County Arts Council. The continuation of the Butler County Community Choir's annual Christmas concert with a chamber orchestra will keep the arts viable in Butler County and provide a unity among the various communities making up Butler County Arts Council with members from the general area. The emphasis on showcasing area talent in One Act Celebrations, Youth Artist Showcase and a Youth Theatre will continue the focus on young people.



## Ulysses Recreation Center - \$1,500

Left, Mark Kinnett, president, and Rita Shipley, treasurer, of the Ulysses Recreation Center, pose with BCAF board member Rolly From. The Center provides a place for public and private gatherings in Ulysses. Age has begun to take its toll on the building. The kitchen area needs upgrades to better serve the groups that use the center.

Improvements to the kitchen will make the center much more appealing and user-friendly for gatherings such as wedding receptions, anniversaries and graduation parties.

### January Excitement!

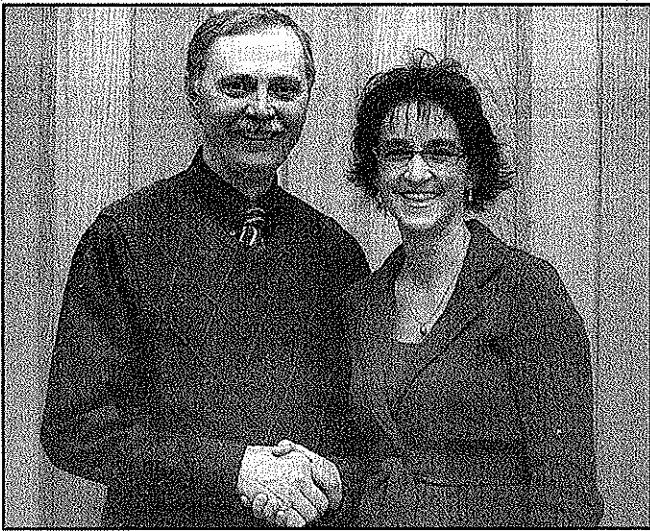
The Butler County Area Foundation presented its 2009 grants in January at the Annual Banquet of the Butler County Chamber of Commerce. Call a BCAF Board member for more information.

### The BCAF Mission

**Our mission is to enrich the quality of life in the area.**

**These are our guiding principles:**

- \*To act as a catalyst for positive change in the area.**
- \*To provide a means for citizens to give back to the community.**
- \*To support and strengthen local organizations.**
- \*To build an endowment to provide funds for community projects that will enhance the long-term success and quality of life in the community.**
- \*To identify needs and make grants in areas of human services, education, art, culture, recreation and civic improvements.**



#### Butler County Community Choir, \$1,000

Choir member Vern Dvorak shakes the hand of BCAF board member Carol Fuxa.

Every year, beginning the last week of September, vocalists gather at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in David City to begin preparations for their annual Christmas Cantata. The cantatas are usually scheduled for the first Sunday in December. Practices continue every Sunday night until performance time. The group is called the Butler County Community Choir. This is a community event, gathering vocalists from all areas of the county to perform, as a mass choir, the sounds of the Christmas Season. Butler County singers are showcased, and a chamber orchestra comprised of many talented musicians from across the Eastern part of Nebraska, is brought in to complete the sound.



#### Butler County Chamber of Commerce, \$1,000

Roland From and Chas Eberle, BCAF board members, pose with chamber director Stephanie Dubbs.

In 2004, LeadershipPlenty came to Butler County through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension with sponsorship by the David City Area Chamber of Commerce.

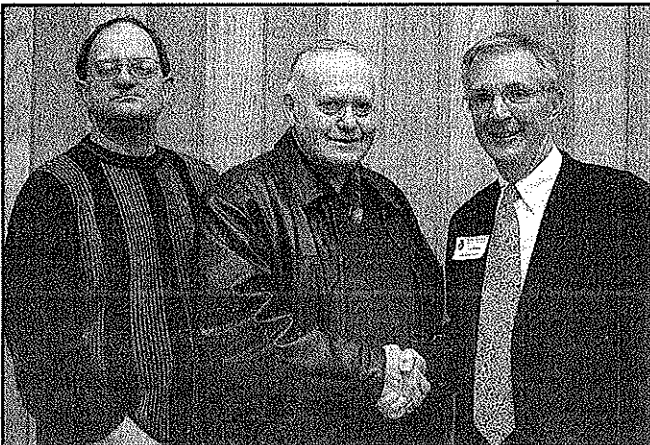
The program is now called Leading Locally, and the chamber has changed its name to Butler County Chamber of Commerce. Some of the 85 course graduates have formed new networks, improved their leadership skills and started new community improvement projects. For the sixth year, the foundation will provide funds to make this course affordable. Local employers and organizations are encouraged to enroll one of your key people in this program. They will grow from the experience. Applications will be out soon.



#### The Thorpe, Inc., \$3,000

Roberta Parks poses with BCAF board member Roland From. The largest and most visible building in downtown David City is the Historic Thorpe Opera House. It has served the community as a venue for plays, musicals, dances, and the list goes on. The east wall of the Thorpe was shared with the old Perkins Hotel, which was razed. The wall was not built to withstand the weather, and its deterioration accelerated and is compromising the structural stability of this historic landmark.

The future plans of this building hinge on repairing the east wall. Then it will have a viable future as a community center, housing its current uses and adding more.



#### Ulysses Cemetery Association, \$1,000

Bill Payne, left, and Donald Mashek pose with Larry McPhillips, right, president of the BCAF board. The spring storms of 2008 brought a tornado through the Ulysses area.

The Ulysses Township Cemetery sustained considerable damage. The foundation provided a challenge grant of \$1,000 to the cemetery association, and within months, the association had raised more than enough to qualify for the grant. The foundation's grant will help the association pay for some of the repairs that are not covered by insurance. The association has been cooperative in raising funds and also in understanding the limits placed on grant funds. The cemetery is one of the oldest in Butler County.



#### Park improvements in DC, \$1,500

Deb Dinkelman, who is involved in the tennis court and basketball court improvement project, poses with BCAF board member Bob Bell. The Tennis Court Committee received \$1,000 to purchase new nets and a windbreak screen for the tennis courts.

The David City Optimist Club is building a basketball court next to the tennis court. This will relieve the extra wear on the tennis courts, and give cagers a home of their own. Local businesses and the youth of David City are helping with funds. The David City Optimist Club formed in late 2007. The Optimist International motto is "Bringing out the best in kids." A great park in David City helps kids of all ages.

## Think forward

The Butler County Area Foundation wants to hear about projects that will make a long-term difference in the future of the Butler County area.

Five years ago, we began the process of strategic grantmaking. That means we began being more selective about the types of grants we approved.

Why? Because there are many fundraisers out there to help purchase items that have a limited lifespan. The local booster clubs help to provide equipment for many high school activities, for example, but that equipment wears out, and more equipment is needed.

These are challenging times in rural Nebraska, and the foundation board wants to use the proceeds from donated funds in ways that will have a long-term positive impact. Entrepreneurship, leadership training and education are three key areas.

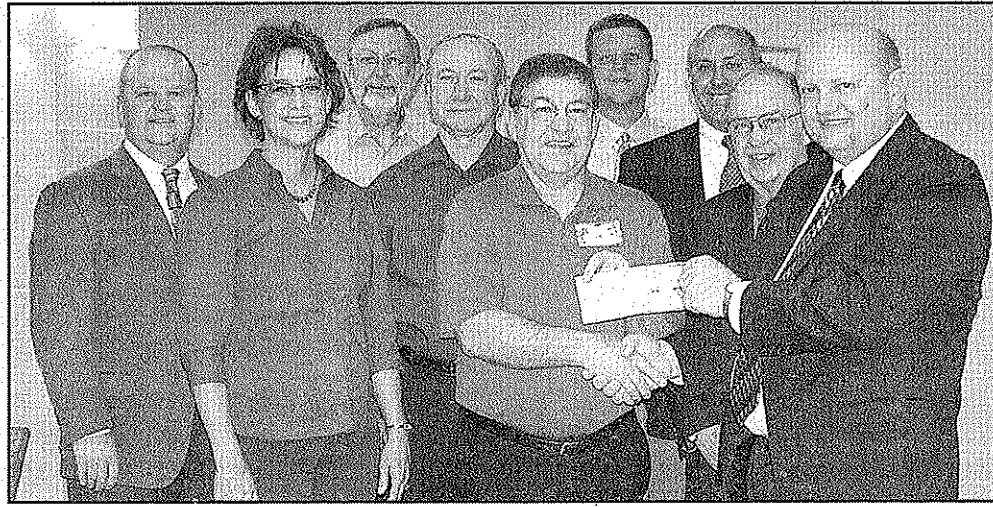
We want to improve the community's quality of life to make it attractive to new families and to those former residents who want to come back and make Butler County their home for their career and their family.

Local community groups are encouraged to think about how their programs, projects and goals will help the community over the course of 10 to 20 years. Grant application time will be here before you know it. Start planning today!

## Future Generations, Library Foundation benefit from Stoops Estate gift



**CONTRIBUTING TO THE GREATER COMMUNITY** -- A check for \$95,770 was presented to the David City Library Foundation in April. From left: BCAF board members Larry Peirce and Carol Fuxa, Hruska Memorial Public Library director Kay Schmid, and BCAF President Larry McPhillips. The library foundation supports the long-term future of the library, named after Sen. Roman Hruska, a major contributor.



**A HELPFUL CONTRIBUTION** -- Future Generations Executive Director Ed Meysenburg, center, receives a check for \$95,770 from BCAF board member Alan Zavodny. From left, Larry Peirce and Carol Fuxa of the BCAF board, Jim Egr, Future Generations board, Dr. Vic Thoendel, Meysenburg, BCHCC Administrator Don Naiberk, and Chas Eberle, Joe Roberts and Zavodny of the BCAF board.

### Become a Charter Butler Builder!

**Our goal:** To have 100 projects. members commit to giving \$1,000 to the foundation's unrestricted endowment. So far we have 41 members who are residents and former residents of Butler County.

#### How can you become a member?

By donating \$1,000, either all at once or in lesser increments. You can give \$100 per year or as little as \$10 per month in an electronic fund transfer from a bank account.

#### Where does the money go?

Into the unrestricted endowment of the foundation. The money will be added to the current endowment total of \$330,000. The amount earned from that invested provides funds to give back to the community.

#### How much comes back to the community?

Each of the last three years, the foundation has given \$14,000 back to local

#### What is the potential?

If the foundation increases its endowment by \$100,000, that means an additional \$5,000 can be given in grants. For a \$200,000 increase: \$10,000. For \$300,000, \$15,000. An endowment of \$1 million would mean that \$50,000 would be returned to the community every year. That could make a real difference.

#### How do I get involved?

Talk to a Butler County Area Foundation board member and pick up a commitment form. Write a check toward your commitment and you are on board.

#### What do I get?

Your gift is tax deductible. You also get the satisfaction that your gift will continue to give, indefinitely. You also will be recognized in foundation publicity and at foundation events.

### Want to help your community?

We know how you can help. As an affiliate fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation, we can assist you in the gift giving process. We have many ways that you can help to provide a strong future for Butler County, through membership in the Builders Club, a planned gift through estate planning or a gift annuity that can pay you back, we can help.

Please call 402-367-4334.

Write to us:

**Butler County Area Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 91**  
**David City, NE**  
**68632**

### Butler County Area Foundation

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