

# The Founders

A group of men gathered in the woods, free from outside influence, and speculated about the future. They allowed their imaginations free rein. The group was self appointed. They knew they were onto something big, and were excited about it. The Founding Fathers? No, but they started to feel like it, as they began to put ideas into words that eventually gave birth to one of the most exciting and influential organizations in the Ozarks. The year was 1973.

In the early '70s, Anne Drummond came into my office at the Citizens Bank (now Commerce Bank). As we visited, I told her about a trust estate we were closing that left several hundred thousand dollars to the Shriners Crippled Children's Hospital in St. Louis — the entire remainder of the trust estate. The donor was not a Shriner, knew no Shriners, was unmarried, and had no children. It was a gift out of the blue to the hospital. When she heard this, Anne became perturbed, and

*In addition to helping found the CFO, retired attorney Vincent Tyndall served as Chairman of the Board of Directors twice; from 1975-77, and 1985-87.*

*Today's CFO stands on the shoulders of those who planted and nurtured the seeds to grow a community foundation in Springfield.*

started in on me, as if it were my fault. Anne was a fine lady, determined, always on a mission, kind, persuasive, and feisty. (I don't know why we call little old ladies like this "feisty", but it always seems to fit.) Why, she wanted to know, couldn't this gift have been given to a community foundation? Why didn't we have a community foundation in Springfield, Mo.? I didn't know what she was talking about. That's the way it was with Anne. She was always ahead of everyone else. She gave me my first lecture on community foundations.

About this same time, City Councilman Jim Payne had had a similar awakening on a trip when he encountered a project successfully completed by a community foundation in another city.

At Anne's funeral, Jan Horton offered a moving eulogy, and noted Anne's Johnny Appleseed-predilection for planting seeds where she thought the community needed them, and providing nourishment until they grew. Jan specifically mentioned Anne's role with the "Community Foundation stimulating permanent

*By Vincent Tyndall*

charitable endowments for the future needs of Springfield.”

The concept of endowing funds was a difficult notion to sell in Springfield in the early days. The donating public had been well trained to believe that all charities had urgent and pressing needs for funds, right then, not sometime in the future. After all, wasn't that the purpose of the United Way? A community foundation was a perceived competitor of the United Way, and even a threat to those who needed relief presently. However, Anne saw into the future, and knew that in time large gifts, and even small gifts, could grow; and the income from such funds would be the fruit, which would nourish many.

The first serious discussions concerning a community foundation for Springfield took place in October 1970. At Jim Payne's request, a small group of interested citizens met at City Hall for an evening's conversation, but no action was taken.

Sometime later, Anne met with Payne, by then the Mayor, and he agreed to appoint a committee to study creating a community foundation in Springfield. It was January 1973. C. Wallace Walter was appointed Chair, and those invited to serve were John Carnahan, Jr., Gary Lipscomb, Charles A. Fuller, Jr., Roger Garrison, Fred L. Hall, Donald E. Roper, Hearld R. Ambler, and

John K. Hulston (who declined to serve). I was also invited to serve. Don Roper was not active and died soon thereafter; R. Barnes Whitlock was appointed to take his place. The committee expanded to include attorney Horace Haseltine and James S. Buckner, Jr., CLU. This group, totaling 11, became the founders of the Community Foundation, and subsequently the incorporators whose names appear on the plaque in the Foundation offices. All were members of the Greene County Estate Planning Council, and represented the professions of lawyers, CPAs, trust officers, and chartered life underwriters. Some of these men are still living, some not. All would be stunned to see what has grown today out of those early musings, along with the commitment, efforts and generosity of those who followed.

After an organizational meeting at Jude Ranch that spring, other meetings followed. Our first goal was to determine whether the foundation should be a trust fund or a corporation. Once a corporate form was selected, the organizational documents were drafted and filed with the Secretary of State on June 18, 1973, and the Foundation was born.

The next step was to draft the bylaws, in which the board makeup was established. We believed that in the beginning, the beneficiaries of the Foundation should be residents of Greene County. The board would consist of categories of membership, with other members serving at-large. There would be members who had special knowledge or experience in the areas of government, labor, industry, heritage and culture, health and welfare, education, business and finance, religion, and professional—nine categories. The balance of the 21 members was to be elected at large.

On June 30, 1973, shortly after the corporate papers were filed, we held a combination board meeting and news conference at the Crystal Room of the Kentwood Hotel. The Board adopted the bylaws for the Foundation. The news conference then began. Refreshments were waiting, but only one member of the media was present (KTTS radio, I recall, but no TV). We were off to a slow start. For several years we encountered a conceptual, if not skeptical, road block.

Attorney Fred Hall, along with our covey of CPAs (Barney Whitlock, Gary Lipscomb and Hearld Ambler), navigated the murky waters of the IRS to obtain our tax exemption, which was critical to our future.

Once the initial board of 11 approved the bylaws, the additional board members were elected. The first full Board consisted of the original incorporators and the following: Mr. Don Dailey, The Rev. Thomas Zimmerman, Mrs. Faye Ollis, Dr. Durward Hall, Mrs. 'Lyn

*The fledgling Community Foundation of Greene County's first-ever grant supported a petting zoo at the Dickerson Park Zoo. It was considered a turnaround project after the Park Board narrowly voted to keep the Zoo open.*



Meyer, Mayor Payne, Mr. Franz Daniel, Mr. Jim Hedges, Mr. W. Paul Harris, and Mr. E. A. Martin, Jr. It was at this point that the real work began, and the newcomers on the Board deserve as much credit as the founders. The Foundation had no money, no recognition, no offices, and no staff.

Before the Foundation was able to give money, it had to *have* money. The board went hat-in-hand to several local financial institutions and asked for \$100 each; they raised \$1,500. It wasn't easy asking for money from these institutions for a new organization with no funds of its own, only a post office box for a home, and hopes for meeting the needs of the community someday in the misty future.

The initial contributors were:

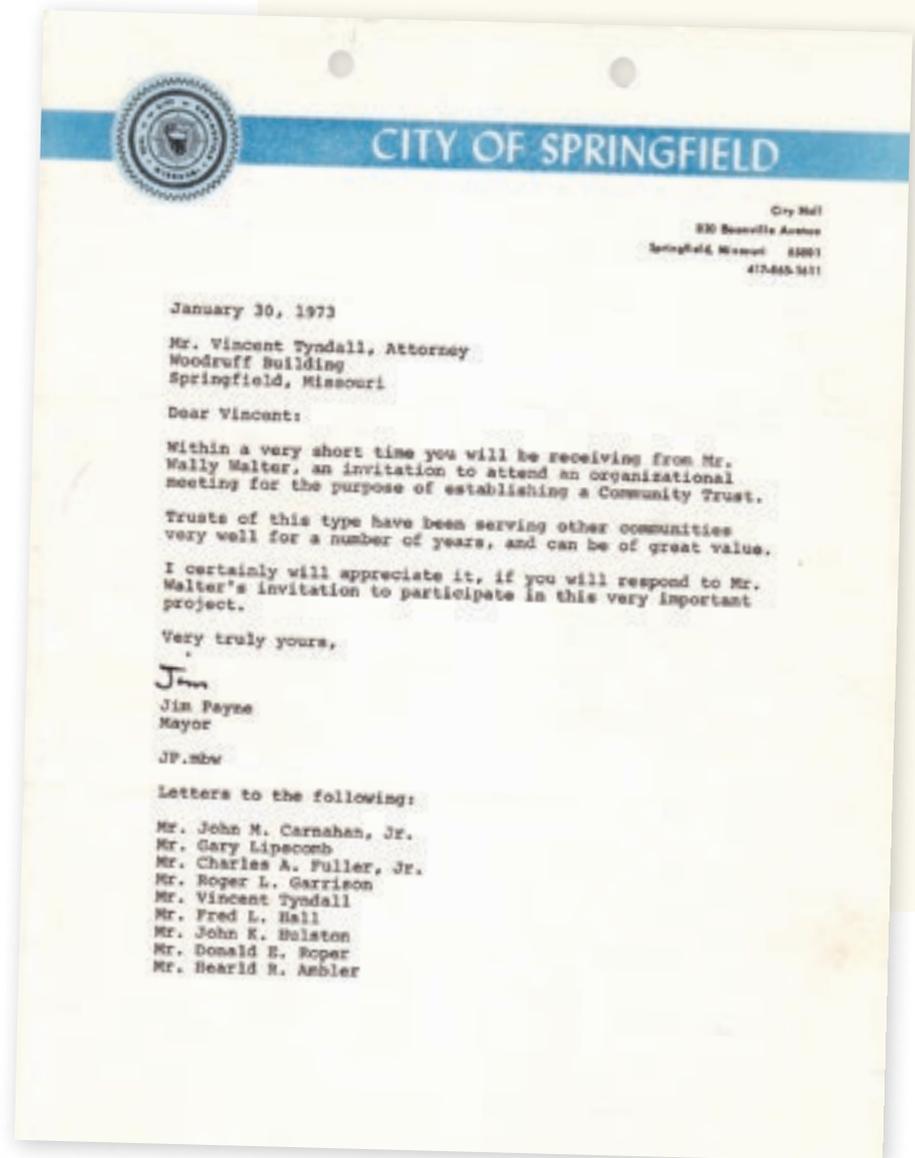
- American National Bank
- Bank of Springfield
- Bell Savings & Loan
- CIT Financial Services Corporation
- Commerce Bank of Springfield
- Empire Bank
- Farm & Home Savings
- Great Southern Savings & Loan
- Guaranty Federal Savings & Loan
- Safety Federal Savings & Loan
- Southern Missouri Trust
- Springfield National Bank
- Systematic Savings & Loan
- Union National Bank
- United Savings & Loan

Not many of these names can be found in the telephone book today.

The initial funds were used to buy our first brochures, which were designed at the art department of AT&T (or was it still Bell Telephone at that time?). One of the creative people there came up with the logo using the commercial Jonathan Livingston Seagull model, which was popular at the time. Our logo shows the letter "C," for Community, surrounding a gull in flight. The wings of the gull form a stylized letter "F" for Foundation. I assume the statute of limitations has run for trademark infringement.

Two years passed before the group received its first endowed gift. The family of Harry Cooper (J.H.G. Cooper, Mildred O. Cooper, and Catherine Cooper Mack) gave \$10,000 to the Foundation, with the income to be distributed as the board "in its discretion determines, (with the hope) that it will give first consideration to the repair and maintenance needs of Downtown Park Central." The Cooper name gave us the credibility we badly needed.

*Former Springfield Mayor, the late Jim Payne, invited Tyndall and others to an organizational meeting to discuss the concept of a community trust.*



Shortly thereafter, the organization received its first unrestricted endowment (from brother and sister John and Marie Rosalie Maser). The Community Foundation of Greene County had reached puberty.

It would be hard to overstate the enthusiasm, willingness, and dedication given to the Community Foundation during its formative years by the professional people who were involved. Richard Brodbeck, while not



*Anne Case Drummond, a visionary behind the CFO's creation, established a fund to honor Nathanael Greene, for whom a park in southwest Springfield was eventually named; today her bronze cast overlooks Drummond Lake within the adjoining Close Memorial Park, which bears the family name of her daughter and son-in-law, Marthe and Major Close.*

one of the founders, was essential to its early nurturing; at that time he was an officer at Union National Bank. Dick joined the board following the resignation of John Carnahan, Jr., the first founder to resign, on Feb. 5, 1976. Dick was like a terrier with a new pig's ear. If anyone was slacking, Dick became the motivator. As a volunteer, he may hold the silver medal behind Hearld Ambler's gold for years of service.

The Foundation achieved adulthood in 1988 when Jan Horton was hired as the Foundation's first Executive Director. Looking back, it is hard to believe how much bravery, courage and optimism Jan must have had to venture into such a dark and thorny forest. She belongs in the community's Hall of Fame.

Because of the IRS clampdown on misuse of private foundations to avoid income tax, we were especially vulnerable as a start-up. To be entitled to tax benefits, private foundations were required to have a broad base of support, and not be exclusively for the benefit of the private few. Consequently, if our fund appeared to be dominated by just a handful of donors, the Foundation could not sustain its tax-exempt status.

One method we employed to deal with this matter was to suggest to everyone we knew that they make their personal charitable contributions to the Foundation, and we would forward it to the charity of the donor's choice. The purpose was obvious, but we were assured of its legality, and everyone was happy in the end. It increased the number of contributors, which avoided an attack from the government. It was a paradox. We wanted the large gifts; we would be nothing without them. On the other hand, they could be our undoing. When we received the \$10,000 Cooper fund on June 9, 1975, we were ambivalent. We were obviously delighted, but it also meant we had to redouble our efforts to increase our size and broaden our contribution base.

Here is an example of the extremes to which we would go for as little as \$25. In October 1974, Paul Mueller wrote me requesting a contribution to the Conservation Federation of Missouri. I responded I would, provided he would make a like gift to the Community Foundation, in which, if he chose, he could stipulate his gift be passed on to the Federation. I wrote: "In this way you will be able to kill two stones with one bird."

One unique fund was established by Anne Drummond. She wanted to honor our county's namesake, Revolutionary War hero Nathanael Greene, who was George Washington's designated successor during the Revolution. In 1975, we were getting all excited about the Bicentennial, so Anne contributed \$50 for such a

fund; I matched it. The intent was sincere and it seemed a suitable way to increase our cash flow, broaden our base, and get some much-needed publicity. In January 1976, the Community Foundation turned this fund over to the Bicentennial Historical Museum at the request of the Springfield-Greene County American Revolution Bicentennial Board. The amount was \$509. While we were unable to build a monument, the Community Foundation was instrumental in the naming of Nathanael Greene Park.

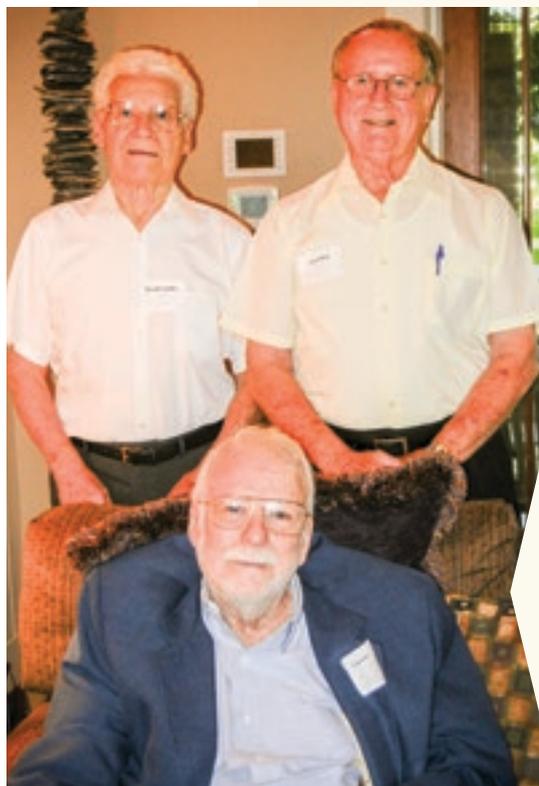
Few of the first board members were experienced fundraisers. Mayor Payne persuaded an anonymous donor to use the Foundation as a pass-through, or conduit, to build the petting zoo at Dickerson Park Zoo. That person donated \$10,000 to the Foundation to oversee the construction of the petting zoo, which we did. It was the Foundation's first exposure and the publicity was helpful. It further added to our plans to broaden the donor base. It was a benefit not only to the Foundation, but also to the community. The Foundation did not, however, keep any of the funds. The same also was true for the rehabilitation of the old Calaboose jail — we had the responsibility, but were unable to keep any of the funds.

My inexperience at fundraising manifested itself when I spent many hours, on more than one occasion, with a prospective donor, only to learn I was being played. He had wealth, that was true, but he was using it to his advantage by showing his interest to a number of charities, and enjoying the attention he received during the wooing period. One Texas university even sent its private jet to fly him down to wine and dine with the university's president. He was, however, a delightful old guy.

During the 1977 fiscal year the Foundation made its first discretionary distributions to Burrell Mental Health Center, KOZK, and the Regional Girls' Shelter, totaling \$2,500. During 1985, the foundation's assets reached the \$1 million mark; by its 15<sup>th</sup> year, with assets in excess of \$1.7 million, it had entered a new era of maturity, experience, and effectiveness.

The succeeding leadership and staff of the Foundation have achieved results far exceeding the expectations of the 11 organizers, wherever they may be.

*My thanks to Constance Tyndall and Suzy Gray for helping me assemble, verify and present the information which, left to their own devices, my little gray cells were insufficient to accomplish. Thanks also to Patty Hobbs at the Springfield-Greene County Library for her research assistance.*



*Three of the CFO's founders, Herald Ambler, left, Fred C. Hall, and Vincent Tyndall, seated, attended a reception at Drs. Tom and Kim Prater's home in September 2012 to kick off the anniversary year.*