

DONOR STORIES

ELDRED & DONNA HARMAN

“Eldred J. and Donna W. Harman Fund”

Eldred J. Harman and his wife, Donna, always felt that being active and generous members of the community was important. Eldred was born on March 26, 1921, in Plymouth, IA, to Walter and Vera Hodson Harman. He came from a rural family steeped in service to country. Donna was born on August 13, 1925 to parents, Ernest and Florence Wheeler of Waterloo.



ELDRED J. AND DONNA HARMAN

Donna grew up in Waterloo and attended Kingsley Elementary and West High for junior high and high school. Her father, Ernest, owned the Ford garage. She had one sister, Jane, who currently lives in Denver, Colorado.

As a young man, Eldred joined the Army in 1942 and was trained as a military policeman at Camp Clark in Nevada. He served during WWII in France and Germany, and also served as a military policeman at Camp Algonia during WWII in 1944. Harman, a sergeant, supervised prison work details. He oversaw German prisoners of war and made sure they weren't mistreated. They planted crops and earned money for the work they performed. Eventually, some of these former POW's became citizens of the United States and many became Eldred's friends. Later in life, he donated a collection of photos to the preservation efforts of the Camp in Algonia.

“We just want to give back to support agencies in their efforts to do wonderful things for other people.”

~Donna Harman

After the serving in the Army, Eldred decided to continue his education and join the workforce. In 1947, Eldred graduated from Iowa State University in 1947 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Husbandry.

Donna also continued her education at the University of Northern Iowa, earning a degree in Early Childhood Education. She taught three years in Wisconsin and Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Donna and Eldred met after college at a dinner party. Eldred left for Colorado the day after, but didn't forget about Donna. He called her two weeks later. They met again at a mutual friends' gathering and hit

it off. The two were married on June 24, 1950 at the First Presbyterian Church in Waterloo.

Donna and Eldred had two children, Jayne and Jim. As a family, they enjoyed family vacations and spent one week every summer at the lake in Minnesota. They also traveled to Colorado occasionally and even took a trip to Europe in 1971, visiting several countries for about 10 days.

Eldred went to work for Rath Packing in the fall of 1947 as a hog buyer, but didn't stay there long. The couple moved to Iowa Falls where Eldred had the Rath hog buying station. After a few years in Iowa Falls they returned to Waterloo for seven years, then moved to Perry, Iowa, where they spent 24 years. Donna currently resides in Waterloo.

Eldred played a key role in establishing the Iowa Pork Co. by starting the hog-buying department in Perry in 1962. Five years later, Eldred went to work for Home Federal Savings, where he became President before retiring in 1983.

Both Eldred and Donna were active in their church, First Presbyterian in Waterloo. Eldred was also active in Kiwanis Clubs in Waterloo, he served as a past president of the Dallas Co. Hospital Board in Perry, served on the national board for Pi Kappa Phi, and took part in many other philanthropic activities. He also enjoyed hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family. Donna currently serves on the Foundation Board at UNI.

On September 30, 2011, Eldred passed away from complications of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

Because of their generosity and dedication to the community, Eldred and Donna established the Eldred J. and Donna W. Harman Fund at the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa as an unrestricted endowment fund to allow the Foundation to make grants from the fund over the years based on the most important community needs. Donna said, "We have both been very community minded. My parents were that way too. We just want to give back to support agencies in their efforts to do wonderful things for other people."

Historical vignette prepared by the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa.