

DONOR STORIES

VERNON & DOROTHY PLAGER “Vernon H. and Dorothy J. Plager Family Fund”

Vernon H. Plager was born May 8, 1919, in Grundy Center, Iowa. Growing up in rural Iowa gave Vern deep Midwestern roots that eventually led him to the University of Iowa in Iowa City. After his undergraduate work, he went to the University of Iowa Medical School to become a doctor. While continuing his education, Vern had an internship at Harper Hospital in Detroit, Michigan. This was a very popular place for University of Iowa students to go, and proved to be a rewarding move for Vern both professionally and personally.

Dorothy (Dottie) J. Plager was born in Muskegon Heights, Michigan, on March 12, 1923. After she graduated from high school, she spent one year at Michigan State University. Dottie decided to study nursing, and began her nursing career at the same hospital where Vern was interning. During her three-year program at Harper Hospital, she met Vern while both were on obstetric duty. They were married on September 25, 1944.

Not long after the wedding, Vern was called to serve in World War II. Dottie stayed with her parents in Detroit until Vern returned. After Vern’s military duties were over, he stayed on in Detroit to do a 4-year residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Women’s Hospital.

Vern was responsible for bringing many new babies into the world in his medical practice, and the couple were also blessed with five children of their own: David (May 29, 1945), Karen (September 4, 1947), Kathleen (September 26, 1949), Robert (October 2, 1951) and Patricia (February 19, 1953.)

In 1950, the family moved back to Iowa so that Vern could set up practice in Waterloo. He was interested in returning to his boyhood home and Waterloo specifically because of his fond memories growing up there. Vern also thought his skills would be well used in the Waterloo area because there was only one other OB/GYN specialist in the entire region at that time. The move turned out to be very successful for the doctor and his young family.

“I just think it’s a good way to give back to a community that has been very good to us.”

Although Vern never took on a partner in his practice, he was long affiliated with Allen Hospital, providing obstetric and gynecological services to thousands of families in the Cedar Valley and beyond.



VERNON PLAGER



DOROTHY PLAGER

Vern and Dottie lived a fulfilling life in the Iowa community they loved. They were active in their church, Westminster Presbyterian, where they served as elders and deacons. They have also given generously to Westminster as well as the community at large.

The Plagers were also very involved with Allen Hospital. Vern served as the President of the Allen Hospital Staff as well as a leader on the Allen Board of Directors. He was a member of the Iowa OB/GYN Society, the Iowa State Medical Association, Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, the American Medical Society, the American Board of OB/GYN's and was a board member at the Minnie Crippen Home.

Dottie was just as busy, serving with the Allen Women's Auxiliary, PEO Chapter, the Allen Hospital Foundation, the American Cancer Society, various "Friends" organizations and various Boards (Hawkeye Community College, Allen College of Nursing and the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra.) She has also served as part of the Community Foundation's Women in Philanthropy organization.

Dottie says that charitable giving starts with giving to your church, and then branches out from there. The Plagers have chosen to donate funds to Allen Hospital, and through the Vernon J. and Dorothy Plager Family Fund with the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa as a way to continue to help those in need in the Cedar Valley. About their fund with the Community Foundation, Dottie says, "I just think it's a good way to give back to a community that has been very good to us." She hopes that the fund will continue to grow in perpetuity and help future generations of children in need.

Vernon H. Plager born May 8, 1919, died 1988

Dorothy J. Plager born March 12, 1923

***Historical vignette prepared by the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa.*