

Clayton gives \$100,000 to Chester County Library

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By Ed Farrell / Staff Writer



CLAYTON

Just about the time Chester County residents absorb the latest philanthropic donation made by the man who is unquestionably the area's wealthiest offspring, Jim Clayton lets loose with yet another surprise contribution to a local organization.

In the past year alone, Clayton has given Freed-Hardeman University two separate \$1 million endowments, one to fund a on-going investment project for FHU finance majors and the other to construct the Bulliner-Clayton Visual Arts Center.

Now, Clayton has contributed \$100,000 to the Chester County Library to endow two funds, one in honor of his parents, Ruth and Cratus Clayton, and the other to honor Hayes and Virginia Dare McAdams, whose family has resided locally for more than a century and a half.

The two funds, which are now initially endowed with \$50,000 each, are the result of contributions from the Clayton Family Foundation, which was established in 1992, and should provide the Library with about \$5,000 a year in additional funds, according to Thomas McAdams, whose Knoxville law firm has represented Clayton for many years.

McAdams said the gift in his parents' honor was the result of his firm's ongoing relationship with Clayton.

"His family is from Finger, and my parents are both from there too," McAdams said. "Jim said he wanted to make a contribution in my honor, but when I told him I'd rather he make the contribution in my parents' honor, he decided he wanted to honor his parents in a similar manner. It's pretty amazing really."

Librarian Nancy Canada said McAdams has, for several years now, chosen to honor his mother with book donations at the library.

"And when we got involved with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, he made a donation in her honor at that time was well," Canada said.

"Well, he called me up recently and asked if the library had any endowment funds, which could be used to help with future purchases of books and equipment," Canada said.

As it were, the library does have one such endowment, the Isham W. Perkins Memorial Fund, which currently has a balance of about \$600, Canada said.

“Mr. McAdams just laughed, and said what he had in mind was for considerably more than that,” Canada said.

Endowed funds typically mean that the principal contribution is set aside in a protected account, and only the proceeds of interest and profits from investments being actually distributed annually.

Each of the two funds will receive 50 percent of the initial donation, with future allocations going to either or both of the individual funds, however, the funds “may be co-mingled for investment purposes, with each fund allocated a pro rata share of the investment income and principal appreciation,” and each fund “shall be accounted for separately.”

The contract specifies that “distributions shall be made ... to the general fund of the (Chester County Library) Board, to be used as a supplement to public funding from the city and county for the purchase of books, computers and other technology, equipment, media and materials with are made available by the general public without charge.”

Distributions, the contract said, “may be used for other library purposes and principal distributions may be made from time to time with the prior written consent of the Foundation.”

Canada said that “somewhere down the road” the library will need to expand, and it could be possible, should the Library Board, the County Commission and the Clayton Family Trust all agree, some of the principal from the two funds could be accessed to help fund an expansion.

“Space is our most pressing need,” Canada said, “particularly for our Children’s area. We’d really like to have a Children’s Room, and we already know our highest-circulated items are children’s books.”

Canada acknowledged to use the new fund money in such a way would require the approval of the Clayton Family Foundation, but said she understood such a use would like be allowable in the future.

County Mayor Troy Kilzer said the library would be grateful for the gift.

“The Library can certainly always use gifts of any size, but this is very generous indeed,” Kilzer said. “I’m sure it will put to good use to meet the needs of the citizens of Chester County, and we’re all very grateful.”