

Where the Heart Is: The Tenanders' Legacy Gift

Each year, communities across Canada and around the world recognize May as Leave a Legacy Month - a time dedicated to encouraging thoughtful conversations about the impact we leave behind. For organizations like the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, it is also an opportunity to highlight the profound difference that planned giving can make, not only for families but for entire communities.

Among those who embraced this vision were Martti and Maxine Tenander, a couple whose lives were defined by generosity, service, and a deep connection to Thunder Bay. Through a meaningful gift in their estate, they joined a growing number of individuals who chose to extend their impact far beyond their lifetimes; something many people find meaningful yet often postpone.

Both Martti and Maxine were deeply committed to the community. Martti began his professional journey at Queen's University, where he earned a degree in Mining Engineering before pursuing further graduate studies. His career reflected both technical expertise and a strong work ethic, but it was his involvement outside of work that truly illustrated his character. Known for his generosity with time and energy, Martti contributed to several local organizations, including the Port Arthur Rotary Club and Magnus Theatre.

Maxine, equally accomplished, built a distinguished career in healthcare as a pharmacist after graduating from the University of Toronto. She later served as the First Woman President of the Ontario Pharmaceutical Association, where she was widely respected for her leadership and dedication to advancing the profession.

Beyond her career, Maxine was known for her compassion and commitment to helping others. Her volunteer work spanned numerous organizations. She was highly involved in the Soroptimist organization both locally and internationally, Served with Lutheran Community Care, was very active in the Alzheimer Society, and Chaired the board of Thunder Bay's Finnish-English Church, all reflecting her passion for improving access to care and support.

Their connection to Thunder Bay was both immediate and enduring. Shortly after their marriage, the couple chose to make the city their home - a decision that shaped the course of their lives. Living in the city for over 50 years, they became deeply woven into the fabric of the community, contributing not only through their professions but also through countless volunteer efforts and personal acts of generosity.

In conversations with Don and Laura Hughes, Maxine's siblings and the executors of the Tenander estate, a clear picture emerges of what drove the couple's philanthropy. "Maxine was influenced by our dad—who is also a pharmacist and loved the idea that there could be something that could help people immediately and long-term that didn't involve surgery or techniques. That was the beginning."

In the couple's younger days, when there was no money involved - just their own effort and time, they loved helping to make lives better. This philosophy ultimately guided their decision to leave a legacy gift. Their estate reflects a commitment to supporting initiatives that strengthen community well-being, particularly in healthcare - a cause that remained close to their hearts throughout their

lives. As Don emotionally put it, "They put their money where their heart is."

They further shared that the couple's personal experiences also shaped their perspective, particularly when navigating challenges within the healthcare system, "Maxine especially was aware that the direction of their gift, could go where there were holes in the system.

There's no innate education about being home caregivers. There's no assistance in suddenly becoming a main home caregiver, so it opened her eyes to a new aspect or division of our healthcare system - one that needs people to be supported to be able to work in those environments."

Laura added, "Another situation that really spoke to them, was wanting to be involved in helping people transition from homelessness to a more wholesome situation".

When asked why the couple chose to give through the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, Don's answer was both simple and profound, "Both Martti and Maxine said to us in their later years that, if they were ever on their own, they would still reside in Thunder Bay because, to them, it was more than just a city."

Laura echoed this sentiment sharing, "It was a relationship that they had developed and loved. So, their philanthropy, and their desire to stay, donate, and work with people in Thunder Bay, was something that meant a great deal to them."

Athena Kreiner, CEO of the Foundation, spoke with heartfelt gratitude on the Tenanders' generosity, "The legacy that Martti and Maxine have created speaks not only to their love for



Pictured from left to right: Maxine and Martti Tenander

this community, but to their deep compassion for the people within it. We are incredibly grateful for their trust in the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, and it's an honour for us to help carry forward their vision with great care and respect in perpetuity."

Through their gift, Martti and Maxine Tenander leave behind more than a financial contribution; they leave a lasting impact on the community they cared for so deeply. Their legacy lives on through the work of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, which continues to honour their wishes by supporting initiatives that reflect their lifelong commitment to helping people in their community.

For more information about donations, wills, or creating a Fund, please contact **Athena Kreiner** at **(807) 627-0512** or **akreiner@tbcf.org**.

It's Leave a Legacy Month! Consider leaving a gift in your Will to the Thunder Bay Community Foundation.

Visit www.tbcf.org or call (807) 475 7279 for more information.