

WACF service a family tradition for Benson

When Laurie Benson joined the Watertown Area Community Foundation Board in 2006, she was following in the footsteps of her late father, Earle Kinsman, who also served on the foundation board from 1989 to 1993.

"You live what you learn," Benson said. "Giving back has always been an important part of my life because of the example set by my parents. They valued generosity and serving others, and they lived it."

Recently, Benson was honored by the Watertown Area Community Foundation for her 13 years of service. She returned the honor by announcing her plan to establish the Randy and Laurie Benson Family Fund with a \$40,000 donation. Specifically, an unrestricted fund that gives the board flexibility to allocate dollars based on the needs of the community.

"Randy was very proud of my involvement on the Foundation board and he knew how passionate I was about it," Benson said of her late husband. "We



had discussions about making a contribution, and with my term ending during the foundation's 40th year, it seemed like the perfect time to formalize it."

Natives of Watertown, both Randy and Laurie hold the community and what it has to offer in high regard. "Randy always said that Watertown was the best place in the world to live and raise a family," Benson said.

That's sentiment that seems to have been passed down, as five generations in the Benson-Kinsman family have called Watertown home, each generation leaving its own legacy of generosity and service.

"Our children get it too," Benson said of her son Matt and wife, Jen, currently residing in Woodbury, Minn., and her daughter Sarah, who works as a missionary with Convoy of Hope in Brussels, Belgium. "They give in time, talent and financial support."

"Generosity in all its forms inspires me," Benson said. "I just want to do my part and see people in our community thrive".



Dedicated board members keep Community Foundation strong

A successful foundation began 40 years ago with just that ... a strong foundation made of donors and a Board that represents our community.

"Our forefathers really used careful thought and insight as they created the trust documents and by-laws knowing they wanted a foundation that would stand the test of time and be a good steward no matter what those times have to endure," said Jan DeBerg, Watertown Area Community Foundation executive director.

"We were the first community foundation in South Dakota and one of the first in the Midwest

and we have grown right along with our community," she continued.

The Foundation's Board is made of volunteers that includes residents appointed by the City, School District and business sectors. In 2018, the Board added two at-large members to be more representative of the greater Watertown area.

"The Board has a big job and they take it very seriously," DeBerg said. "It is imperative that we have different views on the Board, and their variety of backgrounds ensures that. Great discussions have made great decisions. Our Board

continues to have that 'careful thought and insight' during these discussions."

Because of our first Board members (Bob Carey, Bob Cockle, Laretta Hoff, Clark Redlinger and Bill Snyder), to our current Board, the Foundation and community have benefited greatly. "They all have had a passion for their community which has allowed us this year to celebrate 40 years of 'Looking Forward & Giving Back.'

"I've reflected a lot over the years, but this year especially so," she said. "One excerpt in the early minutes I remember is when the Board was meeting and discussing an outgoing mailing. They needed money for postage. They all just dug in their pockets and covered the cost."

Board members continue to give back through their time, skills and treasure.

"We honored Laurie Benson recently for her 13 years of service on our Board," DeBerg said. "She honored and sur-

prised us all by announcing a gift of \$40,000 in honor of our 40th year to establish a fund."

Other Board members who have funds at the Foundation include: Dale and Diane Christensen, Irving & Eula Hinderaker, Laretta Hoff, John & Cynthia Hopper, Merlin Jeitz, Clark and Mary Ann Redlinger, Lee and Jan Schull and Nancy Turbak Berry.

"I am truly humbled by our amazing Board members," DeBerg said. "Here's to another 40 years."

