

**THE PUTNAM COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
PRESS RELEASE**

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MARY LOU MILLER...Putnam County's First Lady of Philanthropy

New gifts bring her generosity to more than \$2.5 million

In January 2007, Mary Louise Miller "Mary Lou" or "Pi" went home to be with her Lord, leaving a legacy that will never end in its benefit to the people and community of Putnam County.

On Friday, December 7, her Smith Barney Financial Advisor, Ted Willer, and Bob Evans, her long time friend and executor of her estate, presented Elaine Peck of the Putnam County Community Foundation, a check for \$1,359,316.00. The Community Foundation is the repository for funds benefiting: American Red Cross of Putnam County, Humane Society of Putnam County, DePauw University, Putnam County Hospice Fund, Second Congregational Church of Christ, United Church of Christ (Congregational), Heidelberg College, and Rockford College.

Miss Miller had a love of life and a love for people. She enjoyed a good story, a funny joke, and her beloved Lake Geneva, Wisconsin summer experiences spanning a period of over 90 years. Miss Miller was the early definition of an 'independent woman' taking care of herself and driving her own car well into her 90's. She credited her parents with giving her an interest in investments and teaching her the wisdom of living within her means.

Mary Lou was not known by many in Putnam County until she agreed to be the first public donor of a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) benefiting the Putnam County Community Foundation. Her attorney, Rob Bremer (who is now a librarian at Louisiana Tech), was the first to alert Mary Lou to the fact that she "had a problem" that could be helped with charitable gift planning. After establishing the plan and committing her assets to charity, Mary Lou reportedly told Ted Willer, "That was so much fun, I'd like to do it all over again!"

With planning and professional management of her CRT, Miss Miller was able to take care of herself throughout her long life, at the same time growing her assets, and eventually allowing nine charities to receive the 'remainder' interest of \$1.3 million through the Putnam County Community Foundation! Mary Lou delighted in being able to support the causes she loved, rather than allowing state and federal government to make the decisions for her.

During her life, Miss Miller gave nearly \$1.2 million of direct gifts through some 77 separate donations to the Community Foundation. Most notable was her recognition of the need to help the Community Foundation become independent and self-sustaining.

Mary Louise Miller is a role model for us all. She cared about people, animals, education, and community, and she shared her life's work and investments with us. Her thorough and thoughtful planned giving allowed her the joy of knowing her life's interests would be supported and continued through her generous legacy to us all.