

Grace Parks Pampel

Young people in Jasper, White, Newton, and Benton Counties dreaming of careers in agriculture, nursing, or the fine arts & music now have another resource to help those dreams come true. Linda Reiners, Executive Director, has announced that the Foundation has received a gift of \$2.7 million from the estate of Grace Parks Pampel. Part of the income from the gift is to be dedicated to the Grace Pampel Education Scholarships, for students in these four counties. The foundation will shortly inaugurate Pampel Educational Impact Grants with the balance of the income.

The Pampel gift is the largest gift the Foundation has received in its 15 year history. The money has been placed forever in an endowment fund, and only the earnings will be used for the scholarships and grants. "We are honored to have such a gift to assist high school students in our area," Reiners said. "The Foundation places special emphasis on the quality of life in our area, especially education, and this gift will significantly aid us in continuing to work toward that goal." Grace Parks Pampel, a resident of Jasper County for most of her life, was born in Surrey, north of Rensselaer, on January 21, 1920, and died in Jasper County Hospital on December 23, 2004. She attended North Marion Elementary School and Rensselaer High School. She married Darrell S. Pampel on February 1, 1958, and the couple made their home on the Pampel farm in Benton County and later in Remington. Darrell died on June 16, 1996. They had no children. Most people remember her as a very quiet, simple person. She was noted for her musical talent, which she shared with both the Remington United Methodist Church and the Church of the Nazarene in Rensselaer. She also played piano at Jasper County Hospital's AlternaCare, the Remington Nutrition Site, and, for many years, the Fountain Park Chautauqua. "Music was a major part of her life," said Attorney Ed Barce of Kentland, IN. "When I helped to arrange for the sale of the estate, I found lots of piano sheet music from the 20's and 30's, an electric organ, a ukulele and other aspects of her interest in music in the old farm house in Benton County." Although her home for the latter part of her life was in Remington, she kept



the Benton house as a kind of retreat. "I can understand why she liked it," Barce said. "Sitting out there on the porch, I could hear lots of birds. It was very peaceful." After graduation from Rensselaer High School in 1939, she held various jobs, including making military uniforms during World War II. Her most adventurous work, however, was skating with the Helen Reynolds Skaters from 1943 to 1950. The Skaters

were a group of 10 girls from Rensselaer who toured the Midwest and East Coast giving skating performances at fairs, carnivals, and even supper clubs. The Grace Pampel Education Scholarships are available to high school seniors and graduates including nontraditional students from Tri-County High School in White County, Benton Central High School in Benton County, North and South Newton High Schools in Newton County and, in Jasper County, Rensselaer Central High School, Kankakee Valley High School, and Covenant Christian High School as well as to Jasper County residents attending West

Central High School. "We are pleased to be able to offer these scholarships to nontraditional students," Reiners said. "These students returning to complete the education have great needs that are often an obstacle to fulfilling their dreams. These scholarships will be a significant help."

The scholarships are intended for students planning careers in agriculture, such as agribusiness, animal science, landscape architecture and other agricultural fields, the fine arts & music, and nursing. Candidates will be chosen on the basis of financial need, scholastic aptitude, community involvement, extra-curricular activities, and work experience. Within the year the Foundation will also inaugurate the Grace Pampel Educational Impact Grant Program. These grants will be designed to enhance high school educational programs and will fund proposals that will have a significant and long-term impact. "One of the advantages of making a charitable gift to a community foundation like the Jasper Foundation instead of setting up a private trust or foundation," Reiners observed, "is that such gifts are tax free. Therefore, more money would be available to fulfill the donor's intention."

Story submitted by John D. Groppe