

GUSTAF THELIN

CHARITABLE TRUST

Heritage Hall on Lake Region State College campus is home to a beautiful, antique china desk which belonged to Gustaf and Mildred Thelin. The brother and sister pair owned and very successfully operated a farm three miles east of Devils Lake.

Living simply, without the benefit of plumbing or central heating, they managed their farming operation, studied the stock market, and carefully invested their earnings. Although notoriously frugal in their personal lives, they were obviously extremely competent in their business acumen. When Gustaf died in 1987 at ninety-one, he left a trust of 1.7 million dollars. Seventy-five



Gustaf Thelin

percent of the trust income is allocated to LRSC, with the remainder going to the UND Medical School. Mildred died in 1975 and left her estate of 1.5 million dollars to the Medical School at UND.

Gustaf was an avid conservationist. Even during the "dustbowl years," he continued to plant and tend young trees, especially evergreens. In April of 1990, at the kick-off event for the college's fiftieth anniversary celebration, a campus garden area was dedicated as the Thelin Garden where a tree that had been started as a seedling by Gustaf was planted.

Gustaf and Mildred's parents, Anna and John Thelin, immigrated to the United

States from Sweden in the late 1880s and settled near Devils Lake. One of their children, Valdemar, died in 1939.

Mildred attended UND and for a time was registrar at what is today Mayville State University. She then returned to the farm, and she and Gustaf continued their parents' farming operation.

"They also became successful investors," said John Haugland, long-time friend of and attorney for the Thelins. "Neither married. They enjoyed reading and travel and were 'rugged individualists' who advocated that 'the least government is always the best government.'"

Earl Strinden, UND Foundation execu-

tive at the time, said of the Thelins, "Gustaf and Mildred had a great respect and appreciation for their North

Dakota heritage and for the pioneers who settled these vast prairies. Their most generous gift will be a living memorial to their pioneer spirit and that of their parents and the many other pioneers who made great sacrifices and overcame countless obstacles to build a better life for future generations."

Gustaf Thelin's gift to the college continues to nurture and strengthen our college community, just as he nurtured and grew trees from seedlings on the North Dakota

prairie. ♦



Mildred Thelin



Thelin Garden dedicated

The Thelin Garden, located near the LRSC library entrance, was dedicated on April 17, 1990, during the Kick-Off Event for the college's fiftieth anniversary. During the ceremony, the evergreen tree at left was transplanted from the Thelin farm where it had originally been planted and tended by Gustaf Thelin.

