

Edmund E. Toutges Memorial Endowment

Edmund Toutges is the kind of home-grown North Dakotan who makes us all proud. “He was Santa Claus without a beard!” an accurate description by Ed’s nephew Paul. Everyone close to Ed knew of his unbelievable generosity. Every Christmas Eve, Ed inconspicuously delivered brand new bicycles to many needy Michigan children. He may not have had a sleigh and beard, but the Santa personality was ever-present. Those close to him confirmed that he not only gave to children during the holiday season, but also put several Michigan kids through college. He had the financial means, and he just wanted to help, never wanting fanfare nor recognition for his contributions. However, in 1987, he was honored during ‘Edmund Toutges Day,’ an event declared by the citizens of Michigan, North Dakota.

Edmund was a self-made man who began earning his keep at age eight. He worked his way up from delivery boy to owner of the Johnson Store in Michigan, when he purchased the store in 1956. He operated it until 1990 and then surprised his employees with an incredible

decision ... he gave the store to the three employees who had helped him operate it for many years! “After working for me for so long, they ought to be entitled to something,” Toutges told Tana Olson, a reporter for the *Devils Lake Journal*.



Ed proudly poses on Edmund Toutges Day, an event declared by the citizens of Michigan.

He and his wife Emma never had children but had very large hearts. Perhaps that is why they touched so many lives with their generosity. On May 6, 1996, Edmund Toutges died, and Michigan lost a special friend. Emma had died eight years earlier.

Edmund had one more surprise up his Santa suit sleeve. In his last will and testament, he directed that a fund be established to provide scholarship dollars each year for students attending Lake Region State College. Paul Tout-

ges reflects, “Uncle Ed didn’t like a lot of fuss over his gifts, but I think he’s looking down right now grinning from ear to ear.”

The Community College Foundation is proud to introduce the Edmund E. Toutges Memorial Scholarship Endowment. It will be awarded annually to exemplary Lake Region State College students. •