

DONOR STORIES

ROBERT J. & JUDITH E. BROWN “Robert J. and Judith E. Brown Fund”

Sharing with the community that has blessed them is the essence of the Robert and Judith Brown family. Sharing their time, talents and treasures have become more than an act, but rather a way of life.

Robert J. Brown was born August 23, 1930, and came to Waterloo to live with his adoptive parents. Robert’s father worked for Iowa Public Service (IPS) until 1946 when he and two other employees from IPS started General Appliance Company on Commercial Street in downtown Waterloo. Judith, born December 14, 1940, moved to Waterloo with her family from Blue Island, Illinois, when she was two years old.

Robert attended Waterloo East High School, graduating in 1948, and then continued his education at Gates Business College and Drake University. Judith attended Iowa State Teachers College (now the University of Northern Iowa) in Cedar Falls.



ROBERT J. &
JUDITH E. BROWN

“Blessing this community with their lifelong dedication and involvement has been worth much more thanks than the Cedar Valley could offer.”

Robert met Judith while she was working at the National Bank of Waterloo. They knew one another for a year before they started dating. They soon found out that they were the perfect pair and married six months later.

On June 10, 1962, the wedding bells rang and Robert and Judith Brown began their married life together in Waterloo. They became the proud parents of Christopher, Jennifer and Matthew. For some, raising a family means making sacrifices with your time, balancing the demands of work, family and service. Robert and Judith did this seemingly with ease.

Robert Brown started as an employee with Palace Clothiers and quickly moved into the insurance industry, becoming a partner with Geist-Brown-Geist Insurance Agency in 1958. He remained with the agency for 35 years, leaving his post there to work for the Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, Northwest Banks and Hogan-Hansen CPA.

The Cedar Valley community also benefited from the time and talents of the Brown family. Judith stayed quite busy with involvement spanning her areas of interest. She was an active member of Junior League of Waterloo/Cedar Falls. She was also a well-known soloist singing for church services and many weddings around the community. Additionally, Judith had a passion and interest in photography and anything to do with computers. In addition to exploring her personal interests, Judith also taught women’s bible studies at church.

The list of organizations that Robert led as President and Chairman is a true testament to the depth of his interest in this community: YMCA, Goodwill Industries of Northeast Iowa, Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, Waterloo Industrial Development Association, Waterloo Community Playhouse, Waterloo Kiwanis Club, Independent Insurance Agents of Northeast Iowa, Waterloo Ambassadors, Heritage Homes (Chamber of Commerce Housing), Cedar Skyline Corp, Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa, Metro Fund Distribution Coordination Council, Spokesman's Club, Waterloo Schools-Fund for Excellence, Waterloo Riverfront Commission, Advisory Commission on Planning I-380 Extension, United Way, Conway Civic Center, Waterloo/ Cedar Falls Convention Bureau, Adult's Inc. and the Fairview Cemetery Board.

Robert was also an active member of many other organizations and groups including American Red Cross, Exceptional Persons, Inc., Governor's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped, Black Hawk Board of Social Services, Hawkeye Institute of Technology Foundation Board, Midwest Power, Quakerdale, African American Cultural and Historical Museum, Family and Children's Council, Alternatives for Women and Institute for Social and Economic Development.

Robert also served on the Waterloo City Council as the councilperson at large and mayor pro-tem from 1988-1992.

His list of involvement is impressive but the impact left by Robert on these organizations is even more important and essential to each of their success. His involvement has been recognized through several awards including the Amvet Signal Award for Outstanding Citizen, East High Hall of Fame, Waterloo Citizen of the Year from the Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, Sertoma Club's Service to Mankind Award and Metro Exchange Club's Community Service Award.

Aside from extensive involvement in the community, Robert and Judith also find time to relax and spend time with family and friends. They are able to enjoy one another's company every January in Waikiki, Hawaii, and every March in Mesa, Arizona. Robert and Judith both look forward to the week their entire family spends together in Minnesota during the summer.

Commitment and giving back to the Cedar Valley is just something that is rooted within the Brown. "Waterloo has always been good to our family. We just wanted to share with the community what we were blessed with," Robert said. With this as their driving force, the Robert and Judith E. Brown Fund was established with the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa. Robert and Judith both knew first hand the good work and great things that the Community Foundation does in this community and they wanted to leave a lasting legacy in the area. Blessing this community with their lifelong dedication and involvement has been worth much more thanks than the Cedar Valley could offer.

***Historical vignette prepared by the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa.*