

DONOR STORIES

LOWELL J. WALKER “Lowell J. Walker Fund”

Lowell J. Walker was born February 27, 1910, in Lamoni, Iowa, the son of Dailey Jerome “D.J.” Walker and Grace Horner Walker. D.J. Walker was a pharmacist who moved his family to Waterloo, Iowa, in 1914 to expand a private business he had started in Lamoni.



LOWELL WALKER

The business focused on the manufacture and distribution of medicine for poultry to what was known as the “farm flock” (small farm operations where raising poultry was mainly the wife’s interest which provided extra cash for household needs). The company was known as the Walker Remedy Company. The business grew rapidly and eventually distribution of their products was handled on a national basis. Its principal marketing strategy was the direct mailing of literature and sample products to farm homes throughout the country. Approximately four million of these mailings were made annually during the company’s growth years. Distribution of products was made through wholesale drug stores with which the company established a working relationship. One of the principal products was Walko Tablets, - a valuable drinking water antiseptic for all poultry, to aid in preventing spread of disease through contaminated water. The business was located in what is now called the Walker Building and remained there until it was sold.

Lowell’s father died in 1945. Lowell took over the company which continued to thrive until the “farm flock” began to decline as specialized companies entered the egg and broiler production business on a much bigger scale. At the same time many of the large pharmaceutical companies entered the agri-business field. This combination of events led to the closing of the Walker Remedy Company in the early 1960’s.

Lowell gave credit to his father for helping him develop a sense of responsibility to his community.

Lowell was a director of the Waterloo Savings Bank for many years. He served as its president and chairman for a period of years. Lowell’s past civic involvement includes serving as president of the Chamber of Commerce, chairman of United Appeal and its annual fund raising campaign and president of the YMCA, as well as being designated as a midwest representative to the YMCA national conference. He was a past president of the Waterloo Rotary Club of which he is a senior active member. Lowell was also one of the original incorporators of the Community Foundation of Waterloo/Cedar Falls and Northeast Iowa, then known as the Waterloo Civic Foundation.

Lowell gave credit to his father for helping him develop a sense of responsibility to his community. Lowell’s father was keenly interested in education and often made it possible for people in need to attend college. He shared with Lowell an understanding that some will give more than others to support a community but “you can’t build a community on what the least give”. His father was also involved in the YMCA and other civic organizations.

Lowell attended and graduated from Grinnell College in 1931, earning a degree in economics and business. It was at Grinnell College that he met his future wife, Charlotte Dickinson. They were married in the living room of her parent's home in Rock Rapids, Iowa, on October 15, 1932. Lowell served on the Board of Trustees of his alma mater starting in 1957 and was designated a "Life Trustee". In furtherance of his commitment to higher education, he made annual gifts to Grinnell College and to Wartburg College. The latter is to the Dr. Richard A. Walker Scholarship Fund, in memory of his deceased son who was chairman of the physical education department and long time, successful wrestling coach at Wartburg. These educational institutions and numerous other worthy, nonprofit or charitable organizations in the Waterloo area have been recipients of his generosity. In 1992 the Eastern Iowa Chapter of the National Society of Fund Raising Executives, at its annual philanthropy day, recognized Lowell as Outstanding Individual Philanthropist from Waterloo/Cedar Falls.

Lowell supported the Community Foundation in many ways over the years, contributing to a variety of funds and was a "Friend of the Foundation" as a supporter of the operations of the Foundation. Lowell established the Lowell J. Walker Fund with the Community Foundation. Income from the fund is designated to go to the Waterloo Community Playhouse for the upkeep and maintenance of the Walker Building. Lowell had previously donated the building to the playhouse for office space and other use but he was concerned that just leaving the building was not enough. As Lowell stated, "You have to help in the maintenance and share in the load that you may have created by donating a building to an organization." That is why he created the fund.

Lowell also was very committed to youth and educational causes and established a Field of Interest Fund to support such efforts. Lowell J. Walker was a man who cared deeply for this community and, through the Community Foundation of Waterloo/Cedar Falls and Northeast Iowa, his caring spirit will forever impact nonprofit organizations in Northeast Iowa.

Children:

Richard A. Walker, born November 9, 1933, now deceased, killed in a car accident on September 10, 1990. Wife Shirley lives in Waverly, IA. Their children are—Matthew, Ann, Amy Walker Middleton, and Steven.

Charles J. Walker, born January 19, 1935. Lives in Clear Lake, Iowa, with his wife, Donna. Charles and Donna have three sons, David, Kenneth and Andrew, the youngest, died at the age of 20 as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident three years earlier.

Siblings:

Louis A. Walker, died December 28, 1928, at age 12, from an accidental shooting.

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