RUTH M. TIECHE FRIEND OF PHILANTHROPY AWARD

Mary Alice Streeter

For decades, Mary Alice Streeter has embodied the spirit of service, generosity, and unwavering commitment to the betterment of Wayne County, Ohio. Through her quiet leadership and steadfast dedication, she has helped shape a stronger, more compassionate community. Her impact spans countless organizations and causes, always driven by a deep desire to uplift others and create lasting positive change.

Mary Alice's relationship with the Wayne County Community Foundation (WCCF) stands as a cornerstone of her philanthropic legacy. First elected to the Board of Trustees in 1991, she served with distinction for 33 years. Over the course of her tenure, she held key leadership positions including Vice President and, notably, served as Treasurer for 19 years. In 2024, the Foundation honored her lifetime of service by naming her an Emeritus Trustee—a title that reflects both her historic contributions and her continued influence on the organization's work. Her thoughtful guidance helped shape the Foundation's growth and cement its mission of strengthening the community through strategic giving.

But her commitment to service extends far beyond her work with WCCF. Mary Alice has lent her time and leadership to more than 20 local organizations, including Ohio's Hospice LifeCare, OneEighty, Inc., The Salvation Army, Viola Startzman Clinic, and the Wooster Community Hospital Board of Governors. She has played a pivotal role in some of the most significant capital fundraising efforts in the region. As co-chair, she helped lead campaigns for Ohio's Hospice LifeCare (1993), Viola Startzman Clinic (1995), The Salvation Army Family Life Center (2000), Goodwill Industries (2002), and the Wayne County Public Library (2005). In each endeavor, her motivation remained the same: to ensure that essential services and opportunities would be available for future generations.

Her involvement is never ceremonial. Mary Alice approaches every board seat, committee role, and campaign with genuine care and vision. Whether advocating for victims of domestic violence, expanding access to healthcare, or helping preserve and revitalize vital community institutions, her work has left a lasting mark on Wayne County. Her legacy isn't confined to formal titles or plaques—it lives in the people and programs her efforts have supported.

RUTH M. TIECHE

The Friend of Philanthropy Award is named in honor of Ruth M. Tieche. Ruth worked at Freedlander's Department Store for nearly 60 years, retiring in 1975 as the personnel director. She passed away in March 1989, at the age of 90, leaving no survivors. Through a bequest, Ruth left $384,000 to the Foundation as an unrestricted gift.

Ruth's generosity brought the total assets under the care of the Foundation to more than $1 million – a major milestone for the young organization. With careful stewardship, her initial gift has continued to grow while also awarding funds back into the community through the Foundation's competitive grant cycle. Unrestricted gifts, like the one provided by Ruth, allow the Foundation to meet the ever-changing needs of our community for years to come.

While Mary Alice has never sought attention or praise, her leadership has not gone unnoticed. She is a recipient of both the Women of Achievement Award and the Athena Award, and in 2021 was inducted into the Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce Wall of Fame. In accepting that honor, she humbly stated, "I'm honored, humbled, and grateful," emphasizing that her volunteer efforts have been personally rewarding and fueled by the relationships she's built along the way.

Mary Alice believes deeply in the power of collective action. Through her leadership, she's helped build a culture of philanthropy rooted in sustainability and equity. Her legacy is etched in lives uplifted, futures secured, and a community forever strengthened.

Those who know Mary Alice speak of her warmth, generosity, and quiet commitment to helping others. She's the kind of person who instinctively redirects praise, preferring to highlight the work of others and the causes she believes in. Yet, her deep impact is undeniable. Through years of selfless service, Mary Alice has demonstrated how one person's dedication can ripple outward to create lasting change. Her life's work exemplifies what it means to be a friend of philanthropy in the truest sense.

Previous Award Recipients

Stanley C. & Flo K. Gault, 2013
The J.M. Smucker Family, 2014
The Donald & Alice Noble Family, 2015
Greg & Kathy Long, 2016
Barry Romich, 2017
Stephen & Cheryl Shapiro, 2018
Michael & Stephanie Reardon, 2019
Richard & Judy Seaman, 2022
John C. Johnston III, 2023
Ron & Prue Holtman, 2024

**No recipients in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic*

The Friend of Philanthropy Award was created to honor those who make a difference in our communities with their philanthropic activities – the giving of treasure, time, and talent – for the betterment of the Wayne County area. It is presented at Wayne County Community Foundation's Annual Dinner. For more details on the award and nomination process, please visit us online at **www.wccfoh.org** or call **330.262.3877**.