

Suzanne and Richard Belcher Fund

When Dick Belcher started The First Federal Savings Bank in the back room of a grocery store, he had no idea what his business would one day become. In this moment, he was also unaware of just how greatly the community would contribute to his success.

Dick was a man who valued work ethic above all else. Having been raised on a farm, and as a child who lived through the Great Depression, he was taught the value of hard work at a young age.

Dick was born in Burton, Indiana. He graduated from Rochester High School and went on to get a degree from Purdue University where he met his wife, Suzanne.

Suzanne Belcher was born in Remington and raised on a farm as well. She also graduated from Purdue, and taught children with speech and hearing disabilities before retiring.

In 1966, Dick decided to start a bank in Rochester, IN. With only one other employee, he ran the bank from the back room of a grocery market. The business soon began to grow and the bank moved to a new building, sporting a drive-thru window and a parking lot, which was rare for a bank at the time.

Helping the environment, as well as the community has always been important to Dick. Today, he owns the only bank in the state of Indiana that is entirely green. It is located in Mishawaka, IN. He has also funded LEED projects for various other buildings in Northern Indiana.

The Belchers had heard about the community foundation and the matching opportunities from the Lilly Endowment, but they hadn't really considered creating a fund. Several years later, the Belchers' granddaughter, Katie, died from Tay-Sachs disease at a young age. It was then that the couple decided to start a fund in her memory. Thus, the Katherine J. Belcher Fund was created in 1998. The fund is used for various charitable purposes in the community.

In 2008, the couple decided to start another fund in Katie's memory, the Katherine J. Belcher Fund for the Benefit of the Fulton County Public Library. Because Katie was so young when she passed, and Suzanne had worked with children for many years as well as being on the Fulton County Public Library Board, it was an easy decision to put the money towards the children's section of the library.

The Belchers also started the Suzanne and Richard Belcher Fund in 2010, The First Federal Savings Bank Fund, and the First Federal Savings Bank Unrestricted Fund, all of which support various charitable purposes in the community.

The community was such a huge part of the Belchers' success that they felt it was time for them to return the favor. "Leave the earth a little better than you found it," is a quote that Dick not only lives by, but with the help of the Community Foundation, has actually achieved.

