



NORTHERN INDIANA  
**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**  
STARKE FULTON MIAMI

WHERE GIVING GROWS

## Our Donor's Stories

### **George and Dorothy Groenleer and Lyle and Doris Hillman Unrestricted Fund and the Rochester Community School Academic Fund**

Don and Lynn Groenleer are community members who need no recognition for their generosity. Oftentimes, they have preferred to give anonymously, though occasionally they have been convinced otherwise. The reason they agreed, though, was to encourage those who knew them to give as well.

The two feel at home in two towns— Rochester, Indiana and Baldwin, Michigan, where they have a summer cottage. They have become valued community members in both of these areas.

Don and Lynn actually met on a blind date. Their connection came from a person in Lynn's family who was associated with Don through work. Lynn didn't have a telephone, so Don wrote her a letter. She wrote him back, and he soon showed up at her apartment to take her on a date. They were married in 1975.

Both Don and Lynn are originally from Michigan. Don grew up in Grand Rapids, and Lynn is from Dearborn, though she moved all around California as a child and spent most of her early life in Taylor, Michigan. When she was a junior in college, her family moved to Battlecreek.

In Battlecreek, Lynn attended Kala Community College. She was later admitted into the dental hygiene program in Kalamazoo. She worked as a dental hygienist in Michigan for almost five years before moving to Indiana.

Don went to Grand Rapids Junior College for two years and later got his bachelor's degree in accounting from Western Michigan. He worked as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and then was connected to First Federal Bank in Rochester. He and Lynn moved to Rochester, where Don worked as an account for First Federal for 33 years, and Lynn worked as a dental hygienist for 32 years.

They have one son, Nick, who went to Ball State University, and two young granddaughters, Natalie Joy and Jillian Marie. The girls call them Papa and Mimi, and the older of the two, Jillian, often calls to hear Papa tell her a story. Don loves to tell extravagant tales to his grandchildren.

Besides spending time with family, both Don and Lynn enjoy reading and staying very active in community activities. Don is also a great cook and has taught cooking classes out of their home for their church group. For the last six years, they've had a cook-off in Michigan, and he also won the first soup-off held at their church.

They attend First Baptist Church in Rochester and have been a part of the adult class there for 38 years. For 32 of those years, Don served as the group leader.

In 2011, Don won the Community Service Award for a lifetime of service to the community. The list of activities in which he is involved is so extensive that this comes as no surprise. Don was on the local library board for about 16 years. He was also appointed to the state library board. He was on the Fulton County Community Foundation board beginning in 1993. He served on the NICF board for 10 years and was President for 5 terms. He is also on the board of First Federal Savings Bank.



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He helped teach swimming (He swam in high school and college.) and even opened his pool for private lessons at one time. He cares about education and has been the President of the Parent Teacher Association. He was also an adjunct instructor at Ivy Tech Community College and Ancilla College and taught Junior Achievement for nine years.

He and his wife both volunteer in their church. They take turns with other families hosting free meals. They provide transportation during hours when the hospital is closed and patients and visitors do not have a ride home. For several years, they also provided formal before-prom dinners for high school students.

Lynn is no less involved. She participates in a prayer group called Moms in Prayer, as well as neighborhood prayer walking. She does personal devotions as well, which includes praying for the nations of the world. She is on a committee that serves funeral dinners, she is active in the Fellowship Guild, she was part of Master Gardeners, she was is Psi Iota Xi for many years, and she was President of Young Women's Club.

The two feel that as Christians, it is their duty to be involved and help others. They feel that they've been very blessed and want to give back.

Don and Lynn established the George and Dorothy Groenleer and Lyle and Doris Hillman Unrestricted Fund in their parents' names. Neither of their parents were wealthy, but they were very generous and caring people. Lynn's parents, who loved to garden and always had a beautiful yard, Lynn remembers, were still living when Don and Lynn established the fund. Lynn would tell them how the fund was impacting the community, and they were both so pleased. Lynn's mother had worked at Kellogg's, and Lynn's father installed carpet and tile in people's homes.

Don's parents were married for over 58 years when his father passed away. Don's mother was a stay-at-home mom, and his father worked for a telephone company. He was extremely handy and could fix anything, Don remembers.

While their parents' fund is unrestricted, Don and Lynn saw one need in the community that they wanted to address. They found that many needs in Rochester Community Schools were not met because there wasn't enough funding. Therefore, Don and Lynn established the Rochester Community School Academic Fund in order to support the needs of the school that seemed to "fall through the cracks." The fund has supported a variety of needs, such as calculators for classes that do not have enough for every student, toiletries for students who cannot otherwise afford them, birdfeeders for the school butterfly garden, tickets to the Museum of Science and Industry, and even funds to help students attend a trip to Spain!

In another community that is close their hearts, Baldwin, Michigan, they also set up a fund to help support the local library, which was in great need of assistance. No matter which community they are in, Don and Lynn feel that it's important to help out those in need. They have made monetary contributions, but they have also given so much of their time and their love to Fulton County. The contributions they have made will continue to impact our community forever.