

## THE LASTING LEGACY OF WHITNEY AND ELIZABETH MACMILLAN

Every October, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) celebrates the remarkable contributions of our Legacy Society donors. This year we have the privilege of celebrating the extraordinary generosity of the Whitney and Elizabeth MacMillan (WEM) Foundation and Elizabeth (Betty) and Whitney MacMillan.

Betty and Whitney first became MNHS members in 1963, marking the beginning of a profound journey. Over the ensuing six decades, their exceptional commitment, extensive volunteer service, and visionary contributions have left a lasting mark on the organization.

Betty, a distinguished leader at both MNHS and the Smithsonian, has been instrumental in expanding the horizons of Minnesota's historical discourse. During her tenure as an executive council member from 1989 to 1999, MNHS became a recognized leader in historical interpretation and education. Betty's forward-thinking approach facilitated MNHS's participation as a host of acclaimed traveling exhibitions such as *The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden*. By highlighting these key national narratives, she helped MNHS promote a deeper understanding of our shared history.

The MacMillans' philanthropy has served as a driving force behind significant MNHS capital projects. They have played a pivotal role in funding major education centers at the Minnesota History Center, Mill City Museum, and Oliver Kelley Farm.

"I recall with great pleasure Betty and Whitney's many visits to the MacMillan Education Wing of the Minnesota History Center," writes Nina Archabal, former MNHS director and

current emeritus and honorary council member. "On these occasions they engaged with young people experiencing the joy of discovery and learning. These encounters demonstrated the potential impact of the MacMillans' commitment to educating future generations of our citizens."

Betty and Whitney's dedication to creating exceptional education centers has had a profound impact on millions of Minnesota students. Thanks to their investments, students now enjoy state-of-the-art classrooms and lunchrooms. These thoughtfully designed facilities provide an environment for students to engage with educational content, collaborate with their peers, and forge a deeper connection with history.

The MacMillans' dedication to education goes far beyond education centers. In 2010, they established a program for Minnesota students, regardless of their location, to participate in field trips to MNHS sites. This program has provided funding to nearly 70,000 students representing 943 schools, opening doors to experiential learning opportunities that would have otherwise been inaccessible to them.

They have also been a strong supporter of National History Day in Minnesota. Throughout the school year, students collaborate with MNHS staff, librarians, mentors, and teachers to develop independent research projects on topics of their choice. Through annual contributions to this initiative, the MacMillans have elevated Minnesota's role in facilitating this program and have established MNHS as a leading force in the nationwide sharing of resources. The Minnesota History Day program has earned widespread rec-



ognition for its high participation and exceptional student engagement, having served over half a million students since 1988. The encouragement and support provided by the MacMillans and the WEM Foundation have been invaluable to the program's success.

Most recently, MNHS has received a transformative grant from the WEM Foundation that will ensure the strength of MNHS programs for decades to come. Through two major endowments, the MacMillans have ensured that History Day and MNHS field trips will exist in perpetuity. The newly established MacMillan fellows program exemplifies their significant investment in staff development and capacity building within MNHS.

As we celebrate the extraordinary legacy of the MacMillans, we recognize the significance of their philanthropy in shaping the educational landscape of Minnesota. Their generosity and support ensure that future generations have access to a vibrant and transformative educational experience through the Minnesota Historical Society.

For further information about planned giving and the MNHS Legacy Society, please contact Jennifer Pogatchnik at [jennifer.pogatchnik@mnhs.org](mailto:jennifer.pogatchnik@mnhs.org).



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