Dick Winton
A Good Man

Born in Illinois, Dick Winton came to Colorado for a job and loved the state so much that he stayed. He worked for Gates Rubber Company for 30 years, and became deeply connected to Denver. He rode the Rockies, cheered for the Broncos, and joined the University Club. He dearly loved the mountains, where he hiked, biked, and skied.

Despite his outgoing personality, there was a private side to Dick: his philanthropy. He gave quietly and thoughtfully to the causes that mattered to him, especially the University of Illinois and national medical organizations addressing heart disease and cancer. He didn’t widely discuss his giving; he just did it.

He first met The Denver Foundation in 2008, when the economy was crashing and Colorado’s emergency food system followed suit. He had heard media stories about the Foundation’s work to put money quickly into food pantries so they could serve the ever-increasing flow of families in need. He read up on the issue, met with our staff, and made the first of a series of gifts to the Critical Needs Fund.

The Foundation activates this fund when there is a situation looming that requires a combination of vision, collaboration, and funding to address or mitigate it. Since creating the fund in 2005, the Foundation has used the fund for energy audits and building modifications for nonprofit shelters and hospices; for emergency food and systemic work for the state’s hunger crisis; and most recently to house at-risk unaccompanied homeless women in Metro Denver.

Between 2008 and 2012, Dick made a series of gifts to the Critical Needs Fund for emergency food grants, food pantry collaboration and capacity building, and food delivery systems advocacy. He also updated his estate plan, naming The Denver Foundation’s Critical Needs Fund as a 25% beneficiary in his will. This quiet generosity is the capstone to Dick Winton’s remarkable life. Philanthropy was his “second act,” a role through which he will help thousands of people who never had the pleasure of knowing him except through his personal giving.

Dick passed away earlier this year, but his generous bequest will ensure lasting legacy in our community. Dick’s favorite saying was “Be good…but only if you have to.” It seems Dick felt he had to, because he certainly was, and we thank him for it.

Family Philanthropy Tips

Look back...

To get your family discussing shared philanthropic goals, talk about your earliest memory of giving and volunteering. Describe what you learned from your parents and grandparents, and what it meant to you. Then have everyone else describe their first memories. Talk about your family culture, what you like to do together, what causes matter to you. Have your early experiences informed your community commitments?

Look ahead...

In planning for the holidays, try to incorporate philanthropy into your holiday giving. Offer to match or even double a family member’s donation to a favorite cause. Together with your family, choose an organization or a project to support, and donate to that cause in lieu of buying gifts for each other. Or, purchase items from a nonprofit organization and use them as holiday gifts for others. People love the soups from The Women’s Bean Project, or jewelry from fair trade cooperatives like Bead for Life, and your purchases make a difference for others.