

Fromm Scholarship Program

Legacy of the Fromm Dynasty

by SHARON JAEGER

The Fromm history stretches back to the twentieth century is indeed a frontier saga about the great American dream. It is the story of the Fromm brothers of Hamburg, who in the early 1900s, were the four youngest sons of a large family on a wilderness farm in the northwoods of Wisconsin. The four sons -- Edward, Henry, Walter and John -- helped their parents struggle for existence. Their story is told through the silver fox, mink, and ginseng industries around the world.

Even though the actual business and prosperity of the Fromm Brothers is now a legacy, the success of the Fromm Dynasty continues into the 21st century through the Walter and Mabel Fromm Scholarship program at Merrill High School.

The Walter and Mabel Fromm Scholarships were first awarded to graduates of Maple Grove School and Merrill High School in 1976. For the first five years, the scholarships were given only to those who had attended all grades from first through sixth at Maple Grove Elementary School.

The main purpose of the trust is to provide an education for Maple Grove students who qualify via the 2.5 grade point average. When they are taken care of, any remaining money is given to the other recipients with grade point being the major criteria.

Every Maple Grove college students receives a minimum of \$3500 and the technical school students a minimum of \$1000. The money paid to the Merrill area students fluctuates depending on the income of the trust for that particular year.

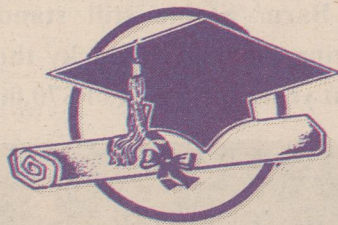
From 1976 to 1980, additional funds on hand were given to older Maple Grove students already in college at the time the trust fund first went into effect. After its

revision, no further back grants were awarded.

In 1981 when the bulk of the estate passed into the trust, it became necessary to expand the criteria for awarding the scholarships. Recipients now include students who attended all of grades 1-6 at Maple Grove and attended grades 7-12 in MAPS as well as students who attended grades 9-12 in MAPS and earned a diploma from Merrill High School with a GPA of 2.5 or better. Recipients must attend a school in Wisconsin and must be accepted by a four-year college program, a three-year nursing program, or a two-year associate program at North-Central Technical College.

The selection of the recipients is determined by a committee made up of a representative of the Fromm family, the principal of Maple Grove Elementary School, the principal of Merrill High School, and the chairman of the Town of Hamburg. This committee is empowered to select grantees, determine eligibility requirements, designate the amount of scholarship, the method and the time of payment, and determine the number of scholarships to be awarded each year.

To date more than 75 students have completed their degrees under the Fromm Scholarship Program. Since 1976, when the Walter and Mabel Fromm Scholarship was established, over \$2 million has been awarded.



Students at Maple Grove School benefit from the legacy left by the Fromm Dynasty.

Recipients of the Walter and Mabel Fromm Scholarship

1976
Karmen Kleinschmidt
Leann Wendt
Karen Zinkowich

1977
Marie Helmke
Jamie Kleinschmidt
Keith Kleinschmidt

1978
Kathleen Bloch
Nancy Broeking
Mark Czech
Denise Klockziem

1979
Dan Czech
Sue Fellbaum
Lee Hoepfner
Carla Kleinschmidt

1980
Tammy Bartelt
Sherry Bloch
Robert Fromm
Wanda Kleinschmidt
Richard Schmidt
Debra Seidler
Steven Steidinger

1981
Janice Londerville
John Moeck
Scott Thurs
Bryan Hornung
Lisa Marnholtz
Joanne Sazama
Anne Smith
Karen Wendorf (*currently serves as principal at Maple Grove School*)
Elizabeth Hershey
Lyle Jaeger
Nancy Kamke
Sally Thompson
Kathy Weix
David Pickruhn
Steven Stahel

1982
Sara Bartelt
Joann Broeking
Cheryl Chisnell
Karen Fromm
Kirk Kleinschmidt
Floyd Mootz
Tim Pruss
Judith Schultz
Sherry Winkelman

1983
Teresa Chisnell
Kim Kleinschmidt
Sherri Stahel
Timothy Zuleger
Molly Geiger
Sherry Schuman
Rhonda Klebenow

1984
Sherry Becker
David Chisnell
Kevin Steidinger
Doug Bonke
Joseph Kysely
Diane Simon
Heidi Grenwalt
Wayne Henneman
Sheila Stahel

1985
Christine Cappell
Colleen Chisnell
Dale Pickruhn

Sue Steidinger
Joan Voigt
Wendy Zastrow
Andrea Britten
Pamela Paul

1986
Kenneth Spaar
Craig Jahnke
Donna Zuleger
Susan Eilola
Joan Luterbach
Karen Steckel
Laura Stiver
Heidi Storm
Vince Zoellner

1987
Jerry Chisnell
Eric Fromm
Becky Giese
Thomas Kleinschmidt
John Pruss
Jodi Zinkowich
Michael Weaver
Leah Wegener

1988
Heather Marquardt
Tammy Heldt
Colleen Gatterman
Angelina Iwen
Shawn Mains
Lynda Nedden
Mark Sczygelski
Stephanie Schneider

1989
Mary Bloch
Keith Klebenow
Kara Seliger
Sherrie Thurs
Heidi Voigt
Dixie Wiederhoeft
Michael Wilk
Nisha Gupta

1990
Neal Christensen
Kevin Giese
Tracy Voigt
Amy Bondioli
Kerry Kraemer
Megan Mains
Ann Neubauer
Sara Nolan
Luke Skarlupka

1991
Amy Chisnell
Galen Fromm
Christopher Hoffman
Amy Juhlke
Chad Plautz
Leah Porath
Stacey Schulze
Jennifer Staus

1992
Joseph Frenkel
Ricky Heldt
Holly Zastrow
Charles Hoeft
Jennifer Thurs
Gina Wendt

1993
Robin Wood
Mary Janowiak
Lisa Kasper

1993
Peter Borchardt
Adam Christensen
Mark Falk
Jeffrey Frenkel
Mary Plautz
Rebekka Surber
Chris Wiederhoeft

1994
Christopher Berndt
Lisa Falk
Philip Henrichs Jr.
Elizabeth Hoeft
Edward Neumann
Paul Welch
Karrie Thurs

1995
Michelle Arneson
Katherine Surber
Alia Vandervoort
Shane Voigt
Korie Kaminski
Brendan Faherty
Miranda Hofmann
Amy Meyer
Beth Ward

1996
Elizabeth Cotrone
Kerry Steinagel
Pamela Thurs
Haley Voigt
Rachel Welch
Michael Wiederhoeft
Karen Tucker

1997
Honey Moser
Bernie Weber
Dwight Falk
Jessica Staus

1998
Stephanie Hoffman
Jill Klockziem
Nathan Kohnhorst
Jonathon Plisch
Eric Tucker
Bela Vandervoort
Theresa Welch
Rena White

1999
Jennifer Boehm
Jeff Christensen
Sarah Melander
Saffron Moser
Patricia Winter
Dan Kaminski
Amber Wegner

2000
Amy Borchardt
Amy Hinz
Angela Paul
Russell White
Bethany DeBroux
Catherine Bartling
Elizabeth Burgener
Amanda Gartman
Jennifer Leider
Kaitlin Mitchell
Natalie Pagoria
Jeremiah Wendt



PHOTOS BY
PATSY WOLLER

The former Walter and Mabel Fromm home is still a showplace today. The home now owned by Stan (Buzz) and Angie Pophal and family has gleaming hardwood floors throughout including the basement, the home is on the National Historic Registry.



Fromm History Has Beginning With Four Enterprising Brothers

By BARB PHILLEO

Take a page from central Wisconsin history and surely the Fromm name will be found among those mentioned. In the early 1900s the four youngest sons of Frederick and Alwina Fromm, Edward, Henry, John and Walter, began the dream of trapping a silver fox. That later gave way to the reality of breeding silver foxes. Thus, they transformed their world of meagerness into a business that was worth millions of dollars.

It was a slow start for the Fromm brothers, whose father thought it useful that Edward and Walter go to Normal School to become teachers. But the two boys eventually rejoined the original "Company".

After numerous false starts, and with pairs of silver fox pups selling at fifteen to thirty five thousand dollars in 1913, the Company did not even have money for a pair of outcaste foxes, which were red foxes that were carriers of silver blood that were selling for four hundred and fifty dollars a pair.

Unfortunately, by the time the brothers had the silver foxes they needed, the bottom

dropped out of the market. As it slowly recovered, the silver fox that the Company felt was the creme de la creme of the fur industry, was not a view held by the buyers, or in the world of fashion. Additionally, it was thought that the only worthwhile pelts were those of animals trapped in the wild, not raised on ranches. Still, the Company persisted, not only in the fur business, but also in ginseng. In that area of endeavor they suffered many setbacks, but each time they tried to learn a little more.

Whether it was an epidemic of internal parasites which killed off half of the Fromm foxes, or a bumper crop of ginseng root that could not be dried effectively and mildewed, the Fromm Brothers never once thought of quitting. They persevered in their dream, and worked hard to bring it to fruition.

In the mid-nineteen twenties, a new disease broke out among the foxes. Foxes that otherwise appeared well, for no apparent reason died within a few hours of contracting the illness. The illness was brief and

the foxes died even before their sickness was detected. The sickness would manifest itself in a fox by it staggering or wildly running and then going into convulsions. The epidemic spread and fox deaths climbed to the point that it appeared the whole fur "crop" might be wiped out.

Dr. Robert G. Green, an Associate Professor of Bacteriology in the University of Minnesota had been asked by the Fox Breeders' Association to research fox distemper. Dr. Green began his work for the Association and had reports published in a series of articles

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Beautiful statues and fountains were part of the landscaping at the Walter and Mabel Fromm home as well as the other Fromm Brothers home.



