



Zeno fortune to stay in Mankato

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The Free Press

MANKATO October 12, 2009 10:20 pm

— Warner Zeno was born in Mankato, graduated from Mankato High School, started Zeno Glass Company of Mankato, died in Sunrise Cottage of Mankato and was buried in Glenwood Cemetery. It is fitting that his money should stay here as well.

On Monday, the trustees of his estate gave out checks totaling almost \$1.8 million to four Mankato organizations. Zeno died in January at the age of 90. He had no children.

Three of those groups — the Blue Earth Nicollet County Humane Society, Mankato Masonic Lodge and the Salvation Army — received about \$232,000 apiece.

Minnesota State University received \$1.1 million to establish a scholarship for students who were born in Mankato and graduated from its public schools.

Zeno directed that all the money be spent in Mankato.

“Of course, we’re delighted and dazzled,” said Susan Kroon, president of the humane society’s board of directors. “It couldn’t come at a better time.”

The society is building a new shelter. Kroon said it had raised about \$780,000 of its \$1.2 million price tag before Monday’s donation. She said the new money will be divided between the shelter itself and an endowment to help the organization withstand future hardships.

The Salvation Army has a process for donations that involves review and analysis by its divisional headquarters in the Twin Cities, Capt. Mike Parker said.

Like the other organizations, they had received a letter saying money was on the way. But it was still an “incredible surprise” to see the check itself.

Parker said the Salvation Army’s board of directors will help to decide how best to use the donation.

The Free Press was unable to contact a representative from the Masonic Lodge.

Aside from a World War II post in Alaska and an education at Minneapolis’ Dunwoody Institute, Zeno spent his entire life in Mankato. The Zeno Glass Company sold mirrors and installed glass.

Zeno married Mildred Flohr, who died in 2004, and together they developed dog obedience classes.

Kroon said Mildred lavished attention and home-cooked food on her French bulldog.

“I always thought it would be great to come back as Mildred Zeno’s pet,” she said.

Warner Zeno’s trustees, a lifelong friend and a lawyer, sold the company and divided Zeno’s estate, emptying the account.

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Warner Zeno