

Erie J. Sauder Heritage Society *By: Andy Brodbeck*

Much has changed here at Sauder Village over the past 45 years since opening in 1976. At that time, little did Erie Sauder know that his dream would grow into what it is today. However, one thing that has not changed, is that during its infancy as a small Farm and Craft Village until today as Ohio's Largest Living History Village, the help of family, friends and supporters has made this treasure to our communities possible.

The generosity of so many has made a significant impact in allowing Sauder Village to offer meaningful, educational and fun experiences for all guests, especially the thousands of school children who visit each year.

Sauder Village receives and is blessed with gifts in many ways. Some donors give of their time, volunteering to help in one of the many opportunities we have to offer. Others give artifacts and personal possessions which help tell the stories of the past. Financial gifts are also received, whether given during a capital campaign or as a gift to one of the annual appeals supporting our Experience Fund.

One of the many ways of giving is by becoming a member of the Erie J. Sauder Heritage Society. This is an opportunity for those who want to leave a legacy gift designated through their will, trust, or other means. We are grateful for those who are currently members, as well as for those who have already extended this special level of gifting.



Vera Williams Schmidt
1917 – 2020



One of those is Vera Williams Schmidt who passed away after more than 4 decades of supporting this organization she dearly loved. Vera experienced a very full and interesting life. She first began working outside the home at the age of 9, helping people with house and farm chores. In her adult life, Vera worked at Sauder Woodworking, managed a local Sterling's Store, operated a catering business and sold insurance. Then in 1976, Vera's adventure with Sauder Village began. She initially volunteered in the gift shop and to her surprise later managed the weaving shop where, until her retirement over 30 years later, she learned and demonstrated the art of weaving rugs, wall hangings, placemats and more.

Over these years, Vera experienced and understood the support needed in order for Sauder Village to continue making a positive impact in the lives of those who visited. She saw first-hand the difference this organization was making in people's lives, especially the children. For that reason, Vera made the decision to become a member of the Heritage Society and leave a legacy gift knowing that this commitment would help continue the mission that has benefited so many.

Estate gifts like Vera's, no matter the size, have had a meaningful impact in continuing the Sauder Village experience over the past 45 years and will continue to do so for years to come.

If you have ever thought about giving a legacy gift or would like to consider one, it would be an honor to share more about ways you can make this happen. I would enjoy talking with you about this opportunity.



Andy Brodbeck
Director of Development

