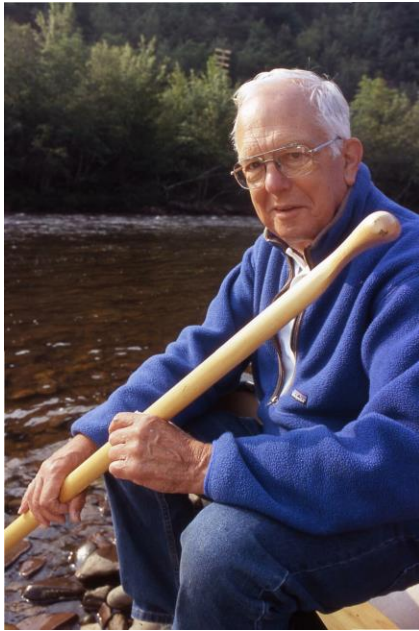


Fundholder Spotlight – Ferd Thun



As Ferd Thun paddles a Wildlands Conservancy canoe down the Lehigh River as part of the Conservancy's river sojourn, he sees the great improvements which have taken place since his trips on the River in the mid-1950s. The cooperative efforts of numerous charitable organizations with state and local governments have turned what was a severely polluted artery for coal transportation into a beautiful recreational area.

A native of Berks County, Ferd was graduated from Lehigh University and spent a significant portion of his professional life as a planned giving specialist at the University. He understands the sometimes complex human dimensions and motivations associated with charitable giving. "For some," he says, "it starts with the significant tax advantages of charitable giving. But then people learn what it means to make a difference, to have an impact, to leave a legacy.

That's when philanthropy becomes gratifying for the donor as well as beneficial for the community."

Commitment to education comes naturally to Ferd, but his philanthropic interests are as broad as they are carefully chosen. "The environment matters," he says, "regional planning matters, human services matter, and above all, cooperation among all the well-meaning groups working in these areas matters."

Grants from Ferd's donor-advised fund at the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation have, among other things, helped to make the Lehigh River more pristine, have established an endowment for the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, and have helped the Community Foundation to present seminars for professional advisors.

"Professional advisors can play an important role in introducing people to the advantages and satisfactions of philanthropy," Ferd notes, "and the Community Foundation assures that philanthropy is something that is understandable and accessible to everyone in the community. You don't need to have a private foundation to be a philanthropist, and you don't have to be a millionaire. You just have to care about something enough to make a charitable commitment to that cause."



Thoughtful and deliberate in his approach to grantmaking, Ferd enjoys the flexibility of donor-advised funds. “They give donors the chance to support a wide variety of needs and opportunities,” he says, “and they help donors to respond to changing needs in the community.”

Ferd is also, understandably, a fan of planned giving. “The chance to make a gift that provides income to the donor, the opportunity to create a fund by bequest or through a gift of appreciated stock or IRA assets—all of these are win-win situations for donors and for non-profits,” he states. “And the opportunity to leave a legacy through the creation of a permanent charitable fund is as valuable to the donor as it is to the community.”