

## Honouring Generations of Community Service

**(STRATFORD, ON) December 5, 2008** – In recognition of the generations of Orr family members who contributed hard work and foresight in making Stratford the vibrant community it is today, brothers Jeff and Rick Orr have initiated the Orr Family Fund at the Stratford and Perth County Community Foundation. In addition to honouring past generations, the Fund will provide a vehicle for investing in future initiatives for the betterment of the City of Stratford.

“I guess it’s in our blood,” says Jeff Orr. “Our great-grandfather, R. Thomas Orr, the first Orr to be born in Stratford, started what has become a family culture of volunteering and giving back. Our parents have reinforced the importance of service to the community.”

“There are few other families in Stratford that can boast of such a legacy of giving and volunteering,” remarked Tim MacDonald, Chair of the Foundation Board, on announcing the new fund. “We can’t think of a better way to recognize the role of past, present, and future members of the Orr Family than through the creation of this fund.”

In the late 1800s and early to mid 1900s R. Thomas Orr was instrumental in many of the activities and decisions which resulted in the creation of Stratford’s parks system and the Parks Board. These achievements included the acquisition of Lake Victoria, the development of Upper Queen’s Park, the clearing of lumber yards and sawmills from the waterways, full public access to the lake and parkland and the creation of the Shakespearean Gardens. Stratford’s existing park system set the stage for what was to become the home of the Stratford Shakespearean Festival – a condition essential for the theatre’s creation and survival.

Equal to R. Thomas Orr’s concern for the creation and conservation of Stratford’s park system was his interest in the area’s civic and economic development. He served on the board of the Public Library, the Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade. He founded the Stratford Historical Society. He was a strong advocate of good roads and influential in bringing Highway 7 through Stratford.

Tom Orr, Jeff and Rick’s father, continues in the footsteps of his grandfather, R. Thomas Orr, having served on the Stratford Parks Board, Chamber of Commerce, and Perth County Historical Society and currently on the Stratford Public Library Foundation.

Earlier this year Tom Orr was named Citizen of the Year for his many years of dedication to the Stratford community. In addition to working in the family business, Orr Insurance Brokers, Mr. Orr has also served on the board of Knox Presbyterian Church, the YM-YWCA, and mobility bus. Mr. Orr has been past chair/president of the Stratford Power Squadron, Stratford Lions Club, Stratford-Perth Archives, Perth County Crime Stoppers, and the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Currently Mr. Orr is serving on the Stratford Economic Opportunities Commission and as co-chair for the Heart and Soul Campaign for the Stratford General Hospital.

“While we want to honour the past and continue the legacy of giving back we also want to begin a new tradition of giving forward,” says Rick Orr. “By setting up this permanent endowment we are making an investment in Stratford and contributing to a strong and vibrant city in which to live, work and play.”

The tradition continues. Jeff Orr and Rick Orr, now the principals of Orr Insurance Brokers, have also been involved in many community organizations taking active leadership roles. Jeff is currently involved with the campaign for the Stratford’s agricultural and recreational complex and Chair of the Stratford Optimist Basketball Association. Rick sits on the Stratford General Hospital Foundation Board and is Chair of the Board of Park Management.

The community is invited to contribute to the Orr Family Fund. Grants from the Fund will support a variety of organizations and projects in Stratford that contribute to community vitality. Please contact the Foundation or visit our website [www.spccf.ca](http://www.spccf.ca) for more information.

*The Stratford and Perth County Community Foundation is a registered public foundation that serves the charitable sector in Perth County. The Foundation matches acts of caring with community needs by providing efficient, flexible donor services, grants to a broad range of community needs, and leadership in understanding and responding to current and emergent community needs and opportunities. For more information contact Elizabeth Hachborn at 519-271-1503 or email [ehachborn@spccf.ca](mailto:ehachborn@spccf.ca).*

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