

Contact

Linda Sandquist
Director of Marketing and Communications
Community Foundation of Northern Illinois
946 N. Second Street
Rockford, IL 61107
Phone 815-962-2110 ext. 12
Cell 815-289-1258
Email lsandquist@cfnil.org

**For Immediate Release
January 8, 2010**

Community Foundation Announces \$1 Million Legacy of Ruth Colman Tower Establishes Howard D. Colman Memorial Scholarship Fund

Rockford, IL – The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois is pleased to announce that it has been named the beneficiary of a \$1 Million Charitable Remainder Trust from the late Ruth Colman Tower. Mrs. Tower asked the Foundation to use the Trust to establish the Howard D. Colman Memorial Scholarship Fund in honor of her father, Howard Colman. Resources from this permanently endowed scholarship fund will be used to enhance regional educational opportunities and training in the fields of engineering, computer science, or a comparable technology. Support from the fund is expected to be approximately \$40,000 the first year.

In an effort to compliment local efforts concentrating on the attraction and retention of talent to the Rockford area, the Community Foundation has assembled a group of representatives from the manufacturing sector for counsel on the creation of guidelines for the Howard D. Colman Memorial Scholarship Fund. Representatives include Paula Capriola (Furst Staffing), Daniel Cataldi (EigerLab/Rock Valley College), Russ Dennis (Leading Edge Hydraulics/Next Rockford), Janyce Fadden (Rockford Area Economic Development Council), Einar Forsman (Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce), Mark Podemski (Rockford Area Economic Development Council), John Quinn (FMA), Chuck Sweeney (Rockford Register Star), and Bob Trojan (Rockford Linear Actuation).

The Community Foundation will officially announce the Howard D. Colman Memorial Scholarship Fund at a media conference on Tuesday, January 12 at 1:30 pm at the Foundation offices located at 946 N. Second Street. Mayor Larry Morrissey and Chairman Scott Christiansen will be attending and speaking on behalf of the community. The above named representatives will also be attending, as will members of Ruth Colman Tower's immediate family.

Howard D. Colman (1873 - 1942) was one of the most gifted American inventors of the 20th Century. Colman was a scientific prodigy who made his own earliest hand tools and taught himself the fundamentals of mechanics and physics. He solved the last great puzzle of textile automation as a young man, and eventually launched a machine-building business in Rockford, IL. that dominated the international market.

According to his biographer, Jon Lundin, Colman was the most important person to ever live in Rockford. *“He changed the course of mechanical science in the 20th century in so many different fields: certainly in textiles, in temperature controls, and remote messaging and contributed significantly to the development of one of the world’s first digital computers. He also created thousands of jobs here. There were 3000 jobs at Barber-Colman at the time that he died. It’s been a wonderful company in terms of its support of the community and historically one of the leaders in supporting charities locally.”*

Ruth Colman Tower (1907 - 2009) was the third of four Colman children. Inspired by her father’s ingenuity and generosity, Ruth created a charitable remainder trust in 1987, naming the Community Foundation as beneficiary, and directing the trust to the establishment of a scholarship in honor of Howard Colman.

Howard Colman, the Colman Family, and the Barber-Colman Company have a long history of charitable support for the Rockford Community. In 1987, when Barber-Colman was sold to an international company, managers from the local company gifted \$2.7 Million to the Community Foundation to be used in perpetuity for Rockford College, United Way, and broad community needs. In addition, Howard Colman’s children, Edwin, Dorothy, Ruth and Janet (on behalf of her deceased husband, Walter Colman) directed the \$500,000 Barber-Colman Foundation to the Community Foundation and established the Howard D. Colman Memorial Fund which each year supports community nonprofits with financial grants.

The Community Foundation was founded in 1953 and is the region’s largest provider of grants and scholarships. The Foundation’s mission is to attract, preserve and grow a permanent endowment for the present and future needs of the people of Northern Illinois.

END