

Wednesday, November 12, 2008

Former GM CEO designates MBH as beneficiary

Meadow Brook Hall has received a \$500,000 gift from the International Paper Company Foundation in honor of Roger B. Smith, a board director of the company.

Smith, who died Nov. 29, 2007, at age 82, designated the hall as a beneficiary through the company's Charitable Award Program for Education in Honor of its Directors. Smith, well-known for community involvement and philanthropy throughout Michigan, was chairman of the board and chief executive officer of General Motors Corporation from 1981-1990.

"We're honored by this generous donation," said Kim Zelinski, associate director, Meadow Brook Hall. "Smith, and his wife, Barbara, have been such great supporters of the hall over the years. They not only offered financial support, but served as wonderful personal advocates for the hall."

When told that the gift would be spent on continued preservation of the hall, Barbara Smith was delighted.

"That's exactly what Roger and I wanted," she said. "We've been very involved in Meadow Brook Hall since the '80s. The hall is a treasure. Every time I enter this wonderfully preserved historic building my skin prickles, it's so beautiful."

"We, as a community, don't do enough to preserve historical jewels as these," Smith added. "Meadow Brook Hall is a shining example of how a community can come together to keep history and beauty alive."

International Paper Company, a global paper and packaging company with an extensive North American merchant distribution system, utilized the Charitable Award Program for Education in Honor of its Directors as a way to support education – the company's primary charitable focus. Smith was a member of its board for eight years.

Smith also served on the boards of Citicorp/Citibank and PepsiCo, and was active in many charitable activities. As a director at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, he founded the General Motors Cancer Research Awards in 1978 with a \$2 million grant from General Motors. Since the award program's inception, 41 preeminent scientists have been honored with the prestigious Kettering Prize, Mott Prize or Sloan Prize.

The International Paper Company Foundation will award the \$500,000 gift to Meadow Brook Hall & Gardens in \$50,000 increments over 10 years. The first installment was paid shortly after Roger Smith's death.

SUMMARY

A \$500,000 gift has been awarded in honor of Roger B. Smith, who was well-known for community involvement and philanthropy throughout Michigan.

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