

Community Foundation's Women's Fund celebrates 15 years



By Noelle Bye / Staff Writer

Posted Sep 8, 2019 at 2:35 PM

Updated Sep 8, 2019 at 5:19 PM

Through re-enactors and displays of historic dresses, hats and gloves, the women of Ashland County's past will come back to life at the Ashland University Convocation Center on Sept. 24 at 6 p.m.

To celebrate its 15-year anniversary, the Women's Fund of the Ashland County Community Foundation will honor multiple generations of women during its annual dinner.

The "Celebrating the Past and Envisioning the Future" program will include a plated dinner, living history vignettes featuring historic Ashland women, remarks from JoAnn Ford Watson and her mother Lucille Ford, a grant testimonial, and the presentation of the Dr. Lucille G. Ford "Freedom from Selfishness" Award.

"We tried to make it a little bit more interesting this time," said Kathy Conery, who serves on the Women's Fund steering committee.

Reservations are \$25, and the ACCF is asking guests to RSVP by Thursday.

To reserve your spot, contact Mindy Howman, executive and grants administrative assistant, at the ACCF at 419-281-4733 or email mhowman@communityfoundation.org.

You can also make reservations at womensfundcelebration.eventbrite.com.

Martha Buckner will portray Mildred Myers and Susan Amstutz will play Sarah Andrews in short vignettes during the program.

"It's just fun to remember and recognize all the special women in Ashland's history," Conery said.

The Women's Fund turned to the Ashland County Historical Society to gather a collection of historic dresses, hats and other accessories for display.

"They allowed us to come in and literally just pick tons of hats and purses," said committee member Kristin Kirtland. "It was kind of fate because they were all already out and on display. We didn't have to go searching for them. They had them there because they were getting ready to put them away or put them on mannequins, so we were able to just choose them."

The historical society also contributed the table centerpieces.

"Celebrating women and the parts they have played in Ashland's history, as well as the support they give to our community, looking toward the future is so important," said Jennifer Marquette, director of operations at the historical society.

The historical society's mannequins were too delicate to bring to the Convocation Center, so committee member Marcy Myers provided five dress forms for the displays.

Plus, another committee member, Connie Marble, borrowed the hat stands from her garden club.

Watson also brought in the wedding gown worn in 1914 by her grandmother and Ford's mother, Edna Garber, for display.

"We've been very blessed with all the different things that have been donated for us to use — different people and organizations," Kirtland said.

During the program, Sherry Bouquet of Fostering Families Ministries also will share her story of how a grant from the Women's Fund helped her organization.

Ford was one of the founding members of the Women's Fund 15 years ago, bringing women together with the intent to help empower other women throughout the county through grants.

The money is raised through the Mother's Day Initiative, which gives community members the opportunity to send Mother's Day cards for a donation.

"At the 10-year (celebration), we had the plated dinner, and then in between, these last five years, we've had just a gathering with a dessert," Marble said. "But every five years, it seems like we should have some celebration."