

Setting the Stage for a Transformational Legacy

*By Ashley Hust, Major Gifts Officer
Yavapai College Foundation*



Kati Kelly grew up in Ohio, attended UCLA and ended up in Prescott when she married the Methodist minister here in town, Don McIntyre. Incidentally, Don’s father Virgil ran the VA Hospital and had a hand in preserving the gates to Fort Whipple that still stand on the Prescott Campus of Yavapai College, just to the south of the Performing Arts Center (YCPAC).

I like to think that wasn’t just a coincidence because the Performing Arts Center was well provided for by the McIntyres.

According to current Yavapai College District Governing Board Chair Deb McCasland, who worked at YC for many years, “Kati was always asking what might be needed [for the Performing Arts Center].” When a patron tragically passed away from a heart attack during a performance at the PAC not long after it opened, Kati purchased defibrillators for the building and paid to train all of the staff on how to use them.

After Don passed, Kati married John Kelly. Unfortunately, John passed away as well not much more than a decade later. Finding herself single once again, Kati became the constant companion of the late Elizabeth Ruffner in her later years. If you saw one of them out and about – you often saw the other one.

We knew Kati had included the College in her estate plans, because she informed us of that fact in general terms when the Foundation was making a strong push for legacy commitments back in 2011. Beyond that – we had no details. Kati had no children, but she also had a long history of supporting a number of other nonprofits and schools in Prescott over the years. It came as a surprise to everyone when, after her passing in 2019, we were informed that she had left YCPAC and the YC Foundation more than 1 million dollars in her will.

This money was to be split evenly between the two areas – the Foundation’s half governed by a windfall policy that required our Board to invest most of the funds in our endowment – and the other half made available to the Performing Arts to meet their area of greatest need. It just so happened the College was already in the process of planning a technical theater space to be added to the north side of the PAC. Kati’s unexpected gift paid for building and outfitting the technical theater space in its entirety. Amazing.

The Technical Theater in Stagecraft Certificate is designed to prepare students for a wide range of careers within theatrical operations and production. This hands-on experience working on theatrical productions and events in the performing arts and entertainment industry includes a wide variety of specializations in audio, lighting, set and props design and construction, costuming, hair and wigs, and make-up design.

If you've attended any of the YC Performing Arts Department's original productions in the past couple of years – It's a Wonderful Life, Chicago, Hello Dolly! – you've seen the fruits of Kati's gift in action. Truly, a legacy of kindness that will go on and on, and something from the short time I was able to begin getting to know her that I'm sure Kati would have been proud to make possible.

If you have questions about leaving assets to Yavapai College or want to let us know about a planned gift you've already included in your estate plans, give me a call at (928) 776-2034 or send me an email at ashley.hust@yc.edu and we'll make sure your wishes will be fulfilled as you see fit.