

Canada Iceland Foundation

— *fifty years of service to our community*

Timothy Samson

We are now completing the fiftieth anniversary year of the Canada Iceland Foundation. For the last fifty years the Foundation has managed and expanded its programs so that in its golden anniversary year there were a dozen scholarships awarded and a number of grants made, many of which you read about in Lögberg-Heimskringla.

The mandate of the Foundation is to act as an organization funded by Canadians of Icelandic descent, dedicated to the preservation of their cultural heritage.

During its fiftieth year the Foundation, as well as awarding the scholarships was able to make a number of worthwhile grants. A grant was made in support of the publication of the book *Cartoon Charlie*, an important book concerning the life of famed cartoonist Charlie Thorson. Again in 1998, the Foundation made a grant to the Icelandic Festival to assist in the presentation of a play, this year the production of *Sandy Bar: the life and times of Guttormur J. Guttormsson*.

A grant was made to the Winnipeg Art Gallery to support the presentation of a show of the work of Ione Thorkelsson. Called “The Unwilling Bestiary”, the show demonstrated the versatility of Ione Thorkelsson’s work in glass.

Pat Peacock, a well known Icelandic Canadian artist, was assisted in the show of her paintings in Iceland by a grant from the Foundation to the Icelandic National League for that purpose.

Canada Iceland Foundation was created as a charitable body by a group of community leaders and organizations in the Icelandic Canadian community in 1948 to fulfill the need for a funded charity to support the non-profit cultural and scholarship activities of our community, aside from the organizations that seek funding for their own specific undertakings. The unincorporated Foundation was turned into a charitable corporation in 1985.

Over the last fifty years a number of families have memorialized family members with the establishment of scholarship funds in their names. This process is ongoing as a number of families and organizations are presently, considering the creation of scholarship funds. The Foundation has also been fortunate to be remembered in the wills of members of the Icelandic Canadian community.

These bequests together with individual donations have allowed the Foundation to carry out its mandate to support worthwhile projects in our community. Recent projects supported by grants from the Foundation include the Red Deer College Icelandic conference, the Icelandic Festival production of *I am the Maestro*, the Gimli conference of The Department of Icelandic, the library project at Gimli High School, the reestablishment and equipping of the Museum in Gimli, Heritage Day and numerous others. As well the Foundation was able to be a major donor to the HIP campaign at the University of Manitoba.

Together with members at large, the Board of the Foundation consists of representatives of various community organizations including The Icelandic Festival of Manitoba, Frón, *Lögberg-Heimskringla*, the Icelandic National League, Jon Sigurdsson Chapter of the I.O.D.E. and the Department of Icelandic Language and Literature of the University of Manitoba.

Like all charitable organizations, Canada Iceland Foundation is, particularly in this time of low interest rates, always looking for more funds. The Foundation’s expenses are mainly for its audit, postage, and advertising for scholarship applicants, the philosophy being that the bulk of the Foundation’s resources should be turned to scholarships and grants. The Foundation had been planning a fundraising drive for this year but deferred that plan until after the fundraising to be carried out by Betel and the Department of Icelandic at the University. After those campaigns are completed next year the Foundation will seek community support in increasing its capital base. If, however, in the meantime you wish to create a scholarship fund or to make a bequest in your will for the benefit of the Icelandic Canadian community by way of the Foundation, please don’t hesitate to contact any member of the Foundation Board.

The Canada Iceland Foundation Board consists of Neil Bardal, Don Bjornson, Linda Collette, Magnus Eliason, Susie Erickson-Jakobson, Bill Helgason, Ingthor Isfeld, Sigrid Johnson, Ken Kristjanson, Diane Kristjansson, Oli Narfason, Paul Olafson, Tim Samson, Elva Simundsson, Lorna Tergesen, Mae Westdal and Dr. Kirsten Wolf.

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