

Allen & Milli Gould Family Legacy Endowment Fund

When Allen and Milli Gould opened their first Hamilton store in 1964, they took the world by storm starting the “Milli Craze” that endures and thrives more than 55 years later at its two retail locations in Hamilton and Toronto. Now, 20 years after Allen’s passing, Milli, together with her sons, Mark, who oversees operations, and Ben, who handles the finances, are continuing the family tradition of brilliant entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

Milli’s family has deep roots in this community. Her father, Sam Netkin, immigrated to Hamilton from Russia in the early 1900s. A founding member of the Adas Israel Synagogue and an accomplished businessman, Sam Netkin’s wholesale produce company, at its height, supplied almost 50 Dominion stores in the Niagara Peninsula.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Allen was a visionary entrepreneur, whose astute business insight combined with Milli’s outstanding fashion sense put Milli on the map in the world of haute couture.

Once their store’s success was established, Milli and Allen embarked on an altruistic journey with the creation of the Allen and Milli Gould Family Foundation. Over the years, their foundation has supported dozens of worthy causes within Hamilton’s Jewish community and beyond. Building upon Allen’s love of the arts and music, the Goulds helped kick start the establishment of Boris Brott’s National Academy Orchestra, that cultivates emerging young musicians.

In 1999, their foundation backed the creation of the Allen H. Gould Trading Floor at the DeGroote School of Business of McMaster University in honour of their father’s entrepreneurial spirit. This state-of-the-art facility delivers real-time data from all North American stock exchanges and helps students develop their skills and meet the demands of the financial services industry.

Keeping with Milli’s entrepreneurial spirit and the family’s desire to support the empowerment of women, the Goulds were instrumental in creating the Hamilton YWCA Women’s Entrepreneurship Program, which assists local women in establishing and growing businesses.

Among the family’s more prominent charitable endeavours are the “MilliMobile” vans, which offer wheelchair accessible transport to Shalom Village residents and Goldie’s Place day program participants.

Mark Gould marvels at his father’s foresight in establishing a family endowment fund with the Hamilton Jewish Fed-



eration back in its earliest days. “We are all going to go one day and when we do, we still want to support the community,” he remembers Allen telling them. Years later, their father’s advice still resonates deeply.

“Over the years we have lost many of our major donors, so if we want the Jewish community to survive, we have to find other means of funding it,” said Mark. “My parents wanted to start the endowment fund so that we could continue to support the community in perpetuity.”

