

**30th** ANNIVERSARY



BUILDING

**WALKER** Area Community Foundation



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## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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Friends of the Foundation,

As I reflect on this past year, I am filled with gratitude for the people, partnerships, and purpose that define the Walker Area Community Foundation. In every corner of our county, the Foundation continues to be a driving force for good—connecting vision with action and compassion with impact.

In 2025, we saw the fruits of long-term investments and bold ideas. One of the most exciting milestones was the start of construction on the **Heman Drummond Center of Innovation**—a transformative career and technical training center that will open new doors for students and adults alike. This bold initiative represents a powerful investment in the future of our workforce and our economy, equipping individuals with the skills they need to thrive in a changing world.

From expanding early childhood education to strengthening mental health resources and supporting local nonprofits, the Foundation has remained committed to addressing both the urgent needs and the long-term aspirations of our community.

What makes this work so powerful is the way it brings people together. The Foundation doesn't just fund projects—it builds relationships. It listens, it learns, and it leads. Whether it's revitalizing our downtowns, supporting recovery efforts, or launching new initiatives like workforce development and youth engagement, the Foundation is always working to move Walker County ONWARD.

This progress is only possible because of you—our donors, partners, and neighbors. Your belief in the mission and your investment in our shared future are what make this community thrive. Together, we are not just responding to challenges; we are shaping a stronger, more hopeful tomorrow.

It is an honor to serve as Chairman of the Board and to witness firsthand the transformative work happening every day. Thank you for walking alongside us as we continue to build a better Walker County—together.

*With appreciation,*

**ROBERT B. NOLEN, JR.**

*Chairman, Board of Directors*



Our FUTURE ...  
Built By COMMUNITY





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# A VISION REALIZED

## Early Years of the Walker Area Community Foundation

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A pivotal moment in the Foundation's early history came with a key decision by the board.

"I remember one of Larry Drummond's best ideas was hiring Carol Savage," recalled former board member Jack Allen. "Our board was discussing whether we could afford to hire an employee, and Larry said, 'We can't afford not to.'"

That decision proved transformational. Carol Savage became the Foundation's first Executive Director in 2000. From day one, she didn't just run the office, she brought the Foundation to life in the community. "I thought it would be wonderful if we could have a web page," she recalled. "But back then, I don't remember a nonprofit in Walker County that had a computer."

It was a different time. Most nonprofits in Walker County were one-person offices with few resources. Carol saw this need clearly. She remembered telling other nonprofit leaders, "They don't have the staff capacity to go to Birmingham for training. You'll have to come to Jasper." And they did.

She worked tirelessly to make sure the Foundation wasn't just a name, it was known. "We did a lot of speaking," she said. "Clubs, churches, luncheons—all just trying to get the Foundation's name out."

Even the office space told a story. "My first office didn't have a window," she laughed. "If two people came in, one person had to go out. Finally, Jack Allen came in one day and said, 'Carol, you need a window.'"

And yet, out of that cramped office came some of the Foundation's most meaningful early work of supporting healthcare access, coordinating volunteer efforts, even printing newsletters that somehow always made the front page of the local paper. "People in Birmingham would ask how we got so much publicity," Carol remembered. "We just made sure we had something going on every day."

She never expected the Foundation to become what it is today. "Never in a million years," she said. "I used to sit and think, how are we going to get money? I remember when we got our first \$10,000 check, we were overjoyed."

That check was just the beginning. Today, the Foundation holds more than \$150 million in assets and continues to grow. But much of that growth traces back to Carol Savage, her humility, her vision, and her willingness to do the hard work of building trust, one meeting and one person at a time.

"I think what we built came from believing we could do something important," she said. "And we did."

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CAROL SAVAGE, WACF Executive Director 2000–2007





# HEMAN DRUMMOND CENTER OF INNOVATION

Futures Built On Legacy

The Heman Drummond Center of Innovation (HDCI) is more than a new career tech facility—it's a symbol of opportunity and innovation for Walker County. At 130,000 square feet, HDCI is a bold investment in the future, designed to empower students through hands-on learning in high-demand industries. The Center will offer career-aligned education that prepares students to meet the needs of a rapidly changing workforce.

“This school is more than a building—it's a launchpad,” Walker County Center of Technology senior Carson Gilliland said. That message resonated with the crowd of partners, donors, educators, and community leaders gathered to celebrate HDCI's groundbreaking ceremony, the next chapter in workforce education and development for Walker County.

Backed by a shared vision between Jasper City Schools, Walker County Schools, industry partners, and the Walker Area Community Foundation, HDCI brings together resources, expertise, and opportunity under one roof. It's not just a place where students learn—it's where they discover their potential, build confidence, and take the first steps toward meaningful careers.

The value of career tech education lies not only in the practical skills students develop, but also in the clarity and direction it provides. With access to credentialing programs, real-world experience, and supportive instructors, students are gaining the tools they need to succeed—and the belief that they can.

HDCI is built on the belief that the best way to shape the future of Walker County is to invest in the students who will lead it. Through innovative programming and simulated work environments, the Center will help close skills gaps, support local industry needs, and create pathways to economic mobility that will ripple through families and communities for generations. The HDCI will replace the existing Walker County Center of Technology.

As construction begins, it's clear that HDCI is about more than a building. It represents a long-term commitment to building a stronger, more resilient Walker County—one student at a time. It's about making sure that every young person, no matter their background, has access to the kind of education that opens doors and changes lives.

The groundbreaking ceremony was a celebration, but also a promise—a promise to students, families, and our entire region. As concrete is poured and classrooms take shape, we move closer to a future where potential meets preparation, and where generational change begins with education that truly matters.

HDCI Groundbreaking Ceremony, MAY 19, 2025





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# BUILT TO GROW

How Jasper Lumber and Its Hometown Continue to Rise Together

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When current plant manager Cliff Beall started at Jasper Lumber in 2004, the mill operated a single shift and produced about 70 million board feet of lumber per year. Fast-forward two decades, and the company is on track to triple that output—thanks to major facility upgrades, a growing workforce, and a bold vision that reflects not just business growth, but the evolution of the city it calls home.

“Jasper Lumber doesn’t want to just offer jobs for the community, but careers for the community,” says Beall, now the plant manager. “And for that to happen, Jasper itself has to be a place people want to live and grow.”

And it is.

Jasper has experienced a quiet but steady transformation in recent years—through intentional investment in public schools, nonprofit infrastructure, workforce development, and quality of life initiatives. Jasper Lumber has mirrored that growth every step of the way.

But Beall is just as proud of what’s happening outside the production numbers. The company has helped launch a new sawmill credentialing program at the Walker County Center of Technology, giving high school students hands-on exposure to the lumber industry—and a potential career path in their own backyard. “It’s about creating opportunity and growing talent from within the community,” he says.

Beall credits local partners such as the Jasper Industrial Development Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Walker Area Community Foundation for helping build the kind of environment that makes economic growth possible. “When people care about a place, that place gets better,” he says. “And we’ve got a lot of people who care.”

For Beall, who has called Walker County home since the age of three, that care runs deep. “I do believe we can make Walker County better every year. And I feel a personal responsibility to be part of that,” he says.

It’s a perspective rooted in legacy but focused on the future. As Jasper grows, Jasper Lumber grows. And as the mill grows, so too does the opportunity to shape a stronger, more resilient community.

“It’s not about leaving for something better,” Beall says. “It’s about staying and building better right here.”

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CLIFF BEALL, WACF Grant Review







WHY SHOULD THE FOUNDATION BE MY PARTNER IN GIVING?

EXPERIENCED

The Staff of the Community Foundation understands the changing needs of the community and has a thorough understanding of the nonprofit organizations serving in those areas. The Board of Directors is made up eleven knowledgeable community leaders and volunteers who serve as policymakers and ambassadors for the community.

RESPONSIBLE

The Foundation is responsible in how it handles the money entrusted to us and how we invest it for both grantmaking and sustainability.

GIVING

Since the Foundation's inception, it has grown from \$6 million to more than \$151 million, all the while giving away \$57 million to more than 250 nonprofit organizations throughout Alabama. We have a sophisticated grant review process to ensure we are investing our grant dollars in nonprofits that are making an impact.

TAX ADVANTAGES

Community foundations are public charities, and donations qualify for the maximum available deduction for charitable contributions in the year in which the gift is made. (Tax credit can be banked and claimed over a period of years).

PERSONALIZED SERVICE AND CUSTOMIZATION

Community foundations will meet with you individually or with your financial advisor to discuss your charitable giving interests and needs.

RESULTS

There will always be community issues, yet here is our promise to you—there will always be a Walker Area Community Foundation to create initiatives around those issues. We will always be here to empower our citizens to create change while encouraging our nonprofits to dream bigger and funding them to do so. Your gift will last more than a lifetime.

HOW CAN I GIVE TO THE FOUNDATION?

GIFTS OF CASH

Donors can now deduct up to 60% of their adjusted gross income for contributions of cash. If your cash donations exceed that limit, you can carry forward any unused deductions for five years.

APPRECIATED STOCK

When you donate stock, you can deduct the full value of the stock at the time you donate it and avoid tax on the appreciated capital gains.

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

Individuals 70½ or older may roll over up to \$100,000 from an individual retirement account (IRA) directly to the Foundation without recognizing the assets transferred as income.

DONOR ADVISED FUND (DAF)

A Donor Advised Fund is set up by a donor and administered by the Foundation. A donor can start a DAF, receive an immediate tax benefit that year, and then provide guidance on distributions from the fund to nonprofits for as long as the fund exists.

NON-CASH ASSETS

You can also donate other non-cash assets, such as real estate. The charitable deduction will depend on the type of asset and whether it is put into related use.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GIVE TO THE WALKER AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.

Contact the Foundation or your Financial Planner if you need help choosing the method that is right for you.

ONLINE GIVING

Venmo: @WalkerArea-CommunityFoundation



Scan the QR Code to give now!



“IT’S EASY TO GIVE AWAY MONEY. IT’S HARD TO GIVE IT AWAY WELL.”

The Foundation is proud to support nonprofit organizations as they respond to the changing needs of our communities. Twice a year, we invite proposals from eligible 501(c)(3) organizations whose missions align with our commitment to meaningful and measurable impact. • We look to partner with organizations that bring strong leadership, sound financial practices, and a thoughtful vision for the future—grounded in community support and long-term sustainability. • Once a grant is awarded, recipients enter into an agreement that outlines how the funds

ARTS AND HUMANITIES

- Alabama Symphony Orchestra
- Bankhead House & Heritage Center
- Birmingham Botanical Society
- Birmingham Landmarks, Inc.
- Camp McDowell
- Denver Center for Performing Arts
- Design Alabama, Inc.
- Main Street Alabama
- Red Mountain Theater Company
- UAB Department of Theatre
- Walker County Arts Alliance
- Walker County Christian Chorus
- Winston County Arts Council
- Winston County Schools

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- Addie's Place
- Backyard Blessings
- Beacon House
- Bell Center for Early Intervention Programs
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Boy Scouts of America, Black Warrior Council
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Alabama
- Camp COOL
- Children's Aid Society of Alabama
- Free Will Baptist Children's Home
- Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama
- Girls Incorporated of Central Alabama
- Kids Loving Kids / Grace Ministries
- Magic Moments
- National Child Safety Council
- Nick's Kids Foundation
- Raising Arrows
- Secret Pantry
- Smile-A-Mile
- Walker County Children's Advocacy Center
- Walker County Children's Policy Council
- Youth Leadership Walker County

EDUCATION

- Alabama Association of Nonprofits
- AlaQuest Collaborative for Education
- Better Basics
- Bevill State Community College
- Birmingham Corps
- Bridge Educational Philanthropy
- Carbon Hill High School
- Carl Elliott Regional Library
- Cordova High School
- Curry High School
- East Walker Education & Development, Inc.
- Haleyville Chamber of Commerce
- Haleyville Community Foundation
- HoneyWord Foundation, Inc.
- Iowa State University Foundation
- Jalayah Hackman Foundation
- Jasper City Schools
- John Carroll Catholic High School
- Liberty Learning Foundation
- Literacy Council of Walker County
- Lupton Jr. High School
- Maddox Intermediate School
- McWane Science Center
- Mountain Brook Library Foundation
- Oakman Middle School Junior Beta Club
- Operation Aviation Foundation
- Preschool Partners
- R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Organization
- University of Alabama New College Program
- Walker College Foundation
- Walker County School System
- Walker County Sheriff’s Office
- Willow Project

ELDER CARE

- Alzheimer's of Central Alabama
- Arley – Smith Lake Senior Outreach
- Fair Haven Methodist Home Senior Living

- Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging

ENVIRONMENT

- Freshwater Land Trust
- Walker County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Wild Alabama
- Winston County Natural Resources Council

HEALTH

- Alabama Lions Sight
- Alabama Suicide Prevention and Resource Coalition
- American Cancer Society, Inc.
- American Diabetes Association
- Arthritis Foundation
- Barney Volunteer Fire Department
- Batten Disease Support & Research Association
- BirthWell Partners
- Boldo Volunteer Fire and Rescue
- Capstone Health Center
- Carbon Hill Fire & Rescue
- Carbon Hill Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Children's Hospital of Alabama
- Community Grief Support Service
- Country Cattery
- Crisis Center, Inc.
- Curry Volunteer Fire & Rescue
- Daybreak Vision Project, Inc.
- Empire Volunteer Fire Department
- Glenwood Autism & Behavioral Health Center
- HARTT – Healing and Responding To Trauma
- Healing House, LLC
- Healthy Eating Active Living, Inc.
- Hope Heals
- Hope Is the Anchor
- Impact Alabama
- Kid One Transport System, Inc.
- Laura Crandall Brown Foundation
- Libby's Friends
- Mother's Milk Bank of Alabama

will be used in alignment with the goals set forth in their proposal. To help us understand the impact of our funding, grantees submit a brief report nine months after receiving support. This report includes financial details and an update on progress made toward the project's stated objectives. • On the following pages, we are pleased to highlight the nonprofit organizations that have received funding from our Community Fund, as well as from our Component Funds, over the past five years.

- Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center
- Oasis Counseling for Women & Children
- Pathways Professional Counseling
- Pregnancy Test and Resource Center
- Recovery Den
- Russell Hill Cancer Foundation
- Shriners Hospital for Children
- Sight Savers America
- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
- STEPS Ministries
- University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Neurology
- University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing
- Walker County Health Action Partnership
- Winston County Rescue Squad

RECREATION

- Birmingham Zoo, Inc.
- C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation
- City of Cordova
- DreamFit AL, Inc.
- Indian Creek Youth Camp
- Jasper Area Mountain Bikers, Inc.
- J.H. Rach
- Kids Play Alabama
- Mission 34, Inc.
- People First of Walker County
- Smith Lake Civic Association
- Townley Community Center
- Walker County Commission

SOCIAL WELFARE

- American Red Cross
- Arc of Walker County
- Arley Women’s Club
- Awakening Life Church
- Bethel Church Food Bank
- Big Oak Ranch
- Boldo Food Pantry
- Bundles of Hope Diaper Bank

- Canterbury United Methodist Church
- Carbon Hill Women's Club
- Christian's Place Mission
- Church of Cahaba Bend
- City of Cordova
- City of Dora
- City of Haleyville
- City of Jasper
- City of Lights Dream Center
- ClasTran
- Community Grief Support Service
- Community Food Bank of Central Alabama
- Community Foundation of SW Louisiana
- Cordova Economic & Industrial Development Authority
- Cordova First Baptist Church
- Daily Mountain Eagle Christmas Shoe Fund
- Dawson Memorial Baptist Church
- Daybreak Family Resource Center of NWAL
- Dilworth Church of God
- Eagles Rest Church and Ministries
- Equines Assisting Special Individuals
- Fellowship House
- First Church of the Nazarene
- Forgotten Tails
- The Foundry Ministries
- Friends of Downtown Jasper
- Glory Fellowship Baptist Church
- Grace Kitchens
- Greater Birmingham Humane Society
- Habitat for Humanity, Greater Birmingham
- Hope for Women, LLC
- Hope House Church
- Iglesia de Restauracion Familiar
- J.A.M.E.S Ministries
- Jasper Area Family Services Center, Inc.
- Jasper First Methodist Church
- Jasper's First Baptist Church
- Jimmie Hale Mission
- Junior League of Birmingham

- King's Home
- Lovelady Center
- Main Street Ministries Inc.
- Mission of Hope
- Mt. Vernon Baptist Church Food Bank
- New Hope Through God's Love
- New Prospect Baptist Church
- Rescuers United for Furbabies
- Ronald McDonald House
- SC Foundation
- Service Dogs Alabama
- Society of St. Andrew
- St. Cecilia's Catholic Church
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church
- Salvation Army
- Sweetwater Outreach, Inc.
- Town of Parrish
- Townley Community Center
- TriCounty Agency for Intellectual Disabilities
- United Way of Central Alabama, Inc.
- UnitéUs
- Victims of Violent Crimes Fountain
- Walker County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- Walker County Coalition for the Homeless
- Walker County Community Action Agency
- Walker County Department of Human Resources
- Walker County Growth Alliance
- Walker County Humane Society
- Wellhouse
- Yerkwood Community Improvement Association
- Your Town Alabama
- Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.



COMPONENT FUNDS

Component funds allow families, individuals, or organizations to focus on the charitable needs of our community and leave the administrative tasks to the Foundation. These funds are a permanent source of community capital, which will help the Foundation to continue its work today and far into the future. Behind each fund is an abundance of success stories. Each one holds its own purpose and history but gains strength from being managed and deployed together. Donations can be made to any fund at any time by anyone.

|                                                |                                            |                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alabama Free Will Baptist Children's Home Fund | Drummond Thorne Stukes Fund                | Oliver Wright Fund                                                                       |
| Amy Bette Salter Fund                          | Engel and Mitnick Family Fund              | Onward Fund                                                                              |
| Andrew and Samantha Byars Family Fund          | Excellence in Education Fund               | Pam and Kevin Callahan Family Fund                                                       |
| Anonymous Fund                                 | Friends of Camp O'Rear Fund                | Patrick and Debbie Drummond Fund                                                         |
| Aubrey Lea Gates Fund                          | Haig Wright III Fund                       | Phillip Fraley Memorial Fund                                                             |
| Bankhead Fund                                  | Haleyville Alumni Association Fund         | Pinnacle Bank Fund                                                                       |
| Bankhead House & Heritage Center Fund          | Haleyville Downtown Project Fund           | Rebekah L. Black Fund                                                                    |
| Barbara Drummond Thorne Fund                   | HDCI Innovate Fund                         | Reed Family Fund                                                                         |
| Big Oak Ranch Fund                             | Healing Network Fund                       | Retired Fire Chief Monroe Marian Cooner and Retired Police Chief Connie Cooner Rowe Fund |
| Cannon Family Fund                             | Health Action Partnership                  | Rotary Club of Jasper Fund                                                               |
| Coach Mickey Beaty Family Fund                 | Jackson Family Fund                        | Samuel Lee Smith Advised Fund                                                            |
| Community Fund                                 | Jasper Main Street Fund                    | Sherer Family Foundation Fund                                                            |
| Cordova Library Fund                           | Jasper Recreational Fund                   | Sonya Violet Webb Fund                                                                   |
| Clyde "Sappo" Black Family Fund                | Joe and Annette Kelley Fund                | Steve, Karen and Caitlin Hudson Fund                                                     |
| Crump Family Fund                              | King's Home Fund                           | Steve Byars Fund                                                                         |
| Disaster Relief Fund                           | KUB Philanthropic Fund                     | Terri Drummond Lyon Fund                                                                 |
| Don Drummond Family Fund                       | Larry Drummond Family Fund                 | Thompson Family Fund                                                                     |
| Dr. Bobby T. and Betty Hooks Underwood Fund    | Laura and David Ulz Family Fund            | Tony and Tammy Smith Family Fund                                                         |
| Dr. Buddy Larry and Rieta Thorne Fund          | Lella Carl Hamiter Preschool Partners Fund | Victims of Violent Crime Fund                                                            |
| Dr. Saywer Mullen Memorial Fund                | Matthew and Ashley Laird Fund              | Winston County Fund                                                                      |
| Dr. W.E. Birdsong Fund                         | Molly Wright Ruble Fund                    | Wright Family Fund                                                                       |
| Drummond Company, Inc. (DCI) Fund              | Nick's Kids Fund                           |                                                                                          |





BY THE NUMBERS

|               |                                                                                           |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| \$57,212,370  | Total amount awarded to nonprofit organizations over the last 29 years                    |
| \$151,899,197 | Total amount of assets held by the Community Foundation on 12/31/2024                     |
| \$6,000,000   | Amount of original gift, given by Community Health Systems, Inc., to begin the Foundation |
| 5,005         | Number of grants made to nonprofit organizations since inception                          |
| 75,000+       | Number of people whose quality of life has improved because of the Foundation             |

WACF FINANCIAL HISTORY

| YEAR                                                                                                                       | GRANTS AWARDED | GIFTS RECEIVED | TOTAL ASSETS |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1995                                                                                                                       | -              | 6,000,000      | 6,000,000    |
| 1996                                                                                                                       | -              | 75,000         | 6,439,025    |
| 1997                                                                                                                       | 289,300        | 147,250        | 7,595,028    |
| 1998                                                                                                                       | 295,000        | 51,869         | 8,192,311    |
| 1999                                                                                                                       | 367,300        | 100,154        | 8,542,749    |
| 2000                                                                                                                       | 311,106        | 60,425         | 8,627,833    |
| 2001                                                                                                                       | 294,490        | 179,278        | 8,226,235    |
| 2002                                                                                                                       | 223,377        | 211,236        | 7,410,969    |
| Gift and grant totals from this point forward include both our unrestricted Community Fund as well as our Component Funds. |                |                |              |
| 2003                                                                                                                       | 330,213        | 359,556        | 8,770,491    |
| 2004                                                                                                                       | 264,158        | 358,402        | 9,902,100    |
| 2005                                                                                                                       | 308,211        | 244,765        | 10,695,867   |
| 2006                                                                                                                       | 489,473        | 552,806        | 12,018,241   |
| 2007                                                                                                                       | 569,170        | 432,961        | 12,164,567   |
| 2008                                                                                                                       | 705,627        | 995,255        | 9,730,123    |
| 2009                                                                                                                       | 465,969        | 776,138        | 12,143,056   |
| 2010                                                                                                                       | 627,450        | 887,699        | 13,361,818   |
| 2011                                                                                                                       | 1,190,071      | 10,701,343     | 22,328,994   |
| 2012                                                                                                                       | 3,626,636      | 2,507,746      | 23,366,184   |
| 2013                                                                                                                       | 3,073,770      | 1,187,125      | 23,976,770   |
| 2014                                                                                                                       | 1,288,044      | 632,233        | 23,971,032   |
| 2015                                                                                                                       | 1,015,748      | 1,317,305      | 23,697,848   |
| 2016                                                                                                                       | 1,245,495      | 472,913        | 24,069,051   |
| 2017                                                                                                                       | 1,393,391      | 1,959,290      | 26,844,697   |
| 2018                                                                                                                       | 2,055,904      | 43,579,423     | 66,352,747   |
| 2019                                                                                                                       | 3,024,560      | 424,999        | 72,387,187   |
| 2020                                                                                                                       | 2,373,134      | 7,906,078      | 83,301,998   |
| 2021                                                                                                                       | 3,838,641      | 5,907,913      | 94,076,906   |
| 2022                                                                                                                       | 14,170,352     | 43,616,089     | 114,547,461  |
| 2023                                                                                                                       | 5,721,955      | 6,842,038      | 127,746,758  |
| 2024                                                                                                                       | 7,653,825      | 19,847,516     | 151,899,197  |
| TOTALS                                                                                                                     | 57,212,370     | 158,334,805    |              |



STRATEGIC PLAN

● **COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & LIFELONG LEARNING**  
**WORK TOGETHER** as a unified community to build a strong economy and lifelong learning pathways that support opportunity, growth, and quality of life for all.

**GOALS**  
Strengthen education-to-employment pathways through school-college partnerships and the new Heman Drummond Center of Innovation.  
  
Provide access to certifications and degrees in high-demand fields aligned with local economic needs and industry partnerships.

▲ **HEALTH, WELL-BEING & QUALITY OF LIFE**  
**SUPPORT A COMMUNITY** where all individuals can grow and thrive with recreational opportunities and access to physical and mental health support.

**GOALS**  
Expand access to physical and mental health resources, substance use recovery, and youth counseling services.  
  
Invest in recreational amenities and after-school programs while coordinating community-wide health efforts.

◆ **NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP**  
**CULTIVATE FUTURE GENERATIONS** of informed, engaged leaders who share a vision, knowledge, and passion for continued community growth, collaboration, and philanthropy.

**GOALS**  
Grow leadership and mentorship opportunities for youth and adults to foster civic engagement and service.  
  
Support nonprofit capacity-building and create accessible pathways for community involvement.

■ **LIFELONG LEARNING AND SUCCESS**  
**INSPIRE AND ENABLE** the community to achieve a bold vision for the future through research, collaboration, sustainable growth, effective grantmaking, and responsible stewardship.

**GOALS**  
Ensure sound financial management, strategic grantmaking, and external funding partnerships.  
  
Strengthen infrastructure, staffing, board diversity, and visibility to support long-term growth and impact.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Robert B. Nolen, Jr.  
Chairman



Emily Donaldson  
Vice-Chairman



Matthew Laird  
Secretary / Treasurer



Robbin Reed Allen



Kevin F. Callahan



Drew Gilbert



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HISTORY AND MILESTONES

In 1995, following a suggestion from John T. Oliver, Jr., Pat Willingham and the Community Health Systems Board set aside \$6 million in proceeds from the sale of the Walker Regional Medical Center to begin an endowment for the Walker Area Community Foundation. This donation has served as the nucleus for funding worthy causes that might otherwise go lacking.

Other community leaders involved in the formation of the Foundation were the late J. George Mitnick and Larry Drummond. Together, Oliver, Willingham, Mitnick, and Drummond created a foundation that will forever serve as a resource for solutions to our community's greatest problems.

Since 1995, the Foundation's endowment has grown not only from the original \$6 million to more than \$151 million due to wise investments and the creation of new Donor Advised Funds, but mostly because of the faithfulness of our donors.

The first two years were a time of growth for the endowment. In 1997, the first seven grants were awarded in the amount of organizations in our area. In addition to awarding grants where warranted, the Foundation staff is dedicated to developing the internal capacity of nonprofit organizations. We provide training sessions to assist with business operations and to further assist in their receipt of out-of-county funds from state, federal, and private sources.

The Foundation made an impactful gift with the opening of the Bankhead House & Heritage Center. Purchased, renovated, and maintained by the Foundation because of the generosity of a few special donors, the Bankhead House & Heritage Center is here to serve our community as a treasure trove of information, artifacts, cultural events, and varied forms of art that connect our proud past to our optimistic present while inspiring our bright future.

In 2011, disaster struck our county in the form of tornados. From those first days, a different kind of relationship was brokered between the Foundation and Walker County nonprofits involved in disaster relief. We quit being just the funder and became a partner. We forged stronger bonds with local donors as well as regional and national funders. Because of our leadership, we became known throughout the state as the ones to call with questions because we were "getting it done in Walker County."

In 2014, the Foundation created its own strategic plan and began to lead the way in planning for Walker County as a whole with partners, including the Walker County Commission, Chamber of Commerce of Walker County, Jasper Industrial Development Board, Walker County Economic and Industrial Development Authority, Senator Greg Reed, and all of the municipalities in our county.

The Foundation was fortunate to receive substantial financial gifts in 2018, tripling the size of our endowment. Through all the gifts the Foundation has received over time, we now have the ability to fund the dreams of our community or citizens—expanding their scope of influence—in addition to meeting our nonprofits' operational needs.

As we celebrate 30 years of impact with our largest-ever investment in the community and the launch of the Heman Drummond Center of Innovation for students, we step boldly into a future shaped by collaboration, growth, and leadership. The past three decades have laid a strong foundation—but our work is far from over. This is not the end of the story. It's just the beginning.

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**WALKER AREA**  
Community Foundation

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