



### Three Generations of Giving

#### PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT A FAMILY LEGACY OF SERVING AND GIVING

**George Ridenour**, Community Foundation board member from 2005 through 2010, loved spending a summer evening sitting on the lawn of the Danby Federated Church listening to the [Ithaca Concert Band](#) perform the Stars and Stripes Forever and his favorite Broadway show tunes.

**“George would close his eyes while listening to the band and tell me it sounded like the Boston Pops,”** said his wife, Jeanette Shady.

At the end of last year’s summer concert series, Mr. Ridenour said he wanted to make a gift to the band from the family’s charitable fund, managed by Community Foundation of Tompkins County. Tragically, two months later, Mr. Ridenour died of a rare, sudden-onset brain disease.

Jeanette and their daughter, Sarah Ridenour, co-donor advisors of the fund, carried through with his wishes and recently made a grant to the Ithaca Concert Band, the first gift made by Community Foundation to the ensemble.

Mr. Ridenour was an accomplished musician himself — he played the cornet, the piano and sang in the choir at the First Congregational Church in Cayuga Heights. He and Jeanette often attended the Ithaca Concert Band’s summer concerts and became band **“groupies”** when Sarah, a physical therapist at Schuyler Hospital, joined the band as a flutist in 2016.

**“My father loved all musical genres, especially jazz, but he had a special place in his heart for the concert band, most likely because of the range of its repertoire, from orchestral pieces to popular music,”** Sarah said.

In addition to the gift to the band, Sarah and Jeanette made grants in Mr. Ridenour’s memory to two other organizations he was passionate about — the [First Congregational Church](#) to create a garden in his memory; and the [Catholic Community at Ithaca College](#) to enhance an endowment fund established last year by Mr. Ridenour and Jeanette. Sarah earned a bachelor of science in clinical exercise science and a doctorate in physical therapy from Ithaca College.

The family’s donor-advised fund was established as one of Community Foundation’s first funds in 2002, by Mr. Ridenour’s father, Layel Ridenour, who had lived at Kendal with his wife, Nan Ridenour. **“His**



**father set the pace for family philanthropy — to always give back in service and treasure if the means exist to help people,”** Jeanette said.

That devotion to philanthropy and service was passed on to Mr. Ridenour who, after graduating from Ohio State University in 1961, served in Laos with the International Voluntary Service and later with the U.S. Agency for International Development. Mr. Ridenour earned a master’s degree from Cornell in International Development and Southeast Asian Studies in 1971, and that same year, became director of admissions and student affairs at Cornell’s Graduate School of Business and Public Administration.

**“George, like his father, wanted to instill that drive to serve and that philanthropic desire in his children,”** Jeanette said. “He appointed Sarah a donor advisor of the family fund just last year and had so very much looked forward to their close collaboration.”

Jeanette, a former administrator at Cornell and in private industry, said she and Sarah are broadly discussing future plans for the family fund. “Our focus right now, however, is to finalize the gifts in George’s memory,” Jeanette said, “and then **I will be excited to engage Sarah in the philanthropic legacy so firmly established by her grandfather and father.**”

Community Foundation staff and board are inspired and deeply appreciative of the Ridenour-Shady family’s time, talent and treasure and extend their condolences.