



2018 MELENDY SPIRIT AWARD HONOREE: The Streeter Family

The Melendy Spirit Award is presented to individuals, families, groups or organizations who have made outstanding community contributions to enhance, improve or positively affect the overall quality of life in Cedar Falls, through philanthropic or other means.

The Streeter family was established in Cedar Falls in 1852 by Zimri and Lucinda Dean Streeter. Generations of the Streeter family have positively impacted Cedar Falls through multiple avenues—political, artistic, work life and service to the community.

POLITICAL SERVICE



ZIMRI STREETER (1801-1880) was born in New York State and settled near Cedar Falls, Iowa in 1852, in a log cabin he built for himself, his wife Lucinda Dean and their nine children. He soon became a highly regarded citizen and avid participant in the life of the community. Zimri Streeter was called a “somewhat eccentric but highly esteemed member” of the Iowa House in 1858 and 1860. Elected at age 57 as the **first representative sent by Black Hawk County to the State Legislature**, he is credited with defeating more unwise measures than any other member, using humor, keen insight and common sense. **In 1862 he was made Sergeant at Arms of the House**, and in 1864 he was one of the men designated to retrieve the vote of Iowa soldiers at the front, and did so while marching with General Sherman and the Iowa troops to Atlanta. (*Iowa: Its History and Its Foremost Citizens, Vol. 1, p. 274*). For his dedication to the county in general, he was known throughout Iowa as “Old Black Hawk” Streeter.

COMMUNITY SERVICE



JAMES WAREHAM STREETER (1826-1907), the second child of Zimri and Lucinda Dean Streeter, lived his entire life in Cedar Falls, working as a farmer and employed by the Cedar Falls Milling Company and Dayton Flour Mill. He was a valued member of the community, operating a dray team that hauled supplies from Dubuque to the first general store in Black Hawk County, Mullarky’s on Main Street. James Streeter’s team brought the tower bell for the first public school constructed in Black Hawk County, on the corner of 5th and Main Streets.

Mr. Streeter’s obituary said, “Mr. Streeter was an honorable and upright citizen in every respect and was beloved and respected by all. During his long years of residence here he was always found faithful to every trust and obligation placed upon him.”



Two of James Streeter's daughters, Anna Streeter Wood and Bess Streeter Aldrich, became well known for their literary talents.

ANNA LAURA STREETER WOOD (1865-1960) was a talented poet and was among the Iowa poets included in *American Women Poets of 1937*. On July 30, 1945 Anna Streeter Wood was granted Honorary Membership in the Eugene Field Society of the National Association of Authors and Journalists for her outstanding contribution to contemporary literature.

BESS STREETER ALDRICH (1881-1954) was a primary teacher in Cedar Falls and later an instructor in the primary department of the Iowa State Normal School at Cedar Falls. She became an internationally known author. Bess immortalized Cedar Falls in *Song of Years*, writing about the Valley of the Red Cedar and the people who lived here. Renaming friends and relatives in order to use them in her story, Bess brought characters to life based on real life people who lived in Cedar Falls.

Bess followed *Song of Years* with *Miss Bishop*, which became the 1941 film *Cheers for Miss Bishop* starring Martha Scott. The novel and film told the story of Miss Ella Bishop, a teacher at Midwestern University. Bess Streeter Aldrich published more than 160 works, including nine novels, in a career that spanned more than 40 years. Some of her well known titles include *A Lantern in Her Hand*, *Spring Came on Forever*, *The Rim of the Prairie*, and *The Lieutenant's Lady*.

CLARK STREETER (1881-1963) was the grandson of Edward P. Streeter, fifth child of Zimri Streeter. Clark Streeter became the Cedar Falls city engineer and utilities superintendent in 1910 and was responsible for construction of the first electric plant, water works and gas plant. He was instrumental in the construction of the local sewer system. Clark Streeter served Cedar Falls for many decades before he retired in 1948.

JAMES W. FORD (1871-1948), a well-known sportsman and his brother **GAYLORD HOTON FORD (1889-1953)**, were instrumental in the formation of the Cedar Falls Gun Club, which has grown into the premier shooting facility in Iowa, and is the home grounds of the Iowa State Trapshooting Association, which hosts the annual Iowa State Shoot.

James W. Ford was a charter member and one-time president of the Cedar Falls Gun Club. When he died, the club considered establishing a memorial shoot, complete with a trophy. His brother Gaylord, also a former club member and professional shooter, expressed the desire to offer a traveling trophy in his honor. James and Gaylord were the sons of Julia Streeter Ford (1845-1937), ninth child of Zimri and Lucinda Streeter.

Generations of the Streeter family, including members highlighted here, have had a diverse and positive impact on the Cedar Falls community. On behalf of the Streeter family, Melinda Petersen Hanlon, granddaughter of Clark Streeter, will accept the award.

LITERARY ARTS



CITY SERVICE



COMMUNITY AMENITIES

