

## THOMAS SILL, C.A. 1905 – 1986

Mr. Sill lived his entire life in Winnipeg and practiced as a chartered accountant for many years. He was an astute investor who built a fortune which became the basis for the Thomas Sill Foundation.

In his last will, Thomas Sill established the foundation which bears his name. His will, a measure of his astuteness, contained only this instruction:

“I have decided to create an entity for charitable purposes.”

*The following was shared by Robert Martens, a member of the Thomas Sill Foundation, founding member of the Altona Community Foundation and manager of the Sill Streuber Fiske office in Altona for many years at a 2024 press conference announcing the \$750,000 Thomas Sill endowment fund to the Altona Community Foundation.*

Thomas Sill (1905 – 1986) was a Chartered Accountant who lived in Winnipeg all his life and was one of the founding partners of the Sill Streuber Fiske CA firm. Under his leadership the firm opened offices in Selkirk, Winnipeg, Morden, Winkler and Altona. Mr. Sill was a generous quiet single man who lived a modest lifestyle in Winnipeg. He was however, also an astute and active investor, who apparently had his own desk at the Winnipeg Stock Exchange when there was still an Exchange in Winnipeg. During his lifetime he enjoyed making donations to all types of causes in Manitoba, but he especially liked to give back to communities in which Sill Streuber Fiske had offices. As an example, you will see his name on the donor wall in the Pioneer Centre in Altona as one of the significant donors when that community asset was built, and there are many other examples throughout the communities where there were Sill offices.

When he passed away in 1986 his will instructed his executors to set up a Foundation with all his assets, which at the time were about \$18,500,000. This act has benefitted qualifying charities and not for profits all over Manitoba for 36 years and shows the magic of Foundations. The Sill Foundation has made grants totaling over \$46,000,000 over those 36 years and still had a current value approximately \$39,000,000 now as it is being wound up.

One of the major initiatives of the Sill Foundation during its early years was to encourage the establishment of local community foundations. This was done for 20 communities where The Sill Foundation provided matching grants up to \$100,000 if the community foundation raised \$200,000. Altona Community Foundation was one of the first community foundations to be established by this incentive.

The vast majority of the Sill Foundation assets are now being transferred to The Winnipeg Foundation into a Thomas Sill Rural Community Fund which will continue to issue grants to the approximately 57 eligible community foundations in Manitoba, which are located outside of Winnipeg. More details about this program will be announced by The Winnipeg Foundation in the near future.

Since the Sill Foundation assets were going to be wound up by the end of 2023, the members of the Sill Foundation decided they would like to see The Foundation give a small portion of its assets directly to the communities where Sill and Company used to have offices. Since the members of the Foundation were all CA's, they of course had to come up with some formula to use to allocate this on what they deemed to be a fair way. Therefore, the formula involved the population size of the community in 2000 (when Sill and Company merged with BDO Canada) and the number of years there had been a Sill office in that community. Thus, the grants to Altona, Winkler, Morden, Selkirk and Brandon are different amounts.

We hope this grant will allow the Altona Community Foundation to continue to grow and make an ever-increasing impact on the community.