



**PLANNED GIVING NEWSLETTER #15: JUNE 19, 2020**

**CONNIE AND JUNE BOWERS...A LIFETIME OF HELPING OTHERS!**

What started as a chance meeting at the weekly square dance blossomed into a 57-year marriage for Connie and June Bowers of Pickens.

“I had just graduated from Pickens High School, and was making plans to attend Clemson University in the fall,” said Connie. “I met June that summer at the weekly square dance at Table Rock State Park, and our relationship grew and grew. We got married following my junior year at Clemson.”

Born and raised in Pickens, June’s upbringing emphasized the importance of helping others. “My Granny Winchester and aunts taught me that we were put on this earth to serve others,” said June. June’s mother helped organize the annual United Fund Drive at the Singer Plant in the 60’s and 70’s.

“Growing up in Pickens, we didn’t have a lot, but we were never in need,” said Connie. “We felt so blessed, and always looked for ways to share our good fortune with others. My parents encouraged that attitude.”

Early in Connie’s career, he agreed to be the Pickens area leader for the United Fund Drive, now called United Way Campaign. “I would visit various businesses, plants, and city offices in Pickens to recruit volunteers to organize their annual campaign,” said Connie. “We put up a thermometer each year on the Courthouse Square displaying Pickens County’s fund-raising goal and charting our progress.”



Connie and June Bowers

While June was home raising boys, she and her friends organized neighborhood drives, going door-to-door in Pickens inviting local citizens to donate to the United Fund.

In 1982, Connie joined Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative as their Chief Financial Officer. “Blue Ridge Electric and its employees have always been leaders in supporting our community through United Way,” said Connie.

Following retirement from Blue Ridge Electric in 2005, Connie was invited by United Way’s Board Member Julie Thompson to join the Board. “Serving on United Way’s Board for 15 years opened my eyes to the critical needs in Pickens County, and how United Way focuses its resources helping people with basic assistance (food, shelter and employment), teaching people to become financially independent and developing educational initiatives to break the cycle of poverty.”

Connie helped to raise the funds to bring the toll-free 2-1-1 emergency services line to Pickens County. “2-1-1 is a 24-hour help line where callers can receive information about food pantries, emergency shelter, rent and utility bill assistance, and senior services,” said Connie.

When asked why Connie and June Bowers decided to join the Heritage Society by pledging a final gift through their estate plan, June quickly responded: “It’s the perfect organization,” she said. “Where else you can touch the most lives and impact the most people in need.” Connie said that they have supported United Way throughout their adult lives and that this is one way that they could continue that support by making a final gift to Pickens County through their wills. “It’s a symbolic way for June and me to say thank you to our community, and to help others long after we’re gone,” said Connie.

United Way of Pickens County is providing this newsletter as a service to our faithful supporters, because we have seen the consequences of people not having an estate plan.

Provided quarterly, this newsletter contains information about the various components of an estate plan. We hope that you will use this information to consider how your estate plan can provide for your family, reduce your tax burden, and support charities that you have supported during your lifetime.

It is not intended to provide legal or financial advice. Please seek the help of a local attorney or financial advisor before making an estate plan.

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## **DID YOU KNOW?...THE CARES ACT OF 2020 PROVIDES DONORS AN ADDITIONAL \$300 TAX BREAK!**

Thanks to the recent CARES ACT of 2020 (the Coronavirus Relief Bill), individuals who typically utilize the standard deduction when filing their income tax can also claim a brand new "above-the-line" deduction of up to \$300 for cash donations made to a non-profit organization in 2020.

As an incentive to encourage charitable donations, Congress has recently announced a special \$300 tax break to individuals who don't itemize, but instead take the standard deduction — which is \$12,400 for singles and \$24,800 for married-filing-jointly. On top of your standard deduction, individuals can add an additional \$300 deduction if you make a charitable gift of up to \$300 in 2020. The IRS requires taxpayers to keep a written record of all cash contributions up to \$300 made in 2020. For cash donations under \$250, donors can use a bank statement or other documentation that substantiates that the donation was made. For all cash donations above \$250, the donor must have a document or receipt from the charitable organization.

**HERE'S THE BOTTOM LINE:** The CARES ACT allows an additional tax deduction on top of your standard deduction if you donate up to \$300 to a charitable organization in 2020...like United Way of Pickens County!

## **OUR "NEW NORMAL"...WE'RE PRESSING ON THANKS TO YOU!**

The CoVID-19 pandemic has changed the lives of Americans in so many ways. As the world reopens, a new reality or "new normal" is being defined, as we struggle to understand what life will be like until a vaccine is developed.

At United Way of Pickens County, our "new normal" is the same today as it was prior to the pandemic. We're pressing on, as we have done for 50 years, helping struggling Pickens County residents in need of food, shelter, healthcare, finding sustainable employment, and ensuring that elementary-aged children read at grade level.

Helping local residents in need is only possible because of thousands of people and businesses, like **YOU**, who have given so generously for fifty years. And your recent support to our Community Relief Fund is helping local citizens who have been furloughed or lost their job due to the pandemic. Thanks to **YOU**, families have received help with rent and utility assistance, sheltered senior citizens now have a weekend meal, and plans are progressing for struggling elementary-age students to attend a virtual-version of Camp iRock this summer. BRAVO to each of **YOU** for your caring heart to help neighbors in need in Pickens County for fifty years. **YOU** are helping to change lives in our community, and we are so appreciative.

## **HERE'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A FREE WILL, COMPLIMENTS OF UNITED WAY!**

United Way of Pickens County now offers our supporters and their spouses an opportunity to create a WILL, thanks to our partnership with United Way Worldwide. And the best news is...it's FREE!

To create your FREE WILL, go to: [www.freewill.com/will/getstarted](http://www.freewill.com/will/getstarted) to utilize the online guide that will step you through the 20-minute process.

As you complete your Free WILL, we want to invite you to make a final gift to United Way of Pickens County through your will. It's an easy way to give from your remaining assets, and it will allow you to help those in need in our community for generations to come through our Endowment Fund.



You are invited to join the *Heritage Society* by pledging an estate gift to United Way of Pickens County. Unless otherwise indicated, your final gift will live on in the Endowment Fund helping those who struggle to access food, shelter, and healthcare in our community. And, you will be supporting United Way of Pickens County's bold goal that 70% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders read at grade level. *Heritage Society* members gather annually to welcome new members, and to hear an update about the work that their annual support is making possible. If you want to help Pickens County residents in need for generations to come, simply contact Mark Eisengrein at 864-850-7094 ext. 108 or email him at: [meisengrein@uwpickens.org](mailto:meisengrein@uwpickens.org)