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## Joe U. Posner left a legacy of giving

Joe U. Posner marched to a different drummer.

For years, he took his pet rabbit to work with him.

And he went without a winter coat, even in Rochester, saying that feeling warm or feeling cold was, in effect, a state of mind.

But all the while, Posner, who died in 2001 at age 77, focused on helping others and improving the lives of disadvantaged people, especially children, in Rochester.

Not only did he give away a significant portion of his own money, he sweet-talked others to give, raising millions for good causes in the process.

"In the community that philanthropy built, (Posner) might just be the most influential philanthropist since George Eastman," the *Democrat and Chronicle* reported in 1999.

For his impact, Posner's name goes on the list of remarkable Rochesterians that I've been expanding each first Saturday of the month. He joins Eastman, Susan B. Anthony and other notables who made a difference.

In the early 1970s, Posner helped start what is now the Rochester Area Community Foundation. Now the largest foundation in the area with assets of \$208.5 million, it has given away more than \$250 million since it began.

Posner also was instrumental in the 1990s in starting what is now Quad A for Kids, a program that has supported youth sports and after-school programs in the city.

Born in Rochester, Posner graduated from East High School and then served in the Philippines and Japan during World War II. After the war, he went to work, rather than college, and by the time he was 30, he was a successful insurance salesman.

Posner was known for asking people to breakfast, fully confident that over toast he could convince them to contribute to the causes he believed in.

"I know there's people out there who want to help," he told me in 2000. "They just don't know how. When they find a way, they just run to it."

Posner was not alone in his philanthropy, and many other generous people deserve a place on the list of remarkable Rochesterians. For now, here's three more names.

**Robert B. Wegman:** Before his death in April 2006, the chairman of the highly successful Wegmans Food Markets Inc. had donated, along with his wife, Peggy, more than \$32 million to Roman Catholic elementary schools.

Many more millions went to other institutions and causes.

"It's harder to give away money than it is to make it," Wegman, who liked his gifts to have impact, once told the *Democrat and Chronicle*.

**B. Thomas Golisano:** The name of the founder of Paychex Inc. is now on so many buildings in the Rochester area that his philanthropy may not seem surprising.

But \$10 million here and \$10 million there adds up to a lot of dollars, and a lot of support for institutions such as hospitals that always have needs.

**Daisy Marquis Jones:** A shrewd investor who wasn't well-known here during her life, she created the foundation that received her assets upon her death in 1971. Since then the Daisy Marquis Jones foundation has awarded millions of dollars, helping children and the elderly especially.

## Additional Facts

Remarkable Rochesterians

Every first Saturday of the month, names are added to the list of notable Rochester-area people, past and present. So far, the list includes Joe Altobelli, Susan B. Anthony, Rabbi Philip Bernstein, Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Mary Cariola, Frederick Douglass, George Eastman, Minister Franklin Florence, Doris Fox, B. Thomas Golisano, the Rev. Thomas James, Daisy Marquis Jones, Dr. Anthony L. Jordan, Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid, Mother Hieronymo O'Brien, Joe U. Posner, Nathaniel Rochester, Al Sigl, Morrie Silver, Frank E. Van Lare and Robert B. Wegman.

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