



Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation Receives Generous Gift from the Estate of the Late Maynard Klingbeil

CRAZY HORSE, S.D. (Aug. 12, 2020) — In February, an 84-year-old man passed away in his hometown of Onida, South Dakota. Maynard Klingbeil farmed all his life in eastern Sully County, working with his father and then taking over the family farm; in his lifetime, not only did the lifelong bachelor contribute to his community in myriad ways, he also quietly built an estate that would continue doing good work long after he was gone.

This month, the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation received a generous gift from Maynard Klingbeil. Although the exact amount has not been made public, the gift will have a positive impact on the nonprofit organization.

“We’re deeply honored that Maynard wished to give us this gift,” said Monique Ziolkowski, the Memorial’s chief executive officer. “It’s hard to put into words, that’s how much it means to us. Mother and Dad both appreciated every single penny; Mother could make a dollar go farther than anyone I know.”

Ziolkowski noted that her parents — sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski and his wife, Ruth — taught their children never to be wasteful, and never to take a gift for granted.

“They taught us to think carefully when spending a gift from someone,” she explained. “That person trusts you to do the right thing. Maynard believed in us. We will be careful stewards of his gift, and our work will be a testament to the life of a shy, quiet man who worked hard all of his life.”

Klingbeil’s financial advisor, Clint Meyer, agreed with this assessment of his longtime client and friend.

“I can’t emphasize enough what a kind and gentle man Maynard was,” Meyer said. “He also was frugal and worked very hard. We worked together to direct his charitable contributions.”

In 2014, Meyer met Jeff Hermanson, supervisor of Crazy Horse Memorial’s Mountain Crew, in Deadwood, South Dakota. They struck up a conversation, and Meyer grew interested in the Memorial and its mission.

“I told him stories, and we had a good conversation,” Hermanson recalled. “Then he said, ‘There’s someone I want you to meet.’”

Hermanson visited Klingbeil, and the two men bonded over their shared background in both dairy and grain farming. From there, they built a friendship.

“Ruth always said, Jeff, make a friend first,” said Hermanson, who started working with the Ziolkowski family more than 35 years ago at the age of 19. “We talked about the mountain, and the educational mission. Korczak taught me that some people get it, some don’t; Maynard got it.

“He and Korczak both had that work ethic,” he continued. “They were careful with money, they knew the value of good hard work, and they loved what they did. Maynard loved farming all his life. He had so much in common with the Ziolkowskis. I saw that.”

The Crazy Horse Memorial, with its Indian Museum of North America and Indian University of North America, did indeed resonate with Klingbeil. Meyer said he perceived it as an important part of South Dakota history and heritage.

“Maynard was a man of great faith,” he said. “He was impressed with this massive undertaking, and he thought it was a worthwhile cause.”

Although Klingbeil was not able to visit the Black Hills before his death, he will have a lasting impact on the Memorial — and on the people there.

“In the end, it’s all about relationships,” Hermansen said. “It’s about friendship, stories, and connection. That’s what matters.”