



KMI Legacy Fund

Venice, Florida served as our winter home for nearly four decades. We recall fond memories of the beach, the drugstore, the Sunday afternoon parades, and the way townsfolk always made us feel special.



That fondness for us continues. An historical marker telling our story recently was placed in front of the old San Marco Hotel, and in 2014, the community celebrated the renaming of the KMI Bridge onto what is now Venice Island. During our last alumni reunion there, the Venice Museum & Archives held a special KMI exhibit that was extended because

of its popularity. The KMI displays in the San Marco were recently restored and upgraded. And a premier showing of the PBS documentary about our alma mater was held in the Venice Theatre (our old gym) to a sold-out performance.

Now is the opportunity for us to continue that relationship in perpetuity. The Venice Museum & Archives has in its archival collection more than 600 objects of KMI memorabilia, and the collection continues to grow through contributions. Preserving and maintaining those donated items, ranging from clothing and sabers to documents and nearly a hundred reels of film dating back as far as the 1940s, requires significant resources. Restoring the decaying film alone is estimated to cost \$10K.

Plans also are in the works to build a new Venice Heritage Center that will contain a permanent exhibit about KMI. In addition to including some of the museum's memorabilia, the plan calls for an interactive display that will provide visitors an experiential sense of what it was like to attend KMI. There also will be temporary exhibit space and meeting rooms as well as space available where the public can go to conduct onsite research.

In addition to the design and creation of KMI exhibits, there exists a critical need for additional archival space. It currently is difficult for the museum to accept new and large donated items due to the lack

of a controlled environment (i.e. temperature, humidity, indirect light) in which to store those contributions. This is occurring at a time when most alumni are increasingly contemplating what to do with their cherished memorabilia. The vision is to have enough archival space onsite in the new Heritage Center to store those artifacts so they are immediately available upon request.

Beyond the planned new Heritage Center, the museum is expanding its educational outreach to schools, senior centers and civic organizations throughout Southwest Florida. Plans also are to create traveling exhibits to be shared with peer museums and centers. And a key objective is to make more of the museum's content available online so that research on KMI can be conducted from virtually anywhere in the world. To see what has already been catalogued and listed online, visit: www.venicegov.com/archives



If the life lessons and values we learned at KMI are to continue



to be shared with future generations, it is dependent upon us, the recipients of that legacy, to share in that responsibility. Please consider a significant contribution to the KMI Legacy Fund so that young men and women today, as well as future generations, can come to understand that character does, indeed, make the person.

Your tax-deductible donation to the KMI Legacy Fund can be mailed to: Gulf Coast Community Foundation, 601 Tamiami Trail South, Venice, Florida 34285. And please stipulate that your donation is for the KMI Legacy Fund. If you need additional information, please e-mail in care of:

info@veniceheritage.org,
or by calling: 407-237-0478.

