

## Where There's A Will... *Decisions That Make a Difference*

Most arts organizations operate on extremely tight budgets. With grant money becoming more limited, and with more organizations competing for the limited grant money, it is becoming more difficult for arts organizations to collect enough funds to sustain themselves or to grow and evolve with the times. Most arts organizations rely on donations and gifts for their continued operations.

A frugal Bristol court reporter who died in 2003 left \$3 million to several local organizations. Ruth Greiner's will specified that her church get 40 percent of her estate, which came to more than \$1 million. The remaining 60 percent was divided evenly among six other organizations, including four in the arts community — Theatre Bristol, Bristol Ballet, Symphony of the Mountains, and Barter Theatre, each of whom received \$300,000. The shocked beneficiaries have already received their checks.

Some of these same organizations have also benefitted from the estate of Bristol businessman J. Henry Kegley. Upon his death in 1998, Kegley willed his entire estate in trust to be distributed in the support and development of deserving nonprofit institutions and organizations serving the Bristol community.

Following is what the arts organizations have decided to do with the monies.

### *Theatre Bristol*

For Theatre Bristol, a bequest such as Ruth Greiner's and support from entities like the Henry Kegley Foundation, are relatively rare. Theatre Bristol's board of directors decided to use the Greiner bequest to pay off all outstanding debts. The remainder — nearly \$180,000 — has been placed into a special reserve to be used for long-range planning, such as capital improvements, and

will not be used to fund the day-to-day general operations of the organization.

Theatre Bristol has not been the recipient of any other estates, although this fiscal year the organization has received contributions of as much as \$1,500 each from individuals and foundations.

When planning their estates, potential donors might want to consider the impact such gifts can have. As Holly Whitely, Theatre Bristol board president, states, "Mrs. Greiner never had any children of her own, but she is going to reach so many of them with this gift," referring to thousands of area schoolchildren who attend Theatre Bristol's productions.

Now in its 39th season, Theatre Bristol was founded in 1965 as the Bristol Children's Theatre. In 1980 they produced their first adult season and changed their name to Theatre Bristol. 423-968-4977.

### *Symphony of the Mountains*

Symphony conductor Cyrus Ginwala says, "Bequests can help to build endowment and fund capital projects or general operating expenses. For example, with support from the Kegley Foundation, the symphony recently launched a new concert series in Bristol and Abingdon."

About 10 percent of the Greiner bequest has been used to fund upgrades in office equipment and to replace music stands which were "so antiquated they were dangerous," as well as instrument cases to protect percussion equipment, some of which was suffering badly from frequent moving to and from performance locations. The remainder of the Greiner bequest has been placed in a restricted long-term stock fund in the symphony's endowment and will not be touched for many years.



**The *Miracle Worker* is only one of the dramas produced by Theatre Bristol.**

**Theatre Bristol presents shows for children as well as adults. Below is a caterpillar from *Alice in Wonderland*. At right is a scene from the musical *Chicago*.**

