

Legacy Leaders: Inge Gaiss and Oscar Richter — Oscar is Why



Inge Gaiss and Oscar Richter were together for more than 60 years. They met as friends at choral practice in New York soon after Oscar immigrated to the United States from Germany.

Inge's family was also from Germany, and perhaps that's why they got along so well.

Or maybe Inge was attracted to Oscar because he enjoyed helping others, including her parents. "If they ever asked him to do one thing for them, he was right there," she recalls.

An only child, Inge had a special bond with her parents, but particularly with her dad, who passed while on vacation with her mother from coronary thrombosis – the formation of a blood clot inside a blood vessel of the heart.

It was her father's heart condition that led to Inge's decision to support the association. "My mother lived to be 93 with a pacemaker," she says. "That was when I realized the

importance of the American Heart Association and how our gifts make a difference."

When Oscar became sick with liver cancer, he wanted to leave Inge his estate to help provide for her. "I really felt the money could have a better purpose, so I told Oscar that God had always taken care of me, and I asked him to consider giving it to our three favorite charities, one being the American Heart Association."

Whether it was Oscar's love for Inge, or simply his benevolence, Inge says it didn't take much convincing. "It was a simple conversation, and it was in his heart to change his will," she says.

Inge planted a tree outside her window as a memorial for Oscar after he passed in March 2015. She also placed two statues of a boy and a girl looking down to represent his two children that passed prior to him. In addition to the comfort that the memorial provides Inge, is the knowledge that Oscar's legacy of helping others continues through his estate gift to the association. "All the years that Oscar worked so hard, those funds went toward good things."

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7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75231-4596

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