

## HSM Legacy Circle: Robert Cayia of Valparaiso, IN



You never forget what you are passionate about. For Bob Cayia, that means choosing to leave a legacy gift to the Historical Society of Michigan through its Legacy Circle of donors.

The retired attorney who now lives in Valparaiso, IN, has always loved history. At one point, the Manistique native even thought he might become a history teacher or professor.

In the end, he minored in history as an undergraduate student at Grand Valley State University and proceeded directly to law school at the University of Detroit. Soon armed with his law degree, he was hired by a steel company in northwest Indiana in labor relations law and built his legal career.

Through it all, he maintained his avid interest in history, often through the programs of the Historical Society of Michigan. Bob has subscribed for decades to Michigan History magazine, published by the HSM. He attends many of the society's three annual history conferences each year as they move around the state. And he is a veteran volunteer judge at HSM's Michigan History Day academic competition, which sends the top K-12 students to National History Day. Along the way, he has also made financial donations to support the state's oldest cultural non-profit.

But giving of his time and treasure during his lifetime didn't seem enough to Bob Cayia.

"It's important to me for these things to continue on even after I've passed on," he said. "It's a way of providing more fulfillment in my life and enriching my life.

"Whatever my contributions to the Historical Society of Michigan have been over the years, they have been far exceeded by what I feel I get in return – the educational value of the magazine and conferences, and the interaction and mentoring with students at Michigan History Day."

He said his legal background "impressed upon me the importance of estate planning."

It is probably easier than people think to support HSM in your estate plan, Cayia said.

"It wasn't difficult at all," he said. "I believe it is extremely important for everyone to do some estate planning. Often, it can be a simple will. Sometimes, a living trust is needed, as in my case."

By notifying HSM that he planned to leave a bequest, Bob became a member of the society's Legacy Circle of like-minded people. When updating his living trust, he "wanted to have a few bequests in there for my legacy to causes and institutions I care about... Estate planning allows your wishes and desires to be fulfilled after you pass away. If not, your wishes and desires play no role" in the disposition of your estate.

"I readily admit that they are modest amounts," he said. "But these are causes or institutions that are important to me. It became natural for me to give back to them... I want to help HSM flourish in the future."

How much does Bob Cayia love history?

"I was such an avid reader of Michigan History magazine, I never threw away an issue," he remembered. "I had collected at least 25 years of the magazines, somewhere between 200 and 250 copies."

He has since donated them all to the Munising Public Library so that others can enjoy reading them as much as he did.

They have become another part of Bob Cayia's growing personal historical legacy.