

McLean man donates \$1 million in honor of late wife

by BRIAN TROMPETER, Staff Writer | Posted: Friday, March 25, 2016 12:00 pm

While on Foreign Service postings in Africa, McLean residents Raymond and Luann Martin were impressed by good works performed by the Mennonite Central Committee.

After Luann Martin died of cancer on July 14, 2015, at age 66, her husband sought a way to honor her memory and serve the causes she had championed.

Raymond Martin decided to create the Luann Martin Legacy Fund for Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition and endow it with \$1 million from his wife's retirement savings.

Martin said he chose the Mennonite group because its projects were less top-down than ones operated by larger organizations, hence allowing the money to have a greater impact.

"It was a very good way to honor my wife and build a better world," he said.

The fund will help Mennonite Central Committee officials to increase the scale of their operations in eastern and central Africa, including providing pediatric and prenatal health care, preventing mother-to-child transmission of the HIV and ensuring adequate access to nutrition for woman, children and infants.

The committee has identified a couple of partner agencies in Africa to help with those efforts over the next several years, said spokesman Rachel Sommer.

The fund "will have a significant benefit for our partners," she said. "It's really inspiring, [Luann Martin's] lifelong dedication. She was a remarkable person with a huge heart."

Martin and Mennonite Central Committee officials on Feb. 28 signed an agreement during a ceremony at Welcoming Place in Akron, Pa.

The committee strives to reduce hunger, poor health and poverty. Its long-term goal is to end



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Raymond Martin (center) holds a document detailing the launch of the Luann Martin Legacy Fund, which will help Mennonite Central Committee scale up its aid efforts in eastern and central Africa. Pictured with him are son-in-law Emre Ozaltin, son Gregory Martin, grandson Troy Ozaltin, daughter Annette Martin Ozaltin and his son's girlfriend, Joanna Walker. (Photo by Brenda Burkholder)

preventable child deaths by 2030.

Luann Martin was born in Berne, Ind., and after earning a bachelor's degree in English from Goshen College, she spent a year doing peace studies at what now is the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Indiana.

She subsequently received a master's degree in international development from American University and volunteered at the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office in Washington, D.C. Afterward, she joined her husband in his foreign-service career with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which took the pair to Ghana, Cameroon, Pakistan and what now is the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Luann Martin later worked with UNICEF, USAID and FHI360, retiring from the last organization after serving as its associate communications director for a worldwide maternal- and child-health project.

She and her husband regularly donated to the Mennonite Central Committee and some of their family members served with the non-profit, charitable group, which operates in more than 60 countries.

The committee was formed in 1920 in Elkhart, Ind., to help hungry people in Ukraine and Russia, including Mennonites. The organization receives most of its financial support from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in the United States and Canada, but about 20 percent of its \$77.6 million budget from relief sales and receipts from its thrift shops.

A million dollars is a breathtaking amount of money for many people, but Raymond Martin said his family was completely on board with using his late wife's retirement moneys to establish the legacy fund.

"The best inheritance parents can leave their kids is a good education and work skills," he said. "They can use those to be productive and earn their own living. They don't need big handouts from their parents."

Martin, who has lived in McLean for 24 years, said he is examining options for places to bequeath his own funds.

"A Mennonite leader said it's OK to make money, but not to die rich," he said. "That's my philosophy."