



News Release

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Martin Foundation Grant Expands High School Auditorium Plan

(Greenville, KY) When Greenville native Felix E. Martin, Jr. (1927-2007) left the majority of \$60 million estate to benefit Muhlenberg County, he included instructions in his will for the money to be invested in a charitable foundation that would provide grants for “the education, civic, and cultural needs of the residents of Muhlenberg County.”

Today the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation announced a \$500,000 grant that it believes will advance all three of Mr. Martin’s objectives in a single project. The grant will enable the Muhlenberg County School Board to expand the new auditorium planned for the Muhlenberg County High School, West Campus from 500 to 800 seats so it will be large enough to host community events and programs. The new facility will be named the “Felix E. Martin, Jr. Hall.”

In presenting the grant to Dale Todd, superintendent of Muhlenberg County Schools, Roderick J. Tompkins, Sr., chairman of the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation, said, “Expanding the auditorium to 800 seats will allow all of the students at Muhlenberg County High School, West Campus to attend school programs together for the first time. The auditorium will also be available to the entire Muhlenberg community for arts, school and civic groups to use throughout the year.”

Tompkins also noted that “Martin Hall will give the community an acoustically-designed auditorium that can accommodate a greater variety and size of performances. This is even more important and timely with the hiring of Cora Hughes as the University of Kentucky Fine Arts Extension Agent for Muhlenberg County—a new position that is being jointly funded by the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation and the community. Martin Hall will provide a wonderful venue for Ms. Hughes to showcase a wide range of instrumental and choral music, theater, films and speakers.”

In closing, Tompkins thanked the Muhlenberg County Schools (MCS) for their willingness to work with the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation. He said, “The school board has been very cooperative and enthusiastic about expanding the auditorium to improve its services for the schools and the community. To date, the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation has awarded grants in Muhlenberg County totaling \$7 million, and we look forward to future opportunities for partnership.”

After MCS superintendent Dale Todd accepted the check, he said, “The results of this partnership will not only enrich the lives of our students, but it will also benefit the county as a whole in ways we can’t even imagine today. On behalf of everyone in Muhlenberg County, I want to thank the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation for making this possible.”

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The grant was recommended to the board of the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation by the foundation's Task Force of five local advisors: Gary Carver, Lanie Gardner, Elizabeth "E. A." Gentry, Mike Mercer and Peggy Williams. Lanie Gardner presented the idea for the auditorium expansion to the Task Force after reading a paper that MNHS alumna Jenna Brashear wrote in February 2009 for a class at the University of Kentucky. Brashear's paper was a feasibility study for fulfilling her dream of having an acoustically-designed performing arts venue in Muhlenberg County.

Lanie Gardner, vice-chair of the Martin Foundation Task Force, said, "Thanks to Jenna Brashear's vision and hard work, the generosity of the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation, and a school system committed to serving the community, Muhlenberg County will finally get what it needs and deserves. This project clearly demonstrates how one person can make a big difference. I hope it shows our students their ideas can have a lasting impact on our community."

Mike Mercer, chair of the Martin Foundation Task Force said, "Making this grant of \$500,000 was a decision that none of the parties took lightly. The Task Force spent many hours evaluating the proposal. The potential benefits to our community are limitless. This is the kind of transformational change we hope the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation will continue to make in the county."

The architectural design of the newly-named Felix E. Martin, Jr. Hall at Muhlenberg County High School, West Campus is under the direction of the architectural firm Clotfelter/Samokar, PSC in Lexington. The auditorium is currently scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2010.

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About the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation

The Felix E. Martin, Jr. Foundation was established by the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Trust in 2007. The Foundation is structured as a supporting organization of The Community Foundation of Louisville. Guided by its own board of directors, the Foundation's role is to carry out the wishes of the late Felix E. Martin, Jr., to address the educational, civic and cultural needs of Muhlenberg County residents. In 2008, the Felix E. Martin, Jr. Trust established two scholarship endowments, each for \$2.8 million, one to the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY and the other to the McCallie School in Chattanooga, TN for the benefit of qualifying students from Muhlenberg County. For more details about the foundation, call (270) 977-9194 or visit its website at: www.felixmartinfoundation.org.

About The Community Foundation of Louisville

The Community Foundation of Louisville is the largest community foundation in Kentucky, and in the top 50 in the country. The Community Foundation is a tax-exempt, public charity that has \$240 million in assets held in charitable funds for more than 1,100 different donors. Grants and distributions from these funds support a wide range of cultural, educational and humanitarian programs according to each donor's specifications. The foundation has five affiliate foundations in Kentucky—in Owensboro and Daviess County, in Elizabethtown and Hardin County, in Shelbyville and Shelby County, in Bardstown and Nelson County, and in a four-county area around Danville, known as the Wilderness Trace Community Foundation. Since its inception in 1984, the Community Foundation has awarded more than \$400 million in grants. For more details about the foundation's services, call (502) 585-4649 or visit its website at: www.CFLouisville.org.