



# A LEGACY OF HARMONY

*The story behind the Gladys and Fred Katen Fund*

When asked why she loves singing barbershop music, Sweet Adelines member Gladys “Gee” Katen explained it this way:

“I always loved singing, whether in the high school glee club or along with the car radio, but nothing compares to the feeling of four different voice parts wrapping their sound around each other.”

In the same way individual voices combine to create an overtone, the lives of Sweet Adelines merge into a deep musical and personal connection that Gee and her husband, Fred, want to ensure will be available to young women for years to come. The Gladys and Fred Katen Fund was created to support young women pursuing music and/or vocal education in the barbershop genre. The Katens’ gift to Sweet Adelines International established an endowment that will benefit the organization for generations.

In 1981, while living in Connecticut (USA), Gee was invited to a YankeeMaid Chorus rehearsal. She sang lead with the chorus for nine years then took a break from the risers to finish her post-graduate education and continue her career as a corporate financial analyst. Throughout, she kept in touch with her chorus “family,” attending shows and competitions.

“In 2004, I had some health concerns and decided that I really needed Sweet Adelines in my life,” said Gee. “My husband, Fred, said, ‘Absolutely you should go back!’”

It took a few years, but in 2006, Gee returned to the chorus, now called Harmony on the Sound (HOTS). Long-time director Karen Sweeters suggested Gee switch to bass, and she sang that part with the chorus until the family moved to Las Vegas, Nevada (USA). Thirty-four years after that first visit to YankeeMaids, Gee competed with HOTS at the 2015 International competition in Las Vegas. Today, Gee sings bass as a proud member of the San Diego Chorus (California, USA).

The Katens agree that performance opportunities like Rising Star and music education impact lives, as Gee has personally witnessed in her own chorus.

“The San Diego Chorus has partnered with numerous youth groups in the community, giving young women an opportunity to expand their musical experience, and the chorus continually offers

its own members countless hours of education,” she said. “I hope each person we help will share what they learn with others. It’s important to me to spread the word about this organization that has given me so much.”

The Katens hope their financial contribution will help Sweet Adelines create and sustain the availability of educational opportunities.

“We wanted to make sure young singers have funds available to pursue something they really love,” she said. “Sweet Adelines encourages young girls all the way up to women in their 90s to be on the risers singing or otherwise involved. That’s a lifetime. Think how many generations of women this organization has touched and continues to touch. It’s wonderful. That’s all I can say. It’s simply wonderful.”

*If you are interested in finding out how to make a donation to Sweet Adelines International, contact Susan Smith, director of philanthropy, at [philanthropy@sweetadelines.com](mailto:philanthropy@sweetadelines.com) or by calling 1.918.388.8040.*

*Creating or establishing an endowment for Sweet Adelines International is one way to ensure a legacy of supporting your fellow singers. An endowment provides ongoing financial support to the beneficiary. The initial gift is invested, and the interest accrued (along with any future donations) continues to provide funding.*

*To find out more about how you can create your legacy through an endowment to Sweet Adelines International, contact Susan Smith, director of philanthropy, at [philanthropy@sweetadelines.com](mailto:philanthropy@sweetadelines.com) or by calling 1.918.388-8040.*