

JOHN DUNHAM'S LEGACY, THE DUNHAM FUND, CONTINUES TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

— Sandy Conrad
sconrad@fvshopper.com

John Dunham and his family created the Dunham Fund in 1996; he determined that it should be “dedicated through wise gifting to making the world a more comfortable, safer place for mankind to live and prosper.” An entrepreneur and businessman, he visualized the fund as a “self-sustaining money maker, as well as a gifting organization.” Mr Dunham’s history is linked to the history of Equipto, the Aurora company founded by his father Thomas in 1907.

At first Equipto manufactured sidecars and headlights for motorcycles. With the advent of the popularity of the automobile, the company began to produce body parts for Ford Motor Co’s Model T. That led to Ford’s need for heavy duty shelving that led Thomas to introduce the concept of space utilization products – the steel shelving that today remains the core of Equipto’s product line.



Son John attended West Aurora High School and North Central and Babson colleges and participated in his father’s business, often behind the scenes in small ways. He officially joined Equipto in 1931 in a commission sales position. He eventually became President and Chairman of the company from which he retired in 1994.



John Dunham is known and respected as a champion of enterprise and education. His philanthropic passion led to the establishment of the Dunham Fund which supported many area educational institutions that inspired students to achieve excellence in not only scholarship but development of character, work ethic and commitment to community service. The Fund is the largest private foundation in the Fox Valley area.

Some of the area organizations supported by the Dunham Fund during the past year include United Way’s SPARK Program, the A+ Foundation for West Aurora Schools, the Paramount Arts Centre, North Central College, St Paul Lutheran Church & School,

Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry, Wayside Cross Ministries Lifespring Center, Aurora University, Breaking Free, Family Focus, Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry, Suicide Prevention Services, the Kaneland Foundation, VNA Health Care, the Aurora Police Department, Rosary High School, Aurora Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board, Association for Individual Development, OnLight Aurora, Riveredge Park, the STEM Partnership School, Aurora GreenFest, CASA of Kane County, Waubensee’s Fast Track associate Degree Program and Oswego School District 308 Foundation. In other words, if you have had involvement with any of these, you have been impacted by the Dunham Fund!