

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
From Sainte Marie Foundation
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Sainte Marie Foundation May 30th Event

Over 60 people were present at the Sainte Marie Foundation House on May 30 for the dedication of a garden and to honor a donation of art work by Helen Keller Graham

The memorial garden was dedicated to Loretta Zuber, longtime Ste. Marie resident who died in 2009 at 99 years of age. Her family and friends donated funds to provide much-needed landscaping in the front of the Foundation House.

The art reception honored Helen Keller Graham, Oblong resident and well-known Jasper County artist who grew up in the Ste. Marie area. Graham, a self-taught artist, donated 17 pencil drawings of “Women in Hats 1923” to the Foundation. The women were a vital part of a committee planning the 50th anniversary of St. Mary’s Church pastor, Father Peter Joseph Virnich, who served the parish for most of his priesthood. Graham was drawn to the group picture and in 1982 started sketching the faces, many of whom were from well-known Sainte Marie families. The framed drawings are the first items to be displayed in what will eventually be a museum at the Foundation House.

In honor of the art donation, those attending wore fanciful hats for the occasion. Hat contests were held for children, women and men.

The Foundation also exhibited historical pictures and documents that were recently enlarged and copied, thanks to a grant from the Mary Heath Foundation, Robinson, IL.

The Sainte Marie Foundation is incorporated as an Illinois not-for-profit, founded exclusively for charitable purposes and dedicated to the improvement and historical preservation of Ste. Marie.

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Picture #1 caption: Among the many women wearing hats at the Sainte Marie Foundation House event on May 30 were: (L to R) Martha Eubank Yockey, Willow Hill; Linda Zuber, Florence Kocher and Marjorie Barthelme, all of Ste. Marie.

Picture #2 caption: (L – R) Pat Reis, president of the Sainte Marie Foundation, welcomes artist Helen Keller Graham, Oblong, to the Foundation House where Graham’s 17 pencil drawings of “Ladies in Hats 1923” are on display. Both Reis and Graham wore fanciful hats in honor of the occasion, as did most of the other women who attended.

Graham’s dress was one she wore at Ste. Marie’s sesquicentennial in 1987.

