



THE  
*Rod Nilstuen*  
FUND

COMMEMORATING  
A COOPERATIVE  
& CONSERVATION  
CHAMPION

*“To me, the  
co-op idea is  
one of the  
most potent in*

*the world because it combines two powerful, basic concepts: the strength and flexibility of the free enterprise system with democracy — one person, one vote — returns based on use, not wealth.”*



*“Without the  
human  
ability of  
leadership,  
which is able  
to seize on  
available  
resources and  
mold and mobilize  
them to a common  
purpose, the best  
ideas and  
structures in  
the world will  
go for naught.”*

## COMMEMORATING A COOPERATIVE & CONSERVATION CHAMPION

### *Who was Rod Nilsestuen?*

Rod Nilsestuen was a farm boy who grew up to be a tireless advocate for

farmers, a passionate believer in farmland preservation, a dedicated volunteer and a results-oriented public servant. But more than that, he was a visionary leader who championed innovative cooperative development and left an indelible mark on the cooperative movement, as well as Midwestern agriculture.

His legacy tells a story of state, regional and national accomplishments:

- Served as Wisconsin's Secretary of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection, providing leadership to create the Dairy Business Innovation Center, among numerous other achievements.
- Led the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives for 24 years, building it into one of the nation's most respected cooperative trade associations.
- Directed efforts to establish the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative, which helps preserve Wisconsin's best farmland, promotes wise use of rural land and protects land and water resources.
- Encouraged investment in a "green and growing" renewable energy future that benefits rural communities.
- Established the Cooperative Network, a two-state alliance between the WFC and Minnesota Association of Cooperatives, which now represents about 600 co-ops with 6.4 million members.
- Co-founded Cooperative Development Services, a first-of-its-kind, multi-state model for new cooperative development.
- Chaired the National Rural Cooperative Development Task Force, which launched major federal investment in cooperative development and the creation of hundreds of co-op development projects across the nation.
- Was inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame in 2003.

Nilsestuen died in July 2010 while swimming in Lake Superior after a day spent volunteering on a Habitat for Humanity construction project.

### *The Rod Nilsestuen Fund*

To commemorate the achievements of this cooperative champion and to sustain his legacy, the Ralph K. Morris Foundation, with the encouragement and support of his family, friends and colleagues in the cooperative and conservation communities, has established the Rod Nilsestuen Fund.

The Fund's purpose is to sponsor programming that advances forward thinking, research, education and

outreach in cooperative business, development, wise rural land use and leadership.

*"The land has not  
only been our source  
of sustenance, but  
our very source of  
identity as people.  
It helps define who  
we are, as well as  
where we're from."*

The organizations helping to establish the Rod Nilsestuen Fund include: Cooperative Network, Cooperative Development Services, CooperationWorks!, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, The Cooperative Foundation, Cooperative Development Foundation, the

National Cooperative Business Association and University of Wisconsin-River Falls Foundation. UWRF is conducting additional fundraising.

### *Fostering collaboration, conversation*

In honor of Rod Nilsestuen and his commitment to bringing cooperatives and their leaders together to seek innovative solutions, the Fund will, among other activities, establish a symposium devoted to in-depth, thought-provoking presentations on issues affecting cooperatives and their future success. The inaugural event is slated for 2012, which has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of the Cooperative.



Rod and Carol Nilsestuen

## *Commemorate this cooperative, conservation champion*

Your donation to the Rod Nilsestuen Fund will commemorate the achievements of a remarkable cooperative and land-preservation champion and ensure that his legacy will grow and thrive.

There are several ways you can make a tax-deductible contribution to the Fund:

- One-time or annual giving:
  - Check or money order.
  - Gift of stock or other securities.
- Planned giving:
  - Make a bequest in your will.
  - Insurance (designating the Fund as a beneficiary for your life insurance policy).
  - Charitable remainder trusts.
  - Charitable lead trusts.
  - Gift annuities where the donor receives income from the annuity.

For more information about making a tax-deductible donation, contact Jayne Kincade, (612) 343-8272, [kincade.jayne@dorsey.com](mailto:kincade.jayne@dorsey.com).

THE  
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*“Wise and prudent people have a vision of the future fashioned by creative, open minds and with a working knowledge of the lessons of the past. They neither ignore the past nor do they worship it. They dream the impossible.”*

The Rod Nilsestuen Fund is part of the Ralph K. Morris Foundation, which was established in memory of Morris, who was a leader of the Midwestern cooperative community and a friend and colleague of Rod Nilsestuen. The RKM Foundation shares a dedication to the future of cooperatives and leadership development.

As part of the RKM Foundation, the Rod Nilsestuen Fund is controlled by the Foundation’s board of directors, and its income will be used at the discretion of the board. Contributions to the Fund are tax-deductible charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes to the extent provided by law.

The Ralph K. Morris Foundation, based in Minneapolis, Minn., operates as a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Its mission is to provide cooperative educational opportunities for young adults who demonstrate, through experience or their plans for the future, their desire to contribute to the betterment of agriculture, rural America and the cooperative enterprise.

A financial statement of the Foundation, disclosing assets, liabilities, fund balances, revenue and expenses for the preceding fiscal year, will be provided, upon request, to persons solicited for contributions.



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