

History of the Lawrence and Miller Families

The Foundation continues a tradition of philanthropy and public service within the Lawrence and Miller families.

The Lawrence philanthropic tradition dates back to 1793 with the founding of Lawrence Academy in Groton, Massachusetts by Deacon Samuel Lawrence, a farmer, shoemaker and Massachusetts Militiaman who took a bullet through his hat in the 1775 Battle of Bunker Hill. Subsequent generations have contributed generously to several colleges and universities, toward the abolition of slavery and to assist persons in need. The cities of Lawrence, Massachusetts and Lawrence, Kansas; Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin; and Lawrence Hall at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Cambridge, Massachusetts have all been named in recognition of their active support.

The Miller family crossed the Appalachians to Kentucky in the late 18th century where they later become deeply involved in civic and political affairs. Mary (Polly) Lawrence's grandmother, Mary Wellman Miller, for many years was active in the Democratic Party. Polly's grandfather, Judge Shackelford Miller Sr. was Chancellor of the Jefferson County Circuit Court and later a member of the Kentucky Court of Appeals. Polly's uncle, Shackelford Miller Jr. was a federal appellate court judge, and her father, Neville Miller, served as Dean of the University of Louisville Law School and Mayor of Louisville. Mayor Miller is especially remembered for his leadership during the 1933 historic Louisville flood.

The decision to launch the Sea2Earth Fund to direct a portion of the Foundation's resources to environmental issues flows in large measure from Polly Lawrence's extended engagement in the natural world and education fields. For many years she was intimately involved in the pioneering promotion of seed saving and sustainable agriculture through her work with the Wallace Genetics Foundation established by Franklin Roosevelt's Vice President and Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace. Polly also served on the boards of the Casey Tree and Accokeek Foundations as well as the governing board for her hometown, Chevy Chase Village, MD, and its garden and environmental committees. Her commitment to science education and the environment has inspired her husband and children. We hope it may also inspire and support you.