Personal legacies can take many forms including a happy family, successful business, and philanthropic activities. One legacy opportunity is through the Heinz History Center’s commemorative tile program, which allows contributors to honor family and friends by placing a handsome tile bearing the name or names of the honoree(s) within the History Center, along with a written tribute. Tiles truly make the honoree a part of Western Pennsylvania history. The History Center benefits from the generosity of its supporters through these and other legacy gifts such as bequests.

Two excerpts from wonderful family tributes include:

~The family name was spelled “Ivan,” but since the Slovak “I” is pronounced like an English “E” the name soon became Evan. The “s” was added in my generation. My grandfather was one of those young Eastern European men recruited by agents of Andrew Carnegie to staff his mills. My father was born on Second Avenue in the Homestead “Ward” near the High Level Bridge, hard by the Monongahela River. His father walked to work through the “Hole-in-the-Wall” on City Farm Lane, and worked 12 hour shifts. By the time my father graduated from trade school, work was slow. He worked at a variety of odd jobs. One was at the old H.J. Heinz glass works on the North Side. These were Depression years and they made an indelible mark on him. Finally, in 1936, at the age of 22, he was hired at the Homestead Steel Works. He started out as a laborer and worked his way through a succession of jobs until, at the end, he had one of the highest job classifications in the Heat Treating and Forge Shop. He forged steel on three rotating 8 hour shifts most of his life; he forged steel on 16 hour shifts during World War II; and he forged steel with my uncles while sitting at my mother’s kitchen table. ~Evans

~Andy’s career with ALCOA was to have a profound effect not only on the company but on society as a whole. You could not see it coming through the dreary industrial years of the thirties, but as the country became engulfed in World War II and the industrial might of the United States was enlarged and harnessed to win that war, many of what were then called employee “benefits” that undergird our present society were born. The gearing up of existing plants to run round the clock, the demand for even more plants, more machines, more research, more everything, required people. New and different people, the men had gone to war. How do you get the new and different people to work. Sure the patriotism was there, but they had to be trained and trained almost overnight. They had to be paid in new and imaginative ways. The United States government said “no” to salary increases — unpatriotic — too costly — for the duration of the war. “Benefits” were born. Health insurance — dental insurance — eye care — life insurance — pensions in many forms — training programs of all kinds — crafts — trades — education at all levels. What was Andy’s part in all this — Andy spoke for the very vital aluminum industry along with others from steel autos, air craft, mining — the whole industrial might of the country. It was Andy and many men like him that defined the origin of “benefits,” the common place, the almost taken for granted part of the economy today. ~Anderson

For more information about leaving a legacy at the History Center through a bequest, commemorative tile, life insurance, or other gift please contact Elizabeth McMullen, Senior Development Associate at 412-454-6445 or eamcmullen@heinzhistorycenter.org