

LEGACIES

By Kaitlyn Loy,
Senior Development Associate

Elaine and Carl Krasik

Members since 2003

Elaine and Carl Krasik know how to make history. As lifelong Pittsburghers with a passion for our city and its people, giving back to the community through the History Center has become a meaningful part of their family's story.

In May 2015, Elaine and Carl generously donated more than 4,100 artifacts to the History Center, establishing The Elaine B. and Carl Krasik Collection of Pennsylvania and Presidential Political Memorabilia. Documenting approximately 225 years of state and national politics, the items range from silk and fabric ribbons to posters and paper election results, buttons and medals to sheet music, all created between 1790 and 2014.

The couple's interest in collecting was sparked in 1969, when Carl began a clerkship with Justice Herbert B. Cohen of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Justice Cohen had been a New Deal Democrat in the 1930s and '40s and knew all of the Pennsylvania political figures of that era. Carl remembers how Justice Cohen made the names and slogans come alive and showed him how collecting could be a wonderful way to learn Pennsylvania's history.

Since then, Carl focused on capturing and collecting the political history of the state. Beginning his collection well before the advent of the internet, Carl first conducted research by reading newspaper microfilm. Today, he is a regular in the History Center's Detre Library & Archives and in Special Collections, where he can be found on a weekly basis helping to archive and catalog the collection.



Carl and Elaine Krasik in front of their time capsule.

Inspired by her husband's commitment, Elaine was eager to join Carl as a History Center volunteer too. She is looking forward to training to become a museum docent and enjoying the opportunity to learn more about the exhibits while shadowing other volunteers. Together, Elaine and Carl are a dedicated team, using their knowledge of our region's history to help bring the stories of our collections to life.

Elaine and Carl's legacy can also be found in their time capsule at the History Center. In celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary in 2015, Elaine and Carl invited their sons and

their wives and grandchildren to the History Center, and asked each family member to place something meaningful in the time capsule. It was Elaine and Carl's children and grandchildren who then decided that the time capsule should not be opened again until the couple's 100th anniversary, in 2065. As Elaine excitedly shares, "One can only imagine what the scope and depth of the History Center will be then!"

The History Center hopes to continue to have active members like Elaine and Carl share their story and tell us how they make connections to our region's history in their own

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Badge commemorating the dedication of the Pennsylvania State Capitol building where President Roosevelt was in attendance, 1906.

HHC Collections, gift of Elaine B. and Carl Krasik, 2015.22.410.



Semi-centennial Loyal War Governor's Conference commemoration badge, 1912.


HHC Collections, gift of Elaine B. and Carl Krasik, 2015.22.1072.

lives. To explore more of the Krasik collection online, please visit: <http://heinzhistorycenter.org/collections/history-center-collections/krasik-collection-of-pennsylvania-presidential-political-memorabilia>.

The History Center values its members, who play an essential role in the success of the History Center's mission. Our members, supporters, and friends make it possible for the History Center to preserve the rich history of Western Pennsylvania and to present award-winning exhibitions and public programs that engage visitors of all ages. For as little as \$57 a year, members can enjoy:

- Unlimited access to the History Center, the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum, Fort Pitt Museum, and Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village
- Invitations to member-only events
- Subscription to *Western Pennsylvania History* magazine

- Subscription to Making History quarterly newsletter
- 15% discount on all purchases in the Museum Shop
- Discounts on tours, lectures, classes, Detre Library & Archives services, and even parking

History Center members also receive a membership to the Smithsonian Institution, including a subscription to *Smithsonian Magazine*. 

For more information on becoming a member or to give the gift of membership to someone you know, contact Membership Manager Shirley Gaudette at sagaudette@heinzhistorycenter.org or 412-454-6436.



Pin presented to and likely worn by Pennsylvania Governor James A. Beaver during dedication ceremonies for Battle of Gettysburg monuments, 1889.

HHC Collections, gift of Elaine B. and Carl Krasik, 2015.22.137.