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# Loose Ends: Inspiring a love of the arts

By Pam Hersh



Georgeanne Moss

The Trenton Public School students in grades K through 8 probably are unaware of the fact that a vacation taken by someone they never met may give them a positive new perspective on life. That someone is Princeton resident Georgeanne “Georgie” Gould Moss who has been the driving force behind an inspiring new arts program introduced into the Trenton public schools.

On Wednesday, Sept. 16, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announced that Trenton would be a participant in the Kennedy Center Program called “Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child.”

Trenton is the 19th U.S. school district — and the first in New Jersey — to be chosen for this honor. The program creates a long-range arts education plan for K-8 students with the goal of bringing access and equity to each student’s arts education. With the assistance of expert consultation services provided by Kennedy Center staff and other professionals, community leaders develop a strategy for arts education that is tailor-made for the school district and community.

But what does that have to do with Georgie’s vacation? It was during a vacation five years ago that Georgeanne and her family met a past president of the National Committee for the Performing Arts of the Kennedy Center (NCPA). He was impressed not only by her belief in the value of arts education in one’s life, but also her passion for giving back to society by improving the educational opportunities for youngsters in under-served communities. He nominated her to the national committee, and her credentials and commitment led to her appointment. And with that action the arts education for Trenton’s elementary school students would be changed forever.

“I learned about the Kennedy Center program, ‘Any Given Child,’ being implemented in Austin Texas — and from that moment I decided that I had to dedicate my efforts to getting this program into Trenton,” Georgeanne said. “Having grown up in Central Jersey, I was very familiar with the challenges of urban districts such as Trenton. Arts education often suffers. But I also am from a family that understands the value of the arts — how music, theater, and art enrich your life — whether you are a performer or an enjoyer... Appreciation of the arts gives children hope and direction that lasts a lifetime. Echoing Mario Rossero, the Kennedy Center’s senior vice-president of education, she said her goal is to “inspire” and “energize” the students through the arts.

Georgie not only thought of making the match between Trenton and the Kennedy Center, but also paid for implementing the match. The “Any Given Child” initiative uses an affordable model that combines the resources of the school district, local arts and community organizations, and the Kennedy Center. The Kennedy Center covers the majority of the cost of the initiative, but requires school districts to contribute funds toward the first four years of the program. Georgie is responsible for the portion that Trenton was obligated to contribute. She made a gift in memory of her late father, Dr. Kenneth S. Gould, MD, a

pediatrician, psychiatrist, and professor at the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. But most importantly, Dr. Gould was a role model for Georgie in his love of the arts and in his “humanity,” “love of people,” and ever-present genuine concern about the welfare of others, said his daughter.

Having been a friend of the Gould family for many years, I was able to see these influences first-hand. Gould gatherings of friends and family generally turned into American Songbook celebrations around the piano in their living room. The only qualification for participation was a love of music — yes, even Pam, who sings with the same lack of skill evident in her cooking, was encouraged to join in.

I remember Georgie, when she was a student of Princeton legendary musical theater director Milton Lyon. She laughed about never being good enough to make it to a “real performance stage outside of my living room. Her sister Ellen Gould Baber, who serves on the McCarter Theatre board, however, did make it onto a stage.

”But it did not matter... I derived so much joy from singing — it influenced how I dealt with all sorts of challenges in life,” said Georgie, who is managing director-investments, for the Gould Group of Wells Fargo Advisors in Princeton.

The Gould gatherings, however, always were about more than singing. There were always discussions about the needs of others in the community and in society. Each member of the Gould family always took the talk to the next level. They acted quietly and without fanfare to make a difference in the lives of others. Georgie, somewhat uncomfortable with all the attention directed at her during the “Any Given Child” launch events, continually referenced the efforts of others who worked to bring this initiative to Trenton and the influence of others in her life who inspired her actions.

”Two years ago, I had a vision and a dream to bring the resources of the Kennedy Center to our local community,” Georgie said. “I am honored that so many others felt the same way and helped to turn this vision into reality.”