

DOING GOOD IN
Your Backyard.

Floyd “Vic” Hooker
Tioga County, NY

Field of Interest Fund
*Earmarked specifically to benefit
the youth of Tioga County.*



The Lucky Break of a Lifetime

There’s an old Irish blessing that reads, “May your pockets be heavy and your heart be light. May good luck pursue you each morning and night.” And on St. Patrick’s Day 1999, Floyd “Vic” Hooker certainly had the luck of the Irish on his side.

It was on that St. Patrick’s Day that the lifelong Tioga County, New York, resident won \$45 million in the New York State Lottery—recorded at the time as one of the largest winnings in state history—a prize that would change the course of more lives than Hooker could ever imagine.

Growing up in a family of 11 children, Hooker experienced firsthand what life was like in a lower-income family in a rural setting like Owego, the administrative center and capital city of Tioga County. Even as an adult, he continued to live modestly, residing in a small one-room apartment above his favorite restaurant and pub in town.

An upholster by trade, Hooker was never married and had no children of his own. But it was clear to all who knew him that he loved kids and was a very practical person, which is why when Hooker met with attorney Mark Dixon to talk about his lottery winnings, he came into the discussion prepared to give more than he would take.

“When we were doing the estate planning, he quickly realized that there was going to be a significant amount of money available that he felt he and his family didn’t need,” Dixon said. “So, he decided to put a portion of his estate into a foundation that would benefit the children of Tioga County.”

Sadly, Hooker died in 2007, and at the advice of the New York Attorney General, Dixon sought out an organization that could professionally manage the grant process for the fund Hooker hoped to create.



The organization selected was the Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers (CFTT), which created a field of interest fund earmarked specifically for the youth of Tioga County, just as Hooker wanted.

The fund, which was initially started through a contribution from Hooker's estate of \$497,000, distributes grants based on earned interest. This structure will enable the fund to provide for kids in perpetuity since the principal balance is never touched.

In the time since, the CFTT fund has distributed grants geared toward youth programming.

After years of working with CFTT, Dixson and an assembled board of advisors that includes Hooker's niece, decided they wanted to do more. While CFTT's fund helps with long-term forever needs, the Floyd Hooker Foundation was established to solve big-ticket emergency problems, a gift made possible by an annual lottery payment.

Among other things, the Floyd Hooker Foundation has replaced high school sports equipment destroyed by the Susquehanna River's historical flood that decimated Owego and is currently backing an elevator/accessibility project at the town's Coburn Free Library.

"One of the neat things that Candor High School did was, at a track meet my board members were invited to, they stood out in the middle of the football field," Dixson added. "All of the student-athletes for all the sports came through and thanked them personally. That was awesome."

Though he now lives in Alaska, Dixson returns to the area each April to meet with CFTT President and CEO Suzanne Lee to talk about how the two charitable efforts can help each other. As Hooker's former attorney and friend, Dixson believes that the pairing of the CFTT fund and the Floyd Hooker Foundation would bring a smile to the face of the selfless man who cared more about others than he did himself.

"He won the lottery and 'upgraded' himself to one of the two-room apartments," Dixson said. "He bought a used car. He never spent a lot of money on himself, but he did spend a lot of money in the community, primarily on what he considered the underprivileged kids."

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