

HERITAGE CIRCLE MEMBERS:

Melissa and Larry Mencotti

Melissa and Larry Mencotti visited Fallingwater for the first time 20 years ago. Impressed by their tour, they decided to make a modest gift. Little did they know that this would lead to a lifelong connection with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Growing up in Penn Hills, an eastern suburb of Pittsburgh, Melissa spent a lot of time in Frick Park, which was, to her, a magical place where her connection with nature began. As a pre-teen, she attended Girl Scout camp and was introduced to the wonder of the rural nighttime sky and the sights and sounds of the forest. Soon after, she left for college at Edinboro University and fell in love with small-town life, wide-open spaces and woodland ecosystems.

After working for a nonprofit organization that serves women and children in Meadville for a dozen years, Melissa began working with Allegheny College's fundraising office while earning a master's degree in philanthropic studies from the Lilly School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. She is now the director of gift planning at Allegheny College.

Growing up in urban Detroit, Michigan, Larry was practically a stranger to rural landscapes. After accepting a position at Edinboro University as a professor of sociology, he found himself exploring Western Pennsylvania's natural world, which eventually became his passion.

He and Melissa met "over tofu" at the former Edinboro food co-op. Nearly 40 years later, Melissa and Larry have traveled backroads and camped in tents from northern New Hampshire to southern Utah. Their English Setter, Vic, joins them in today's adventures. "Nature sustains us emotionally, physically and spiritually. My husband and I refer to being in the woods as 'going to church,'" Melissa shared.

They now live in Crawford County, and every morning come rain, shine or snow, Larry and Vic traverse the woods and fields of the region, including those protected by the Conservancy. They've explored WPC-owned preserves including Katz Natural Area in Meadville, as well as other properties that WPC helped to establish, such as Erie Bluffs State Park — Pennsylvania's newest state park.



"Nature has made us rich in experiences," says Melissa. "We relish our region's quiet beauty and biodiversity. We want people, flora and fauna always to have access to it." Making nature accessible to all is a large part of why they decided to name the Conservancy as a beneficiary of an IRA.

Conservation is one of their main philanthropic priorities and, as such, they support other regional organizations such as French Creek Valley Conservancy and the Foundation for Sustainable Forests. We are humbled that we are one of the organizations they've chosen to carry on their legacy of and passion for the natural world. Their planned gift ensures that their contributions will have positive and lasting impacts on the landscapes that they love. 



Melissa and Larry enjoy WPC properties like the Helen B. Katz Natural Area in Crawford County.



Wolf Creek Narrows Natural Area is beautiful in every season.

A Legacy Gift for Wolf Creek Narrows

Earlier this year, the Conservancy received a generous bequest from the estate of Joseph McCandless that will have a significant impact on improving and expanding the Wolf Creek Narrows Natural Area.

Known for its spring wildflowers and scenic beauty, this 243-acre preserve in Slippery Rock, Pa. is one of the 41 places that the Conservancy owns and stewards for visitors to enjoy.

Mr. McCandless was born in Slippery Rock in 1921 and lived most of his life in Ellwood City, working as an engineer and construction inspector for his family's business, B.J. McCandless Architect. He served as a bombardier and pilot during World War II, flying dozens of missions in the Asiatic Pacific Theater. He ended his service in 1947 as a captain, earning many medals including two Bronze Stars and a Distinguished Flying Cross.

Unfortunately, we did not have the opportunity to meet Mr. McCandless in his lifetime. We would have loved to have been able share our gratitude and let him know how significant his gift will be in the years to come to protect this treasured landscape. 🌿

Creative Giving through Life Insurance

Life insurance has long played an important role in charitable giving. Whether you donate an older policy that you no longer need or start a new policy to fund a major charitable project, life insurance offers a unique way to leverage relatively modest annual payments into a sizable charitable gift.

There are four basic methods to benefit the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy or Fallingwater using life insurance:

- **Name WPC as your successor beneficiary.** For example, you own a policy and have named your spouse as the beneficiary. You could name WPC as successor beneficiary in the event that your spouse predeceases you. There are no immediate tax benefits, but if no successor beneficiary were named, the death benefit would be included in your taxable estate.
- **Name WPC as your primary beneficiary.** If you purchased a policy several years ago, but your chosen beneficiary no longer needs the protection, you can designate the Conservancy to receive the benefit. Once again, your estate would receive a charitable deduction and the death benefit would pass to charity tax-free.
- **Donate an existing policy.** If you have older insurance policies that you no longer need and would like a current income tax deduction, you can donate these contracts to WPC. As long as all of the rights of ownership are completely transferred to WPC, you receive an income tax deduction equal to the lesser of your cost basis or the fair market value of the policy (roughly equal to the cash surrender value).
- **Give a new policy to WPC.** Many donors would like to make a significant contribution, but simply don't have the available funds. If you transfer a newer insurance policy, or even purchase a new policy on your life and name WPC as owner, you can make a sizeable impact with relatively modest annual payments.

Examples of policies which are often no longer needed: business insurance after the business has been sold, income replacement insurance after you've retired, estate insurance when your estate has been reduced below the taxable level and mortgage insurance after the mortgage has been repaid.

For example, you purchase a \$100,000 policy on your life that is owned by WPC, and every year you donate funds to WPC to pay the annual premiums. This gift guarantees that WPC will receive a generous donation, whether you pass away 10 years from now or live to be 100. By using life insurance, you limit your current outlay to a small deductible annual gift. You can even leverage this current gift further by donating highly appreciated assets, such as stocks or mutual funds, to pay these premiums. You still receive an income tax deduction for the gift, and the charity can sell these assets without paying capital gains taxes.

If you are interested in making a gift of life insurance, please contact Julie Holmes at **412-586-2312** or jholmes@paconserve.org, or consult your financial advisor. 🌿

With Gratitude for Our Heritage Circle Members

Legacy gifts can be transformative, having an incredible impact towards greening our communities, protecting forests, streams and wildlife, and preserving Fallingwater. If ever there was a time to make a move towards positive change for our region, it's now!

The Heritage Circle is a community of people who have included WPC or Fallingwater in their estate plans. Heritage Circle members are invited to special events and receive insider updates throughout the year.

If you have already included us in your estate plans or are interested in learning how to establish a legacy gift from your will, trust, charitable gift annuity, insurance or other financial vehicle, please return the enclosed envelope or contact Julie Holmes at 412-586-2312 or jholmes@paconserve.org.

We are grateful to the following Heritage Circle members for their forward-thinking generosity, and welcome our newest members who have recently notified us of their estate plans (indicated by an asterisk).

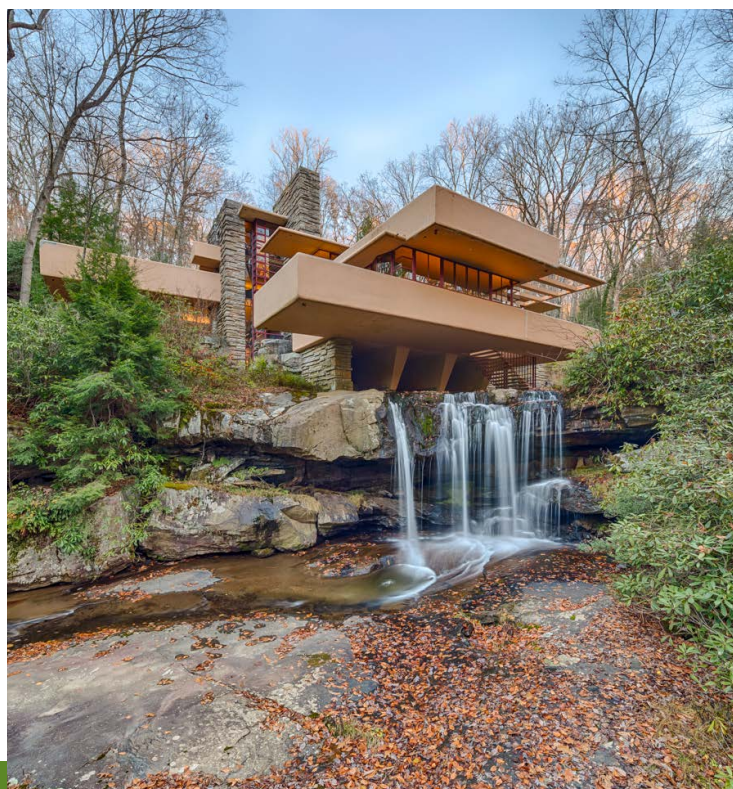
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Ultimate Legacies

We are deeply grateful to the following donors whose planned gifts have been received by the Conservancy since November 2020.

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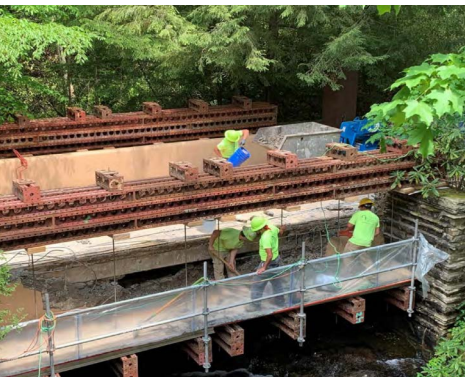
Email is the most efficient
and economical way for us to
communicate with you about
upcoming events and other
time-sensitive matters.

If you haven't already, please share
your email address with Kathy at
kpatrignani@paconserve.org to
receive monthly e-newsletters and
invitations to free webinars, hikes and
other fun and educational events.

Join Us for a Free Zoom Webinar for Members

Helping Fallingwater Live On: An Inside Look at Current and Future Preservation Efforts

Wednesday, December 1
Noon to 1 p.m.



How do you restore the only bridge to a
World Heritage site that thousands of visitors
cross each week? And as we look to the
future, what repairs are needed to sustain
Fallingwater for the next generation?

Join Justin Gunther, Conservancy vice
president and director of Fallingwater,
and Scott Perkins, director of preservation
and collections, as they share the major
preservation projects accomplished this year
and the plans to care for Fallingwater into
the coming years.

Register at [Fallingwater.org/preservation2021](https://fallingwater.org/preservation2021)

**WPC's free zoom webinars feature
interesting information presented
by staff on a variety of nature,
gardening and scientific topics.**

Access the library of recordings anytime
at WaterLandLife.org/Webinars, and
visit Fallingwater.org/Webinars for
features on art, design, architecture
and preservation.



Mission Statement: The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean waters and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.