



To Our Friends and Supporters

Thank you! Your generous support has enabled us to reach an inspiring and historic moment in the growth and development of the Willa Cather Foundation. Together, we've created an award-winning museum and cultural center that serves as a living memorial to one of America's greatest writers.

Since the National Willa Cather Center's grand opening, visitation is up 50% with guided tours and bookstore sales also experiencing dramatic increases of 24% and 52%, respectively.

We're extremely proud of our enhanced facilities in Red Cloud—home to the nation's largest collection of nationally designated historic sites dedicated to an American author. But we also take great pride in knowing that Cather's writings are celebrated across the world and we do all we can to support and sustain that interest.

Outside of our home in Red Cloud, people from across the country and around the world are served by our programs. They access educational resources on our website, read illuminating essays in our *Willa Cather Review*, or attend educational conferences and seminars.

It's inspiring to be a part of an organization that helps enrich the lives of thousands of students, teachers, scholars, and visitors annually. Our programs not only inform and enlighten our constituents. They also motivate them to pursue their passions or embark on literary pilgrimages years in the making.

This report spotlights three simple testimonials from friends near and far: Nebraska, New York, and Canada. Please read it with pride as we celebrate our collective accomplishments!

Gratefully,

Lynette Krieger
Board President



Ashley Olson
Executive Director



Our Mission

To promote Willa Cather's legacy through education, preservation, and the arts.

Our Vision

To become a premier cultural center that offers broad educational opportunities for patrons to experience Cather's work, explore historic landmarks related to her life and times, foster their own creativity, and embrace the arts and humanities.

Our Programs and Services

- Operation of an archive, library, and study center at the National Willa Cather Center
- Preservation of the largest collection of nationally designated historic sites devoted to an American author
- Conferences and seminars held annually in Red Cloud and biennially across the country and internationally
- Arts and humanities programs in the restored Red Cloud Opera House
- Guided town and country tours of more than twenty historic sites relating to Cather's life and work
- Publication of the *Willa Cather Review*
- Scholarship awards to English and history majors
- Arts and educational exhibits at the National Willa Cather Center
- Restoration and conservation of the 612-acre Willa Cather Memorial Prairie
- Management of a Cather bookstore and gift shop
- Outreach to and curriculum support for teachers and students



Promoting Cather's legacy through **E D U C A T I O N**, preservation, and the arts.

"This past spring, I had the distinct pleasure of attending (all the way from Toronto!) the Willa Cather Spring Conference in Red Cloud. Not only was it my first time in Nebraska, but it was also my first experience at a literary conference. I learnt a great deal and met individuals who have made me even more motivated to pursue graduate studies in English and to become a Cather scholar! I look forward to attending more conferences/seminars with the Foundation in the future. I'm grateful to everyone at the Willa Cather Foundation who made this trip so lovely and inspiring."

Emily Leahy
Undergraduate Student at Glendon College, York University
Toronto, Canada



Docent Angela Duca assists students with identification of forbs during our Pollinator Workshop at the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie.



Conference-goers assemble after a lecture for a book signing with Karen Gettert Shoemaker, author of *The Meaning of Names*.



Scholarship recipient Ashley Morrison poses for a photograph with scholarship benefactor Antonette Willa Skupa Turner.

Promoting Cather's legacy through education, **P R E S E R V A T I O N**, and the arts.

Red Cloud and the National Willa Cather Center are a special place offering our Landscape Architecture Program and first-year learning community the opportunity to see a community through Willa Cather's literature and then experience first-hand the place that inspired her writings. By partnering with the Willa Cather Foundation and engaging our students in service-learning projects in and around Red Cloud, we are connecting learning in their disciplines through service learning. Whether it is preserving a historic house through painting its exterior or developing a regional cultural heritage tourism plan, students find meaning and purpose through connecting their love of the land and new-found understanding of authentic placemaking with ensuring that Willa Cather's legacy is preserved for others to experience.

Kim Wilson
Professor & Director of the Landscape Architecture Program
University of Nebraska–Lincoln



The fully restored Moon Block comes to life as the National Willa Cather Center.



Students from UNL's Landscape Architecture program gather after reading selections from *My Antonia* during a break from their service learning project.



A climate-controlled archive within the National Willa Cather Center ensures long-term preservation of the Willa Cather Foundation's mixed collection.

Promoting Cather's legacy through education, preservation, and the **A R T S**.

“The Red Cloud Opera House is one of the best-kept secrets of the American Midwest, a bastion of cultural history and bustling modern-day arts events and development nestled in a storefront in the unassuming downtown district of Red Cloud. Along with providing community and artistic opportunities to the city it also serves a wide swath of the state, as well as northern Kansas. Countless students, scholars, and tourists from all over the world have been attracted to the center for its access to Willa Cather's life and works, and along the way have been pleasantly surprised by the very current work that the Opera House continues to support throughout the year.”

A.P. Andrews
Playwright, Theatermaker, & Arts Instructor
New York, New York



UNL students rehearse a scene from *The Marriage of Figaro*, which toured to the Red Cloud Opera House as one of the most popular productions of the season.



Local children as cast members as they appeared in the Missoula Children's Theatre production of *Rapunzel*.



Artist Jeremy Daniels pictured in the Red Cloud Opera House Art Gallery during a reception for the opening of his exhibit, *Two Ways of Seeing*.

Financial Summary 2016

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the years ended December 31, 2016 and 2015

	2016	2015
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$604,777	\$2,184,552
Investments	1,636,700	1,614,443
Accrued interest receivable	29	29
Prepaid expenses	3,277	0
Pledges receivable, net	107,640	180,476
Other receivables, net	299,872	1,014,441
Assets in charitable remainder trust	539,519	513,367
Bookstore inventory	42,508	40,983
Property and equipment, net	2,034,692	1,971,456
Investment in Willa Cather Society	5,487,040	2,719,285
Art and historic structures	289,083	270,253
Total assets	\$11,045,137	\$10,509,285
LIABILITIES		
Accrued expenses and taxes withheld	\$31,508	\$44,073
Deferred revenue	21,376	967,571
Split interest charitable remainder trust	433,944	418,962
Capital lease obligations	1,529	4,586
Total liabilities	\$488,357	\$1,435,192
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	\$7,909,310	\$4,654,235
Temporarily restricted	599,772	2,372,160
Permanently restricted	2,047,698	2,047,698
Total net assets	10,556,780	9,074,093
Total liabilities and net assets	\$11,045,137	\$10,509,285

The financial statements of the Willa Cather Foundation are audited annually by an independent public accounting firm. A copy of the audited financial statements and the Foundation's tax filing (Form 990) may be obtained by contacting the Foundation office.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the years ended December 31, 2016 and 2015

	2016	2015
REVENUE AND SUPPORT		
Contributions and memberships	\$347,161	\$795,109
Nebraska State Historical Society appropriations	75,273	75,273
Grants	1,241,249	693,940
Sales and admissions	97,381	90,670
Rent income	62,533	47,040
Conferences and seminars	13,610	62,417
Change in value of split interest	11,170	1,181
Royalties income	12,511	7,097
Other income	16,613	18,462
Interest income	50,132	107,904
Investment gain/loss	58,116	(123,010)
Developer fee income	250,000	—
Loss on asset disposal	(12,759)	—
Total revenue and support	\$2,222,990	\$1,776,083
EXPENSES		
Program		
Cost of sales	\$34,776	\$37,947
Education and scholarships	52,764	70,413
Preservation of sites and collections	21,004	16,662
Historical center operations	135,060	140,696
Opera House and programming	177,205	157,685
Cather prairie operations	11,541	17,665
Supporting		
Management and general	242,403	218,234
Development and fundraising	65,550	69,847
Total expenses	\$740,303	\$729,149
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS		
Net assets, beginning of year	\$9,074,093	\$8,027,159
Net assets, end of year	\$10,556,780	\$9,074,093

The Cather Legacy Society

Anonymous (2)

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A descendant of Frank H. Woods, Chicago, IL

John A (Jay) Yost and G. Wade Leak,

New York, NY

†Deceased

Join the Cather Legacy Society

The Cather Legacy Society was founded to recognize individuals who make charitable gift plans to benefit the Willa Cather Foundation beyond their lifetime. Gifts received further our mission to promote Cather's legacy through education, preservation, and the arts. You may join the Cather Legacy Society by making a future gift intention in your will or through a beneficiary designation. For more information, contact Ashley Olson, Executive Director, at 402-746-2653 or aolson@willacather.org.

Support

The following individuals and organizations were donors to the Willa Cather Foundation in 2016. Space does not permit us to list donations under \$50.00, but we are grateful for these contributions. Every gift is important to us.

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(The HTDD is supported through a collaborative partnership with the City of Red Cloud, Red Cloud Chamber of Commerce, Nebraska Community Foundation, and Red Cloud Community Foundation Fund.)



Mildred Bennett Willa Cather Foundation Founder

Mildred is seen here in the Farmers and Merchants Bank around 1959, when the bank became the first historic property acquired by the Foundation. Thanks to the hard work of Mildred and her fellow early members and volunteers, the restored bank opened in 1962 as the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial. She dedicated more than half her life to furthering Cather's legacy and building the Foundation; we think often of Mildred and draw our inspiration from her.



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The State of Nebraska owns six Cather-related properties and a number of inventoried artifacts and documents held in Red Cloud. The properties are collectively referred to as the Willa Cather State Historic Site and are jointly preserved and maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Willa Cather Foundation. The Cather Foundation acquired the sites in its earlier years and continues to manage them and care for them alongside its own historic properties.

