



*The National Willa Cather Center*





## To Our Friends and Supporters

Your interest and generosity have led to another remarkable year. The National Willa Cather Center hit a milestone of completing its first full year in operation since our grand opening and dedication. Visitors to the Center hailed from 48 states and three countries outside the United States. All in all, nearly 55,000 people were served by our programs, publications, or online resources.

The impact of our work is felt by students, educators, tourists, and residents of central Nebraska. Whether they utilize our educational resources, attend conferences, patronize arts events, browse exhibits, or simply walk out into the expanse of the Willa Cather Memorial Prairie—the experience is consistently reported to be meaningful.

We've long known that Willa Cather's work provides a lens in which to examine our world, both past and present, delivering intellectual stimulation and broadening our collective experience and understanding. This was especially apparent in 2018 when we commemorated the publication centenary of Cather's *My Antonia*. Celebratory events took place across the country thanks to volunteers, program partners, and generous grantors.

The Nebraska Legislature spent time talking about Willa Cather and Red Cloud, passing two important bills. The first, to provide a path for History Nebraska to transfer ownership of their Willa Cather Historic Sites to our care. The second, to send a sculpture of Willa Cather to become part of the National Statuary Hall Collection of the United States Capitol. We were honored and humbled by how quickly enthusiasm and financial support was assembled for these two important causes.

Since our founding in 1955, every project we have completed has had two essential ingredients: a bold vision to further Willa Cather's legacy and the generous support of people like you. As you'll see in the following pages, we aren't done dreaming. Your continued financial assistance will ensure a full restoration of historic sites like Willa Cather's Childhood Home and the Pavelka Farmstead. Most importantly, your support will help us create a 21st century museum experience that visitors are sure to remember.

Thank you for your outpouring of support, enthusiasm, and advocacy. We couldn't do all that we do without it!

Gratefully,

Marion Arneson  
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 a museum, archive, 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 20 historic sites relating to Cather's life and work
- Publication of the *Willa Cather Review*
- Outreach to and curriculum support for teachers and students
- Scholarship awards for student research and to support 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



## Looking to the Future

*“It makes me smile to think that sometime soon the Pavelka Farmstead and other important Cather landmarks will be under your caring stewardship.”*

— **Abigail A. Loomis**  
Monona, Wisconsin

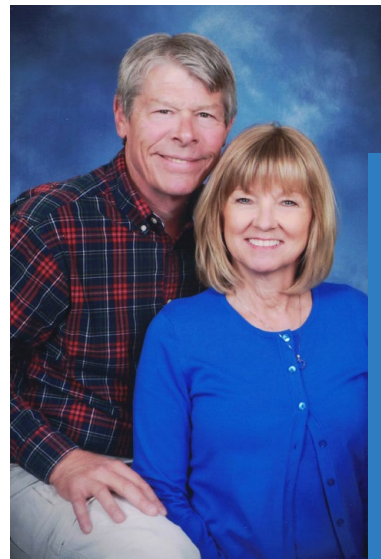


With vision, teamwork, and the help of generous supporters and elected officials, significant plans were made to expand and sustain our living memorial to Willa Cather. The Nebraska Legislature unanimously passed LB 379, a bill introduced by Senator Burke Harr that made it possible for History Nebraska to transfer ownership of their six Willa Cather State Historic Sites to our care. In addition to establishing a path toward local ownership, this action enabled us to begin planning for historic site restorations and interpretive enhancements that will deeply enrich

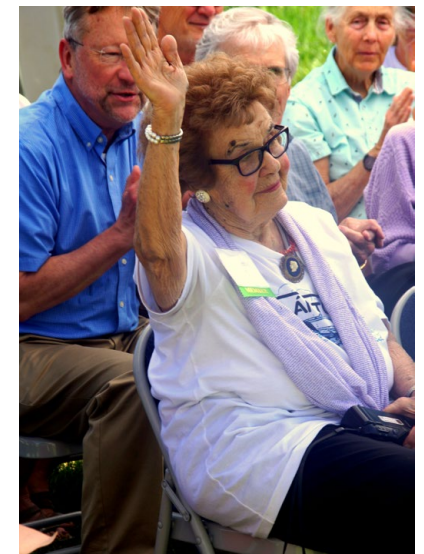
the visitor experience. Secondary goals revolve around conservation assessment and treatment of collection materials, new educational programming, growth of our endowment, and expansion of our staff in the mission-driven areas of education and preservation. We owe special thanks to lead donors Brad and Nancy Sherwood for their generous gift that launched our current campaign and to Antonette Willa Skupa Turner, whose gracious support will facilitate the first-ever restoration of the cherished Pavelka Farmstead.



Many Pavelka family descendants were present when plans were announced to restore the farmstead. Entering the fruit cellar was a special highlight for many.



*“Great grandmother Carrie Miner Sherwood was a visionary and a collector. A lifelong friend of Willa Cather, she saved letters Cather wrote to her and stored Cather family artifacts in her large attic with the hope there would one day be a place for them. We believe in the mission of the Willa Cather Foundation and want to help preserve this legacy. This project will preserve the historic sites associated with Cather’s life in Red Cloud and enable the Foundation to expand its outreach and programming across the country. We hope you’ll join us in supporting it.”*

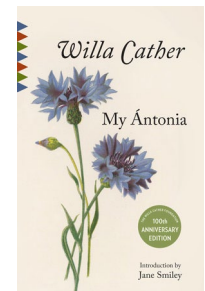


Antonette Willa Skupa Turner, granddaughter of Anna Pavelka.

## The Anniversary Year of *Antonia*

*“Thank you for the 100th anniversary edition of My Antonia. I have taught it to students for over 20 years. Along with my great fondness for Willa Cather, I appreciate the fine work that the Foundation does to keep Willa Cather alive and esteemed.”*

— **Rebecca K. Pinker, PhD**  
Olathe, Kansas



“The best thing I’ve done is *My Antonia*,” recalled Willa Cather. “I feel I’ve made a contribution to American letters with that book.” To celebrate the novel’s 100th year, we had a singular goal—to introduce new readers to a book already beloved by many. Special events included a moderated discussion of the television movie adaptation with writer and producer Victoria Riskin and a scholarly symposium in Northern Ireland. An eight-hour marathon reading of the novel took place at Omaha’s Gallery 1516 featuring over 45 readers, hundreds of guests, and a live broadcast on our YouTube channel. A memorable series of events that examined

contemporary themes from the novel was organized with the Willa Cather Archive and held in Nebraska communities of Omaha, Lincoln, Scottsbluff, Kearney, and Red Cloud. Public events, book discussions, and lectures were also held in Jaffrey, New Hampshire; Winchester, Virginia; and Portland, Oregon. An anniversary edition of the novel featuring a new introduction by author Jane Smiley was produced in partnership with Knopf Doubleday and distributed to thousands of event attendees as well as students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha as part of their Common Reader Experience.

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Youth and staff of Girls Inc. of Omaha participated in the *My Antonia* marathon. Pictured here: Lilyana Hill reads from Book II, “The Hired Girls.”

Symposium Director Willa Murphy of Ulster University welcomes scholars to Northern Ireland.



“Legends and Stories: The Changing Ecology of the Great Plains,” organized by the Willa Cather Archive, included a sunrise viewing of sandhill cranes on the Platte River, readings, and and tours of Cather-related sites and the Cather Prairie.



Fourth graders from Red Cloud Community Schools visit the National Willa Cather Center.



## Commemorating a Significant Publication Centenary

*“I had a wonderful time performing in Red Cloud. This small town is rich in charm and culturally significant history. I drew much inspiration from performing in a space that has hosted so many powerhouse talents over the last 140 years. The Opera House left a long-lasting and good impact on me that persists to this day. May it live on for many more generations to enjoy.”*

— **John Reed-Torres**  
Los Angeles, California



Our 63rd annual Willa Cather Spring Conference, themed “Here at Last Is an American Novel”: Celebrating 100 Years of *My Ántonia*, brought together 315 conference-goers and guests. A ragtime piano concert by John Reed-Torres in our historic Red Cloud Opera House brought the music of John William “Blind” Boone to life in an evocative and educational performance. Memorable exhibits that marked the publication centenary included a 74-day public simulcast of *My Ántonia* entitled *A Slow Read* created by Barbara Tetenbaum; *Landscapes of the Imagination* featuring artwork by students from St. Aidan’s, Ballyhackett, and Castleroe Primary Schools in Northern Ireland; and *Complete and Great*, which featured the work of over 30 regional artists. Three issues of our *Willa Cather Review* marked the centenary.

We featured *Ántonia* stories from fans, scholars, neighbors, students, Cather and Pavelka relatives, and many others. An array of new scholarship on *My Ántonia* and original works of fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and visual arts were also published. All in all, the *Review* featured work from over nearly 80 contributors. Approximately 4,500 constituents were directly impacted with *My Ántonia* book gifts or program attendance, and over 50,000 were served on site at the National Willa Cather Center or through our online resources. We are indebted to Spring Conference codirectors Kelsey Squire and Todd Richardson for their leadership and to all program partners and funders who helped to make this incredible year possible.



Conference-goers learn to make kolache with Pavelka family descendant Alana Hoyt.

Author and essayist Roger Welsch was joined by his daughter Antonia Welsch Barlage to deliver an address they called “Our Ántonias.”



University of Nebraska at Omaha students enlightened conference-goers with their modern-day migration stories.



19th century parlor games and dances provided afternoon entertainment.



## Financial Summary 2018

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,471,297	\$245,150
Investments	2,525,996	2,405,045
Accrued interest receivable	0	9
Prepaid expenses	43,450	43,450
Pledges receivable, net	1,242,985	47,384
Other receivables, net	390,796	582,584
Bookstore inventory	57,727	42,800
Property and equipment, net	2,039,364	2,116,087
Investments in real estate	5,520,907	5,490,907
Art and historic structures	325,660	317,208
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$13,618,182</b>	<b>\$11,290,624</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accrued expenses and taxes withheld	\$35,931	\$33,769
Deferred revenue	223,257	25,859
Capital lease obligations	9,101	11,527
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>\$268,289</b>	<b>\$71,155</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Without donor restrictions	\$10,766,439	\$8,827,051
With donor restrictions	2,583,454	2,392,418
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>13,349,893</b>	<b>11,219,469</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$13,618,182</b>	<b>\$11,290,624</b>

*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's office.*

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the years ended December 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
<b>REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>		
Contributions and memberships	2,826,942	685,267
History Nebraska appropriations	53,406	72,225
Grants	33,683	142,452
Sales and admissions	126,938	129,262
Rent income	63,034	58,791
Conferences and seminars	40,787	70,275
Change in value of split interest	—	(105,575)
Royalties income	13,212	8,921
Other income	34,441	31,788
Interest income	75,591	66,636
Investment gain/loss	(181,007)	214,542
Developer fee income	3,341	252,702
Loss on asset disposal	—	(1,529)
<b>Total revenue and support</b>	<b>\$3,090,368</b>	<b>\$1,625,757</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Program</b>		
Cost of sales	\$46,714	\$52,008
Education and scholarships	72,292	106,215
Preservation of sites and collections	42,279	33,245
Historical center operations	198,768	193,981
Opera House and programming	167,547	208,979
Cather prairie operations	26,072	20,352
<b>Supporting</b>		
Management and general	275,552	244,277
Development and fundraising	130,720	104,011
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$959,944</b>	<b>\$963,068</b>
<b>INCREASE IN NET ASSETS</b>		
Net assets, beginning of year	\$11,219,469	\$10,556,780
Net assets, end of year	\$13,349,893	\$11,219,469

## The Cather Legacy Society

Anonymous (4)

Virgil & Dolores Albertini, Fairway, KS

Melvin C. Anderson†, Red Cloud, NE

Martha E. Artist†, Omaha, NE

Hazel C. Baker†, Omaha, NE

In honor of Nita Beth Snyder Bohling, Superior, NE

William D. Fellows & Everette B. Quinton,

Milwaukee, WI

Thomas Reese Gallagher, New York, NY

Helen Cather Garner†, Pittsburgh, PA

Melissa J. Homestead, Lincoln, NE

Sharon L. Kohout, Lubbock, TX

Ella Cather Lewis†, Long Beach, CA

Abigail A. Loomis, Monona, WI

Josephine Frisbie†, Omaha, NE

Jane Renner Hood, Lincoln, NE

Cynthia Mines, Wichita, KS

Warren & Julie Olin-Ammentorp, Syracuse, NY

Glenda J. Pierce & Jeff Kirkpatrick, Lincoln, NE

Mary Ruth Ryder, Normal, IL

Helen L. Sag†, Albuquerque, NM

Amy L. Soderberg†, Beatrice, NE

Norma S. Steen†, Grand Island, NE

Margaret Lambrecht Votipka†, Fairmont, NE

Norma Ross Walter†, Vallejo, CA

A descendant of Frank H. Woods, Chicago, IL

John A (Jay) Yost & 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 2018. Space does not permit us to list donations under \$50.00, but we are grateful for these contributions. Every gift is important to us.

### \$250,000 and Above

Anonymous

Inavale Foundation, Arlington, MA

Brad & Nancy Sherwood, Elkhorn, NE

### \$100,000 to \$249,999

Anonymous

John & Elizabeth Lauritzen Foundation,  
Omaha, NE

Antonette Willa Turner, McCook, NE

### \$50,000 to \$99,999

Nebraska Community Foundation,  
Lincoln, NE

### \$25,000 to \$49,999

History Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Frank Sibert, Kearney, NE

### \$10,000 to \$24,999

John W. Carson Foundation, Encino, CA

Robert A. Cary, Portland, OR

Thomas Reese Gallagher, New York, NY

Claire M. Hubbard Foundation, Omaha, NE

Humanities Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Robert & Ardis James Foundation,  
New York, NY

Ann Mactier, Omaha, NE

Nebraska Arts Council, Omaha, NE

James P. & Angela J. Southwick,  
Heber City, UT

### \$5,000 to \$9,999

Virgil & Dolores Albertini, Fairway, KS

Marion A. & Patricia Arneson, Wayne, NE

The Theodore G. Baldwin Foundation,  
Kearney, NE

President & Mrs. George W. Bush, Dallas, TX  
Cather Project, University of NE—Lincoln,  
Lincoln, NE

The Chief Foundation, Inc., Grand Island, NE

Sydney Green, Towson, MD

Geraldine L. Lewis, Red Cloud, NE

Cheryl Long, Topeka, KS

Nebraska Tourism Commission, Lincoln, NE

Bernard J. & Nancy S. Picchi, New York, NY

Glenda J. Pierce & Jeff Kirkpatrick,  
Lincoln, NE

Joyce J. Walker, Boston, MA

William A. West, Denver, CO

John A (Jay) Yost & G. Wade Leak,  
New York, NY

### \$2,500 to \$4,999

Sterling E. Ainsworth, Elgin, IL

Dave & Carol Domina, Omaha, NE

Dick & Katherine Endacott, Pleasant Dale, NE

The LeRoy W. Thom, Jean E. Thom,  
and T-L Foundation, Hastings, NE

Thomas & Kathy Kelley, Santa Ana, CA

Paul R. & Lynette R. Krieger, Hastings, NE

Rick & Barb Kudrna, Red Cloud, NE

Dr. Susan N. Maher & Al Kammerer,  
Duluth, MN

Susan D. McClanahan & Ted Gannon,  
Bonita Springs, FL

Ana McCracken, Angel Fire, NM

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission,  
Lincoln, NE

Jorn & Mary Olsen, Hastings, NE

Sally Stich, Denver, CO

Webster County Visitor Promotion,  
Red Cloud, NE

Dayre & Tere L. Williams, Red Cloud, NE

Dan Yost, Hastings, NE

### \$1,000 to \$2,499

Adrian K. Almquist, Bloomington, MN

Linda Anderson, Kearney, NE

Dr. & Mrs. Bruce P. Baker II, Omaha, NE

Mogens & Cindy Bay, Omaha, NE

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George H. Brockway, Sun City, AZ

Joanne Bruner, Wichita Falls, TX

Willa Cather Archive, Lincoln, NE

Roy & Gloria Dinsdale, Omaha, NE

Jack & Judy Ekeler, Fremont, NE

Englund & Lindsteadt Financial Advisors,  
Hastings, NE

Larry & Lyn Fenwick, Macksville, KS

David & Anne Forsyth, West Roxbury, MA

Gifford Foundation, Omaha, NE

Max & Vernon Frazier, Grand Lake, CO

Richard Giannone, New York, NY

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C&B Hearn Foundation, Brentwood, TN

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California, PA

Katie Weitz, Omaha, NE

Ardis Yost, Red Cloud, NE

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 Saint Charles, IL  
 Gary Thompson Agency, Inc., Red Cloud, NE  
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 Potomac, MD  
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 Roger & Linda K. Welsch, Dannebrog, NE

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 Jerry Gerard Dollar, Poestenkill, NY  
 Michael Dorcy & Kathleen Shannon-Dorcy,  
 Seattle, WA  
 Patty Mountford Doty, Owasso, OK  
 Angela Duca, Red Cloud, NE  
 Lonnie Pierson Dumbier, Edina, MN  
 James W. Eckman, Springfield, OR  
 John & Bonita English, Red Cloud, NE  
 Sara Enriquez, Medford, OR  
 Evangelical Free Church Superior, Superior, NE  
 Elizabeth Fabel, Saint Paul, MN  
 Philip & Joanne Fabel, Saint Paul, MN  
 Becky Faber, Lincoln, NE  
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 James L. Farmer, Fairfield, NE  
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 Ben B. & Karol S. Finch, Colorado Springs, CO  
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Once again, we must thank our many generous supporters whose donations to our collections contribute to our ever-growing knowledge of Cather and her world. Hundreds of new objects and documents have made their way to the National Willa Cather Center, where they can be studied and shared with Cather researchers and the author's many fans. As we marked the centenary of *My Ántonia*, we welcomed special gifts from the Anna Sadilek Pavelka family—photos, textiles, and so much more—that celebrated the life of the woman who inspired Cather's title character. We believe Willa Cather herself would have appreciated the outpouring of affection for Anna and viewed it as a fitting tribute to the legacy of her own work.

*Quilts and handiwork made by Anna Sadilek Pavelka from the Leo Paul Pavelka Collection and the Antonette Willa Skupa Turner Collection.*





The commemorative *My Antonia* T-shirts were a popular item throughout the novel's centenary year.



Larry Fenwick was one of many visitors to the Pavelka Farmstead during the 63rd annual Willa Cather Spring Conference.



Kent Pavelka, grandson of Anna Pavelka, participated in the marathon public reading of *My Antonia* held to mark the novel's 100th anniversary of publication.



In celebration of Cather in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, young actors from Jaffrey's Project Shakespeare enacted moments from *My Antonia* in the meadow where Cather wrote portions of her novel.

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