

A Family Legacy Blooms


Growing up in Muskogee, Oklahoma, Miriam Freedman remembers taking walks with her mother, Roberta Kirschner, through historic Honor Heights Park. The 132-acre public park was built on Agency Hill in northwest Muskogee in 1909. Famous for its spring azaleas, today the park is a top tourist attraction for the city and is home to an arboretum, hiking trails and a number of floral gardens.

Miriam's family has long supported Honor Heights Park, as well as the Muskogee community. Her stepfather, Phil Kirschner, was a successful oil man, and he and Roberta generously contributed to a number of charitable causes. Following Phil's death in 1981, five charitable trusts were established to continue his philanthropic endeavors. Miriam began assisting her mother with administering the trusts, and she continued to carry out her family's charitable goals after Roberta's death in 1985.

Miriam administered the Kirschner Trusts for more than 30 years. When she began thinking about retirement, she wanted to find a way to lighten her workload. In 2013, she transferred the trusts to a Family Affiliated Fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. She remains involved with the grant making decisions and relies on the Community Foundation's expertise to handle the legal and administrative tasks.

Miriam says it's been a great partnership. "I feel like we're working together," she said. "I'm very proud to be part of such a wonderful organization."

The Kirschner Trusts support grants to nonprofits in the Muskogee area, as well as programs for Jewish education and opportunities for foster children. The fund has supported a number of projects in Honor Heights Park including the Papilion Butterfly House and recently opened Children's Garden.



Miriam Freedman admires a butterfly in the Papilion Butterfly House at Muskogee's Honor Heights Park.