

# REMEMBERING PARKER

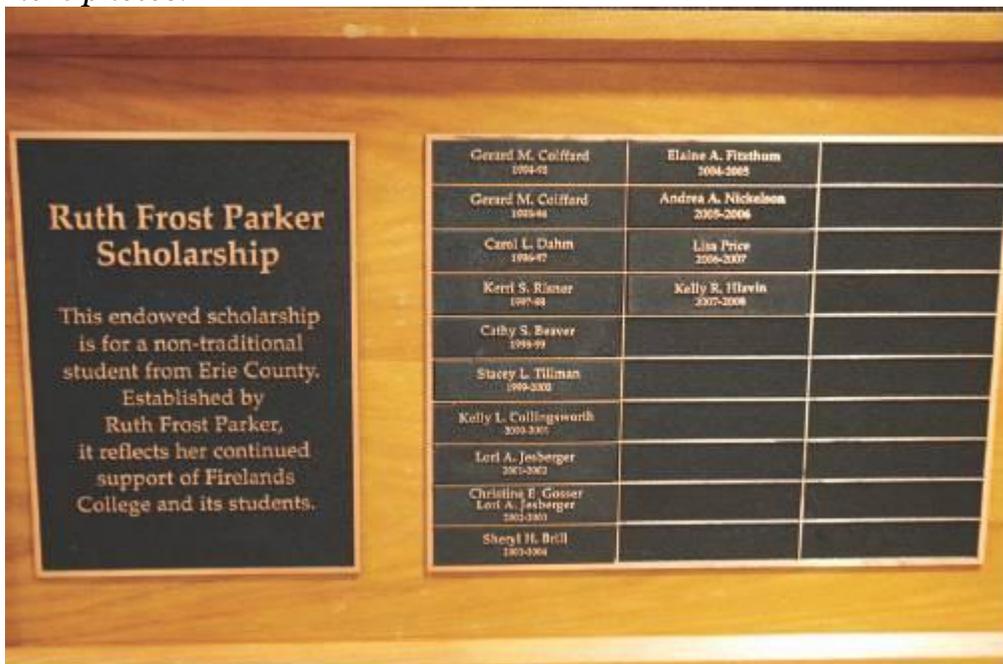
## The town Ruth Parker built

### Philanthropist worked tirelessly for community

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*A mural of the many buildings and organizations Ruth Frost Parker was influential in hangs on the wall of the Parkvue community building. Go to [sanduskyregister.com](http://sanduskyregister.com) for more photos.*



*Register photo/ANGELA WILHELM*

*A plaque listing the names of students who received the Ruth Frost Parker Scholarship hangs in Foundation Hall at BGSU Firelands.*



The Rev. Lenore Kure of First Congregational United Church of Christ remembers Ruth Frost Parker as a woman devoted to her faith and a person who was a true leader.



Ken Keller, administrator of Community At Parkvue, remembers Ruth as the reason the retirement community in Perkins Township is there and how helping the elderly was a project near to Ruth's heart.



Jamie Steinemann, executive director of Firelands Symphony Orchestra, said Ruth Frost Parker strongly supported the Firelands Symphony School of the Arts.



Merry-Go-Round Museum director Victoria Vanden Bout remembers Ruth Frost Parker as a woman who, when she set her mind to it, gave 100 percent to whatever project she was involved in.



George Mylander remembers Ruth Frost Parker Tuesday.  
Register photos/LUKE WARK & ANGELA WILHELM



Bill Balzer, dean at BGSU Firelands, remembers Ruth Frost Parker as a quiet, generous woman who helped make the campus what it is today.

### **Ruth Parker's philanthropy**

Here are some of the projects or institutions benefiting the Sandusky community Ruth Frost Parker helped, according to officials who spoke with the Sandusky Register and to other biographical articles. It is a partial list:

Shoreline Park in downtown Sandusky.  
Revival of Sandusky State Theatre.  
Michael's House to assist child abuse victims.  
Preservation of abolitionist Rush Sloane's house.  
Support for the Sandusky Fire Department including the Residential Lock Box program for seniors.  
Support for the BGSU Firelands campus.  
Establishment of the Merry-Go-Round Museum in Sandusky.  
Establishment of the Genesis project in Vermilion to help women recovering from addiction.  
Safe Harbour domestic violence shelter serving Erie, Ottawa and Huron counties.  
Frost Center at Osborn Park, which is part of Erie MetroParks.  
College of Wooster, in Wooster Ohio (she created both the Ruth Frost Parker Endowment Fund and the Ruth Frost Parker Scholarship Fund).  
Firelands Area Council of Boy Scouts of America.  
United Church Homes Parkvue Community in Sandusky.  
Sandusky Library.  
Firelands Symphony Orchestra.

## SANDUSKY

As the mourning continues for Ruth Frost Parker, local residents are remembering some of her most recent efforts to help the community, including her support for the Genesis by the Lake sober-living facility in Vermilion and the Rush Sloane house in Sandusky.

Parker, 92, Sandusky, died Feb. 14 after a long illness.

Abolitionist Rush Sloane, also a former mayor of Sandusky, was a hero for abolitionists in the north after he was convicted in Sandusky of violating the Fugitive Slave Act, a federal law designed to help Southern slave owners recover slaves who had run away to the northern states in an attempt to gain their freedom.

Parker had financed ongoing efforts to restore the Rush Sloane mansion at 403 E. Adams St., and turn it into a bed and breakfast. Last year, the National Park Service put the home on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

Randy Koch, president of the Erie County Historical Society, said old houses can crumble if no one makes an effort to preserve them.

"I really believe her action helped save the house" Koch said.

The home is an important historic landmark, said Koch, a specialist in antebellum and Civil War history.

"Rush Sloane was one of the first individuals charged with breaking the Fugitive Slave Act," Koch said.

The Genesis project, which is still being developed, will be located on the grounds of a failed condominium property, Chappel Creek. It will be located off U.S. 6 near Beulah Beach.

It's intended to be a place where women can continue their recovery from addiction. The project recently received a \$280,000 grant from the state, funneled through the Erie County Health Department.

The fight over the proposed project played out in a key meeting of the Erie County land bank board.

Parker's support for the project was important, said Sandusky ex officio mayor Dennis Murray Jr.

“She had a very strong will. That was a demonstration of true grit. She was willing to oppose an awful lot of people” Murray said.

Kurt Landefeld, a Huron businessman, author and chairman of the Erie MetroParks board, told the Register Saturday he believed Parker’s stance had been critical.

“Some people are forces in their communities just because they have lots of money. Some people are forces because they stand up for what’s right,” Landefeld said. “Ruth Parker was a rare combination of both”