

# Redlands Woman Leaves \$880,000 to Local Agencies

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REDLANDS - During her life Jeanne Cole lived a modest and private existence in Redlands, belying the million-dollar value of her estate when she passed away on December 16, 2005.

This month, a year after her death at the age of 77, Cole becomes the generous benefactor to eleven Redlands nonprofit agencies that are sharing more than \$880,000 from her estate.

Cole allocated \$80,000 each to the Redlands YMCA, the Friends of Prospect Park, the Kimberly Shirk Association, the Lincoln Shrine, Redlands Day Nursery, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Redlands Community Hospital Foundation, the Family Service Association, Boys & Girls Club of Redlands, and the Redlands Historical Museum Association.

Harry John, a Redlands certified public accountant and longtime Cole family friend who served as executor of her will, described Cole as a quiet and reserved person who conserved her money.

"She lived simply and was a very caring person who wanted to share her good fortune with the community where she lived all her life," he said.

John said that each agency would receive an additional check for several thousand dollars when the estate is finally closed.

Born in Redlands on Aug. 26, 1928, Cole was the daughter of Carl and Loueven Ihrig, and lived in the family home on Park Avenue. She attended Franklin Elementary School and graduated from Redlands High School.

She lived in Newport Beach for several years after being married, but returned to Redlands when the marriage ended in divorce. A close friend, Annette Gambrell, who became Cole's care giver in the last years of her life, said that Cole attended an art institute in Los Angeles and was employed in Redlands as a graphic artist for the Harris' Department Store.

"Jeanne lived at the family home until 2004 when she moved to Mission Commons. She had a very quiet and private life and she loved to drive around Redlands to see what was happening," Gambrell recalled.

Cole had no children or siblings, according to John, who said that some of the estate went to her cousins. Her grandparents moved from Missouri to Redlands in 1912 and planted a grapefruit grove on New York Street.

Her uncle was Dr. Forrest Young, a well-known Redlands physician. Her grandfather owned and operated Young's Service Station at New York Street and Redlands Boulevard, which later was operated by her father as C&L Service Station.

According to John, the only stipulation placed on the nonprofit agencies is that the funds be placed in an endowment fund. "She hoped it would inspire other citizens to remember their favorite local nonprofit organizations in their estate planning," he said.

Bob Denham, president of Redlands Day Nursery, was elated at receiving the Cole bequest.

"We have recognized the need for starting an endowment fund that would produce an ongoing income for the Redlands Day Nursery and this will give us the seed money to start one," he said.

Linda Serros, co-president of the Boys & Girls Club of Redlands, expressed the organization's appreciation for "this significant contribution at this important time in our club's history."

"With the construction of our new clubhouse, which is now in process, this money gives us a solid base for the support of the clubhouse and for the future of our club members," she stated.

Leaders of the Redlands Historical Museum were equally thrilled. Nelda Stuck, co-president of the Redlands Historical Museum Association board of directors, said, "As we begin our seventh year working toward opening our museum in Old City Hall, this a tremendous gift toward our goal of the several million dollars eventually needed to bring this gem of a building up to the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and ready to display the historical items that have been donated."

The overall benefit of Cole's philanthropic gift to the community was expressed by Zachary Tucker, president of the Redlands Community Hospital Foundation, who said, "Mrs. Cole's endowment contributions to organizations in Redlands are a testament to the affect that one person's generosity can have on the lives of people she will never meet. Her gifts will sustain organizations, such as ours, that make a difference by increasing the quality of life of our citizens."

*Ron Kibby of Redlands was a reporter for Daily Facts from 1960 to 1968. He later became dean of occupational education at Crafton Hills College and retired in 2001.*

