Albert O. Eck, Jr. ("Al"), a life-long Springfield resident, served on boards of various nonprofits and championed downtown Springfield while building two accounting practices in Springfield with his brother John.

His family watched him continually work to strengthen his community, but did not realize the total impact of his efforts until his death. As Albert Eck III greeted those in line at his father’s visitation in November 2017, he heard one story after another about how his father helped in a time of need, realizing the private side to his father’s philanthropy was far greater than he imagined.

“I don’t think we know to this day how much he did because he did it without any sort of fanfare,” Albert said. “He wanted to be that person in the community who helped Springfield by empowering good people to be the best they could be . . . helping them get back on their feet and stay on their feet.”

Al’s wife Nancy had a better idea of his generosity. She saw their mailbox fill up a little more each year as her husband discovered new worthy charities. “He was always generous,” Nancy said, “$50 here, $25 there, $100 there – whatever he felt like giving. But, he saved the bulk of his giving for his own beloved community.”

So, when Al passed and the family was considering a way to help honor him, a donor-advised fund at the Community Foundation seemed like a natural fit. They had known about the Community Foundation for some time as Al’s brother, John, was a founding board member. The family found that the flexibility of a donor-advised fund could provide for the wide range of causes Al supported in life. With the support of more than 100 memorial gifts, the Albert O. Eck Jr., Memorial Fund was established.

As a devout Catholic, Al supported a number of causes within the church, but there were secular nonprofits he supported as well, including Helping Hands of Springfield and PORA, which provided housing for survivors of prostitution. When Nancy recently considered nonprofits for the first round of grants out of the fund, the Community Foundation facilitated the honoring of his memory by making grants to a wide number of organizations.

Granting through the Community Foundation comes with security and anonymity, if you wish.
“I don’t have to worry.” Nancy said. “I place funds with the Community Foundation and they protect it and manage it until I am ready to give. The process is seamless. It utilizes the money in the most fruitful way, without all of the bureaucracy. I appreciate the efficiency, the integrity, the diligence and the caring.”

Albert III’s connection to the community was something he inherited from his father. With the establishment of a fund at the Community Foundation, he’s confident his family is working with an organization with local knowledge and bonds.

“What I like about the Community Foundation is that it creates a habit of giving, but it allows you to direct where the funds go, allowing you to stay connected to the community,” said Albert.

“And the Community Foundation allows you to pattern your giving to suit your personal preferences. You can give smaller sustaining amounts on a regular basis, as my father so often did, or you can work your way toward a lifelong philanthropic goal, which is something I like. You can build a charitable asset and direct where it’s most needed when you’re ready to give. I think that’s fantastic, and I think the Albert O. Eck, Jr. Memorial Fund allows us to do both.”

For information on starting a donor-advised fund, or how to contribute to the Albert O. Eck, Jr., Memorial Fund, please contact the Community Foundation at 217.789.4431 or visit CFLL.org.