

2018 INDUCTEES

LEONARD “LEN” SARGENT

1912 -1997

MERRIAM “SANDY” SARGENT

1921-1997



Len and Sandy Sargent developed a model to ensure funding for emerging conservation groups and issues—and then generously endowed the Cinnabar Foundation in 1982 with 80 percent of their estate to support such endeavors.

National organizations, such as the Sierra Club, have long histories and dependable revenue sources. Grassroots organizations that emerge in response to local concerns aren't so lucky.

The Sargents filled that void in Montana by creating a historical legacy of activist philanthropy.

Len, a 1937 Princeton alum, taught math and coached football, hockey, and baseball at Taft School in Connecticut until he retired in 1969, the year he married Sandy.

Sandy attended Sweet Briar College and graduated from the Kathrine Gibbs School in New York. She migrated with her children, Rick and Kerri, to Denver in 1962 where she taught at Denver Country Day School.

Len purchased the Cinnabar Ranch near Yellowstone Park in 1962, and the new Sargent family moved there in 1969.

Their activism emerged in the 1970s. The Sargents supported efforts to prevent a federal dam from being built on the Yellowstone River at Allen Spur and were fierce wilderness advocates for the Absaroka-Beartooth country.

The Sargents were exceptionally generous to environmental startups—including the Northern Plains Resource Council, the Montana Environmental Information Center, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and the Rocky Mountain

Elk Foundation.

After more than a decade of donating to worthy conservation organizations the Sargents created the Cinnabar Foundation to provide more extensive and systematic funding.

In a transformational record of philanthropy in support of Montana's outdoor heritage, the Cinnabar Foundation has awarded nearly \$8 million to more than 1,860 successful grant applicants.

What's more, for Len's 80th birthday, Len and Sandy's son—the late Rick Hubbard Sargent and his wife, Judi Stauffer—presented his parents with a pay-it-forward gift. They established the “Len and Sandy Sargent Environmental Activism & Advocacy Fellowship Award” for students enrolled in the University of Montana's environmental studies program.

It's a perfect gift for a couple who never looked back to see who'd help carry the environmentalist's banner. They trusted others to step forward. The Sargents were always between the barricade and the balcony in every environmental fight—articulate and passionate about saving Montana's natural landscape.

“While each of us is mortal, the horizon of Cinnabar is perpetuity,” Len wrote in 1986. “Sandy and I take great joy in the thought that a century from now some young crusader, with help from this foundation, will stand defiantly in defense of this land...and the grizzly and wolf will salute him from the north rim.”

As the Cinnabar Foundation today notes, when Len wrote those words, there were no wolves on the north rim. There are now. ■

