



# Citizens National Bank

## Wealth Management

### **Citizens National Bank Presents Over \$74,000 in Grant Money To Area Non-Profit Organizations**

Citizens National Bank presented \$74,000 in grant distributions to area non-profit organizations in a morning press conference which was held at the Bank's Downtown Banking Centre in Meridian on Thursday, March 23, 2017.

Of this amount, a total of \$71,862.35 in donations was made through the W. R. Baird Charitable Trust, which is managed by Citizens National Bank's Wealth Management Division. An additional \$2,500 grant was awarded to The Montgomery Institute on behalf of the Bank.

#### **The W. R. Baird Charitable Trust**

The W. R. Baird Charitable Trust was established in 1978 by William Robert Baird with less than \$200,000 and is now worth over \$4.8 million. In his Last Will and Testament, Baird requested that the income from his charitable trust account be used to support persons, institutions, and organizations which serve the poor people of Mississippi and Louisiana.

The following organizations received grants today from the Baird Trust: Care Lodge, Multi-County Community Service Agency, L.O.V.E.'s Kitchen, Lauderdale County Habitat for Humanity, Mississippi Special Olympics, Greater New Orleans Foundation, Boy Scouts of America (Disadvantaged Campers Fund), Catholic Charities, the American Red Cross Southeast Chapter, The Salvation Army of Meridian, The Boys and Girls Club of East Mississippi, Hope Village for Children, The Free Clinic of Meridian, New Destiny Daycare & Learning Academy and Meridian Freedom Project.

Baird was born in 1902 in Jackson, Louisiana, and his early career included a position as a traveling salesman for Congoleum Rug Company of New Orleans. In 1930, he became a salesman for New Orleans Manufacturing Company, making his headquarters in Meridian, where he married Elizabeth Gulley Hall in 1938. While serving as Vice President for the company, Baird and his wife moved several times around Louisiana and Mississippi. The couple moved back to Meridian in 1969, when their home in Pass Christian was destroyed by Hurricane Camille.

Baird, who lived to be 76 years old, had become President of the New Orleans Manufacturing Company in 1966 and was serving as Chairman of the Board at the time of his death in 1978.

The Baird Charitable Trust committee makes semi-annual distributions, and has made a total of \$205,321 in distributions in 2016 and 2017. Since 1981, over \$4.4 million in distributions have been made.

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### **The Montgomery Institute**

The \$2,500 donation to The Montgomery Institute was the first installment of a \$12,500 grant that the Bank has pledged to the organization over a 5-year period, from 2017 through 2021.

**Teresa Thornhill**, who serves as a Board Member for The Montgomery Institute, was on hand to accept this donation. The Bank has designated these funds to support job training programs, employment, and/or entrepreneurship related activities for the benefit of un-employed and/or under employed individuals who reside in the East Mississippi area. The grant will also support community planning and development in the same area.

The Institute was organized as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation in 2001, after receiving permission from the late G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery to be named after him. According to the Institute's website, the organization agreed to do two things when it was founded: "First, it would pursue its program of work guided by the leadership legacy of G. V. 'Sonny' Montgomery. Second, it would preserve and promote Sonny's legacy. The Montgomery Institute has consistently strived to live up to these commitments and continues to do so."

To accomplish its mission, The Montgomery Institute has undertaken initiatives since its inception in 2001, in leadership development, rural place building, educational enhancement, workforce development, research and information dissemination, regional cooperation, and innovation.

The hallmarks of The Montgomery Institute's approach to do things "Sonny's way" are its reliance on partnerships, citizen involvement, and network building. Working with partners to engage citizens, identify place building champions, and create regional networks of place builders, The Montgomery Institute seeks out resources and opportunities for innovation that will help partners do more and do it better, for the benefit of the people and places in West Alabama and East Mississippi.

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