



The Escondido History Center

With the Generous Sponsorship of

Jack Raymond

2022 ESCONDIDO LEGENDS AWARDS



APPLICATION

HELEN HELLER AWARD BUSINESSWOMAN AND PHILANTHROPIST

Explanation of award: The honorarium will be given to a senior attending a high school in Escondido who has participated in a variety of school activities and has demonstrated leadership throughout his or her high school years. Consideration will be given for involvement with, and a pronounced interest in, pursuing a career in medical services. Additional consideration will be given for participation in Boys and Girls Club. Volunteering in the community is also important.

Commitment to attend the Honorarium presentation **on January 26, 2022 is required.**

Applications are also available from your high school counselor.

Please complete: The 2021 Escondido Legends application information below and submit your typed responses to the Escondido History Center along with a copy of your current high school transcript, no later than **4 P.M. on Friday, December 8, 2021.**

Please include your full name on all pages and deliver finished application:

- In person to the Escondido History Center, 321 N. Broadway or by U.S. mail, P.O. Box 263, Escondido, CA 92033 OR
- As an email PDF attachment to fox@escondidohistory.org .

APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. YOUR NAME AND YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S NAME.
2. THE HIGH SCHOOL YOU ATTEND.
3. SUBMIT A COPY OF YOUR CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT.
4. TELL US ABOUT YOUR MEDICAL RELATED ACADEMICS.
5. DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB.
6. DESCRIBE YOUR ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE.
7. TELL US ABOUT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCE.
8. DESCRIBE YOUR ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

Helen Heller

Helen Heller was a pioneering business woman, a dedicated philanthropist, a caring mother and grandmother, and a role model for all of us.

Helen Hill was born on December 18, 1910 in Waitsburg, Washington, the middle child of five born to parents who moved the family bakery from Minnesota to Iowa, then Washington, and finally to Long Beach, California. Attending California Polytechnical High School, she met Homer Heller, whose family had moved from Nebraska to Colorado and ,at the age of 14, hitchhiked to Long Beach with his 18-year-old brother.

In September 1933, Helen and Homer were married and, in 1940, moved to Escondido with their two young children as the new owner-partners of the Ford automobile dealership. Just eleven months before Pearl Harbor was attacked, they became sole proprietors of Homer Heller Ford due to their partner's illness.

When Homer Heller died in a private plane crash in 1959, Helen took over the Ford dealership. The Ford Motor Company was strongly opposed to women in the role of business owners at the time and she had to fight to retain the franchise. She asked her son, Don, then 19, if he would be interested in learning the business. When he answered "yes," Helen took on the Ford Motor Company and later, after successfully managing the franchise for ten years, Don Heller became the general manager.

Helen Heller then had time and resources to serve her many community interests. She was a sponsor and founder of the California Center of the Arts, Escondido, and a charter member of Escondido's PEO Chapter B. In the 1940s, Helen and Homer led other civic leaders to establish Palomar Medical Center. Helen led campaigns to improve the Pediatric Care Unit and, throughout the years, was dedicated to volunteering in many roles at the hospital, also convincing administrators to establish a gift shop that was named in her honor in 2002. Beginning in the 1960s, Helen served on the Escondido Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors and was instrumental in building the gymnasium. Families and Escondido youth benefited from Helen's leadership in the 4-H Club, Brownies, and Girl Scouts.

Helen Heller, one of the 2001 Escondido Times-Advocate "Women of Merit," was instrumental in establishing Escondido. Although the "old" Palomar Hospital is being razed and the Homer Heller Ford Dealership franchise has been sold, she most certainly qualifies as a 2022 ESCONDIDO FOREVER LEGEND.