

in Cycle of Giving



From left, Jim Sibthorpe, Dale Ens and Brian Sibthorpe amid part of the Sibthorpes' collection of vintage motorcycles.

Sibthorpe Family Fund celebrates love of the Bowness community

By Karen Rudolph Durrie • Photography by Jared Sych

SITTING WITH BRIAN AND JIM SIBTHORPE in a Bowness building that's part office space and part museum, it's easy to see what the brothers hold most dear.

Sure, the collection of vintage bicycles and motorcycles on display is testament to their family's success in turning its former business, Bow Cycle, into an icon of two-wheeled retail—but it's more than that.

It's the lively conversations with the many people who filter in and out of the office, the stories about the feats and foibles of their father, Jim Sibthorpe Sr., and the tales of growing up in Bowness and working at the family business that make the brothers' eyes light up.

Behind it all is a desire to give back to the community that gave their family so much since their father, a Second World War veteran, settled his family in Bowness.

In 1957 he opened up a small shop selling bicycles and fishing gear and repairing lawn mowers.

Brian and Jim Jr. eventually took the reins of the business, which grew into separate operations: Bow Cycle

& Sport, specializing in bicycles, and Bow Cycle & Motor with motorcycles and ATVs. The brothers sold the company in 2002.

Acts of charity were a fundamental part of the Sibthorpes' upbringing, Brian says.

"Dad was a compassionate man and always considerate. He had charitable initiatives, even though he didn't have a lot of time—he was busy trying not to go broke."

He donated to local sports teams and encouraged his sons to be of service, because even though they didn't have a lot, not everyone was as fortunate as their family.

Creating a legacy

The Sibthorpe brothers' desire to give back to the community that had supported them began to take shape through a customer who was a regular at their motorcycle shop. Dale Ens, a motorcycle aficionado and professional financial advisor, had developed a rapport with Jim Sibthorpe Jr. through long chats on the sales floor beginning in the early 1990s.

A few years ago, Jim called Dale after seeing his picture in a Calgary Foundation publication. Ens is a long-time Foundation volunteer.

"He said 'I wonder if you could spend a few minutes telling me what Calgary Foundation does. My brother and I are looking at expressing our parents' legacy,'" Ens says.

Part of Ens's work as a financial advisor is to introduce philanthropy and discuss the impact clients can create through giving.

"Your individual charitable intentions are a reflection of your values and principles, not the values and principles of your advisor," Ens says. "It's not my story; it's my clients' story. It's about what's important to them: what is the cause, and why do they care?"

And that's what was discussed when the brothers and Ens sat down one Saturday morning at the Sibthorpes' office, perusing their eye-popping two-wheeled collection while chatting about Calgary Foundation.

Their priorities were clear: "Those two guys are infatuated with their community. They don't just like Bowness; they love Bowness," Ens says.

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