



## ***Deep Roots, Lasting Impact***

### **Park and Sharon Price, 2026 Idaho Philanthropy Hall of Fame**



For Park and Sharon Price, philanthropy has never been about recognition. It has always been about community.

Over decades of service, leadership, volunteerism, and generosity, they have helped strengthen educational institutions, arts organizations, economic development initiatives, and nonprofit causes throughout Idaho. Yet

when asked about being inducted into the Idaho Philanthropy Hall of Fame, their first reaction was not to talk about themselves.

"It is such a privilege to be among such an elite group," Sharon said. "We're very, very honored." Park agreed, noting that many of the other honorees are longtime friends whose lives have also been defined by service.

That response reflects the philosophy that has guided their lives together: success is measured not by individual achievement, but by the strength of the community around you.

For Park, that philosophy began long before philanthropy became part of his vocabulary. Raised in eastern Idaho, he grew up in a family that believed in showing up, working hard, and contributing to the places they called home. After studying economics at Dartmouth College, serving in the U.S. Navy, and building a successful career with General Motors that took him across the country, he faced a decision that would ultimately shape the rest of his life.

His father was preparing to retire from the family automobile business in Pocatello. Park could continue climbing the corporate ladder or return home to Idaho. His father's advice became a defining principle.

"If you come to Idaho, you can make a difference," Park recalled. In larger communities, he explained, people often move from place to place before developing deep roots. In Idaho, his father believed, a person had the opportunity to stay, invest, and create meaningful change. "To make a difference like that is really important."

Park and Sharon embraced that idea wholeheartedly.



After returning to Idaho in 1979, they built not only a business and a family, but a lifetime of community involvement. As Park's leadership expanded into banking, education, economic development, and statewide nonprofit work, Sharon found her own path into service through the arts.

Having lived in communities across the country before settling in Idaho, Sharon was drawn to arts and cultural organizations almost immediately. She became deeply involved with symphonies, arts councils, public television, and community organizations in both Pocatello and Idaho Falls. What began as volunteer service became something much deeper.

"The thing I really enjoyed the most about that was the people," Sharon said. "Working with outstanding people and encouraging people to attend the arts, because the arts make such a difference in a community. A stronger community. A healthier community."

Together, the Prices came to view philanthropy not as a separate activity, but as a way of participating in community life.

Park became a founding board member of the Idaho Community Foundation, was its second chair, and has continued serving on its Investment Subcommittee for decades. He and Skip Oppenheimer founded Idaho Business for Education, led economic development initiatives across eastern Idaho, served as a director on state and federal financial boards, and advocated tirelessly for educational opportunity. Sharon dedicated countless hours to arts and cultural organizations, often helping build the relationships and collaborations necessary to sustain them.

Yet neither of them believes philanthropy is defined by money alone.

"Too often philanthropy is correlated with donating money," Park said. "In fact, many nonprofits need time and talent." Organizations need people willing to contribute their expertise, energy, leadership, and commitment. "If you have resources and no people, that's no good. If you have people and no resources, that's no good."

This belief has shaped their approach to giving throughout the years.

When Sharon discusses community involvement, she often emphasizes the role that ordinary people can play. Not everyone is comfortable asking for donations, she says, but there are countless other ways to contribute. She found her own passion organizing events, building partnerships, and bringing people together around causes she believed in. One example is ElevateHer Music, an organization she helped



launch to support female musicians, composers, and conductors within the Idaho Falls Symphony.

The effort has not only provided financial support for the orchestra, but also introduced new people to philanthropy and community engagement.

"I think one of the things I'm fairly good at is connecting people," Sharon said. "I really enjoy doing that, and it's made for some great collaborations through the years."

That ability to bring people together has become one of the defining characteristics of the Price legacy.

Through volunteer service, they have cultivated relationships with leaders, educators, business owners, artists, and community advocates across Idaho. Many of those relationships eventually evolved into partnerships that strengthened organizations and communities.

Park often describes philanthropy as one of the best ways to build meaningful connections.

"You meet people you otherwise wouldn't meet," he said. Through service, people discover shared interests, common goals, and opportunities to work together. Those relationships, in turn, become the foundation for stronger communities.

At the heart of their philanthropy lies a belief in education and opportunity.

For decades, Park has been a passionate advocate for helping more Idaho students pursue education beyond high school. Through Idaho Business for Education, the College of Eastern Idaho, and numerous other initiatives, he has worked to create pathways that help students build successful futures. Sharon's own support for education often intersects with the arts, encouraging young people to experience music, creativity, and cultural opportunities that can broaden horizons and build confidence.

Together, they have also focused on creating a culture of generosity within their own family.

Through their charitable fund at the Idaho Community Foundation, Park and Sharon have intentionally involved their children in the grantmaking process. Their goal is not simply to pass on resources, but to pass on values.

"We hope that our children will then establish funds in the Community Foundation themselves," Park said.



That commitment to future generations reflects a larger vision of philanthropy as something that grows over time. Every volunteer hour, every contribution, every relationship, and every act of service becomes part of a larger legacy that can continue long after a person is gone.

For the Prices, some of the most meaningful examples of philanthropy are often the smallest.

Park recalls hearing a report about a grant that helped a small Idaho community purchase a stage curtain for a local performance space. The community had already done the difficult work and raised most of the funds necessary to improve the facility. They simply needed help crossing the finish line.

"You can make a huge difference," Park said. "A curtain can make a big difference." What impressed him most was how much could be accomplished with relatively modest resources when people were already willing to do the work.

That lesson remains central to the Prices' understanding of philanthropy. Lasting change is not created by any one person, organization, or donation. It happens when people come together around a shared purpose.

Today, as Idaho continues to grow and welcome new residents, Park believes there is still no better way to become part of a community than through service.

"If you're a newcomer to Idaho, there's no better way to get to know the community as people than to volunteer," he said. And for those who may wonder whether they have enough to give, his answer is simple: "You don't have to make a big donation to get going. We value your time and your talent."



That belief has guided Park and Sharon Price for decades. Through education, economic development, the arts, philanthropy, and countless acts of service both large and small, they have demonstrated what is possible when people put down roots and invest in the well-being of their neighbors.

Their induction into the Idaho Philanthropy Hall of Fame honors not only a lifetime of generosity, but a powerful idea: that strong communities are built by people who choose to show up, contribute what they can, and help others do the same. In doing so, Park and Sharon Price have left an enduring mark on Idaho, one relationship, one opportunity, and one act of service at a time.