



Grant news
Mary Chilton DAR Foundation
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Contact: Judy Goetz
jgoetz6970@gmail.com
(605) 413-3798

DAR Foundation grants will fund documentary about war pilot and help preserve women's history

SIoux FALLS, S.D. – Ret. Col. Marty Mahrt, an accomplished U.S. Air Force pilot, was shot down and rescued in 1966 during the Vietnam War. Years later, as the war was ending in 1975, the Purple Heart winner from Custer, S.D. helped evacuate the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.

A grant from the Sioux Falls-based Mary Chilton DAR Foundation will help the South Dakota Air and Space Foundation preserve and tell Mahrt's fascinating story.

"It's really a cool story about rescue, about faith and about hope because his rescue involved helicopters and air support airplanes that were willing to go deep into North Vietnam to cover his rescue," said John Mollison, who will produce a documentary and related educational materials. "The cool thing about him is that he thought so much of his service that he stayed in Vietnam, and he was one of the very last Americans to leave the U.S. Embassy with the fall of Saigon."

Mollison handles communications for the Air and Space Foundation, which manages a museum just outside Ellsworth Air Force Base in western South Dakota. The foundation recently was awarded a grant for \$11,500 from the Mary Chilton DAR Foundation for the Mahrt project.

Mollison is thankful for the grant and how it will enable the Air and Space Foundation to preserve and publicize Mahrt's contributions to the nation. "I can't speak highly enough of DAR. They are a treasure to South Dakota," he said.

The DAR Foundation is affiliated with the Mary Chilton Chapter, NSDAR, which is short for the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. DAR strives to perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and women who gave their lives and fortunes for American Independence.

The Mary Chilton DAR Foundation was established in 1987 with a bequest from Dorothy Day Davenport, a longtime DAR member, community leader, and former president of the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

The grant to the Air and Space Foundation was one of three grants the Sioux Falls-based Mary Chilton DAR Foundation awarded during the organization's final award-distribution period of 2020. The DAR Foundation also awarded \$15,000 to the South Dakota Historical Society in Pierre to help preserve women's history in records such as documents and photographs.

Women's history is slipping through the cracks of time in South Dakota, and important records will be lost if not preserved soon, said Judy Goetz, who chairs the DAR Foundation's Grants Committee. "Most people don't think South Dakotans had much to do with women's suffrage, for example, but they really, truly did," she said.

In addition to the two Regular Grants, the DAR Foundation awarded a Mini-Grant for \$1,000 to Downtown Hartford Inc. The money will be used for an event and a gravestone to help the civic group commemorate E.I. Oaks.

"His family has deep roots in the community. Their legacy runs deep and wide throughout Hartford's history," Goetz said. Because of Oaks, Hartford was originally known as Oaksville, she noted.

For the year, the DAR Foundation has awarded more than \$78,000 in grants to nonprofit organizations. Jan. 5, 2021 will be the deadline for the organization's next round of grants. To be considered, applications must be received before the deadline, Goetz said.

The DAR Foundation currently awards grants in three categories: Regular Grants (\$1,000 to \$15,000), Mini-Grants (for up to \$1,000), and Schoolroom Grants (for up to \$500 for educational projects in public schools with fewer than 300 students.) Regular Grants are awarded to support causes such as education, patriotism, and historic preservation.

The DAR Foundation prefers that Regular Grants be used for specific projects and not be used to partly fund other programs. Some changes in grants are being made for 2021 and will be announced soon.

Goetz encourages nonprofit organizations from around South Dakota to check out grant criteria and apply. Forms and filing information are available at online at DAR-MaryChiltonFoundation.org.

Written inquiries about grant policies and procedures may be mailed to: Mary Chilton DAR Foundation, PO Box 90716, Sioux Falls, SD 57109-0716. Prospective grant applicants also may contact Grants Committee Chair Judy Goetz at jgoetz6970@gmail.com or (605) 413-3798.