

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Giving through private foundations

For 35 years, Shandy Hill was arguably the most powerful person in Pottstown.

Hill was the general manager of the Pottstown Mercury from its founding in 1931 until it was sold to a newspaper chain in 1967.

In the days before the internet and social media, the local newspaper had a near-monopoly on deciding what was newsworthy. It dominated public discussion.



Commentary by
Thomas Hylton

Shandy Hill, a Lehigh University journalism graduate who started The Mercury with Reading

millionaire William Heister, ran the paper with an iron hand and did his best to run the town as well. He used his bully pulpit to pursue various causes, laud friends and chastise enemies.

When the newspaper staff unionized in 1966, Heister sold the paper to a New York-based chain the following year. Hill retired. He continued to live in Pottstown's north end until entering a nursing home not long before he died in 1992.

Hill left the bulk of his estate to a private charitable foundation he set up in 1989 with attorneys Paul and

Harold Prince as the Greater Pottstown Foundation

The articles of incorporation are quite general regarding the distribution of gifts, stating they are to be for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes.

The foundation has five directors, of whom Paul Prince is the only original member. The directors decide where the money goes.

According to the most recently available form 990, a public document the IRS requires private foundations to file annually, the Greater Pottstown Foundation had \$1.2 million in assets and fund balances in 2016.

That year the foundation gave \$40,710 to ArtFusion for program support, \$8,400 to Save Alliance Foundation of Gilbertsville for program support, \$15,000 to the Montgomery County Community College for scholarships, and about \$43,000 divided among eight individual scholarship students.

The Greater Pottstown Foundation articles give its directors wide latitude in giving out money. Other foundations may be more focused.

When you consider the scores of Pottstown area residents who have died with substantial assets, it's surprising there are not more foundations set up to contribute to Pottstown's welfare. They have great potential to do good.



SHANDY HILL was general manager and editor of The Pottstown Mercury from its founding in 1931 until the newspaper was sold to an outside chain in 1967. Hill established a charitable foundation in 1989 with two attorneys called the Greater Pottstown Foundation.