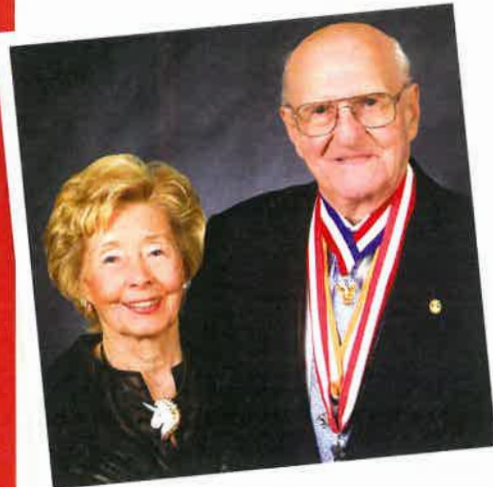


# Paul & Muffy Christen



## How Scouting's values shaped them for life.

**P**aul R. Christen joined the Boy Scouts of America on the eve of the United States entering World War II. "My first Boy Scout hike was on Dec. 7, 1941," he recalls. "I'll never forget coming back and finding out what had happened?"

Since then, Paul and his wife, Muffy, have been longtime Scouting supporters. Paul earned the Eagle Scout rank as a boy, and he later became president of the Pheasant Council in South Dakota, chairman of Region 10, and a member of the BSA national executive board. His awards include the Silver Beaver (1960), Silver Antelope (1964), Silver Buffalo (2012), and the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award (1961).

Paul recalls his early Scouting days as some of the most vivid in his life. The Scouts threw themselves into collecting paper, costume jewelry, and much more in support of the war effort. "They needed dogs, so I shipped my dog to war," Paul

recalls. "I built a crate and put him on the train and shipped him to the Army. He served in the South Pacific."

The experience of wartime Scouting shaped Paul forever, he says. "You learn to serve your country and get a patriotic background by doing those things."

Scouting also helped Paul develop skills he later used in a successful career in banking and other businesses—as well as in Scouting as an adult.

"I got into leadership as patrol leader and then senior patrol leader," he says. "And I got to be assistant Scoutmaster because the assistant Scoutmaster got sent to war. From that, I really developed a desire to be a leader. For some reason I liked leading. And it taught me you have to respect people, build consensus, and develop a team."

As a team, the Christens, as well as their two daughters, believe Scouting is a tight fit with their values. "When I see what it's done for my husband it's easy to say I'm happy to support Scouting," Muffy says. "I grew up with Paul being a Scout, and I've seen how terrific it is and how it changes lives."

The Christens have been active philanthropists for decades, supporting a variety of causes in South Dakota and elsewhere, as well as being significant donors to Scouting. Muffy, in particular, has held many high-profile roles with civic and charitable organizations, including United Way, colleges, and museums. Along the way, Muffy says, they've used the model for fundraising they learned early on with the Boy Scouts. "We used Boy Scout leadership methods as we served as chairs of local and statewide philanthropic organizations through the years," she says.

While the Christens' business success enables them to offer significant financial support to Scouting, Paul stresses that there are many other ways to help. "Every gift is important," Paul says. "Everybody can give some time."

The important thing, in the Christens' view, is to do something to give back, and they see Scouting as a vital vehicle for that pursuit. "It's the one organization for youth that's trying to teach you values to live by," Paul says. "We need to help so that all young people can have the opportunity to be in the Scouting program."

Eagle Scout Steven Koster and Life Scout Matthew Draganchuk (opposite, from left), both from Troop 442 in Tampa, Fla., congratulate Paul Christen—joined by his wife, Muffy—after Paul received the Silver Buffalo Award at the 2012 National Annual Meeting in Orlando.



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## WHY WE GIVE

## 'Prepared. For Life.' means something personal

**ALTHOUGH MANY MAJOR DONORS** to Scouting talk about their desire to give back, Paul and Muffy Christen say that it's a little more important to them than most to walk the talk. "I owe my life to Scouting," Paul explains. "I would not be alive today if not for the Boy Scouts of America."

On May 1, 1968, he says, a small plane in which he was a passenger crashed on takeoff. He and the pilot, the only occupants, survived, but both were profoundly injured. As he lay in the wreckage, Paul realized his foot had been severed and his hand was severely cut. That's when he had what amounted to a vision.

"I saw the old Boy Scout blue handbook from a long time ago," he recalls.

"It was the page where they talked about tourniquets. I took my tie off and made a tourniquet around my arm. I took my belt off and made a tourniquet around my thigh." Paul's improvised first aid allowed him to get to the hospital alive, despite heavy bleeding.

The experience gave the Christens the motivation to encourage others to support Scouting as well. Today, their preferred mode of giving is by challenge grant, in which other donors are challenged to match the amount the couple pledges. And the Christens prefer gifts that support activities rather than facilities.

"I don't believe in bricks and mortar and putting names on buildings," Paul says.

"I'm interested in programming. So our gift is going into a foundation, and the earnings from that will go to support the Christen High Adventure Base and [the Summit Bechtel Reserve]."

Whether they are supporting programs for youth or encouraging others to give through challenge grants, the Christens never have a problem remembering that morning in May 1968 and why they support Scouting today. "I think Scouting is outstanding," Muffy says. "There was no question about giving funds to Scouting."



LEARN MORE about the BSA National Foundation at [bsafoundation.org](http://bsafoundation.org).