

Betty Friedan Committee reaches goal

The Betty Friedan Tribute Committee announced Tuesday it has met its \$100,000 goal to rename the YWCA child care center on West Lake Avenue the Betty Friedan Family Child Care Learning Center.



Betty Friedan

By **CLARE HOWARD**

Posted Sep. 1, 2010 @ 12:01 am

Updated Sep 1, 2010 at 12:03 AM

PEORIA

The Betty Friedan Tribute Committee announced Tuesday it has met its \$100,000 goal to rename the YWCA child care center on West Lake Avenue the Betty Friedan Family Child Care Learning Center.

The two largest donations came from Friedan's brother, Harry Goldstein, and memorial contributions made in honor of Dorothy Sinclair, former Peoria City Councilwoman and mayoral candidate, who died May 20.

"It's bittersweet for me," committee member Fran Kepler said. "I can never separate Dorothy Sinclair and Betty Friedan."

It was Sinclair's memorial contributions that "put us over the top," Kepler said. "We had 60 percent of our goal at the time of Dorothy's death."

Sinclair had been one of the original women spearheading the effort to establish a fitting recognition for Friedan in her hometown.

Four months before her death, Sinclair talked about the fundraising effort to rename the child care center at the Y and said, "Dan Fogelberg has a street named after him. Richard Pryor has a statue. But nothing for someone on a par with them."

Rather than a statue or a plaque, Sinclair and other committee members decided renaming the child care center would underscore Friedan's philosophy of empowering women and facilitating their entry into the work force by recognizing the need for excellent day care centers and preschools.

A public naming ceremony is scheduled for 5 p.m. Sept. 30 at the YWCA, 1013 W. Lake Ave. A private reception will follow.

Kepler said the committee is working with Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office to confirm her attendance at the event.

"We wanted the highest female political figure in the state. We will also invite all local elected female politicians," Kepler said.

The committee first announced its goal in September 2008 and watched the effort rapidly become mired in a deepening global recession. Work started again in February 2009.

Pam Schuback, chief executive officer of the YWCA Peoria, said Peter Couri recently showed the committee his extensive collection documenting the work and global recognition of Friedan.

He has books written by her, about her, photographs and even an original watercolor of her used for a cover of The New Yorker magazine.

"He told us that more was written by and about Betty Friedan than any other Peorian," Schuback said.

Sinclair continued to work on the fundraising effort until weeks before her death.

The next stage of the effort will be to establish a Celebration Hall recognizing the most important deceased women in Peoria's history. There also is an effort to raise money for a Betty Friedan endowed lecture series at Bradley University.

"Everything we do is to try to educate. A lot of young people who think they didn't need the women's movement don't understand the shoulders they are standing on," Kepler said. "Women no longer have to be just wives and mothers. But they don't realize how precarious their status is and how quickly rights can be lost."