

# Editorial

## Gordon's gift

### A miser's millions show there's more to folks than meets the eye

Just about the time you're sure you've got people figured out, along comes a fellow like Gordon Elwood. His tale -- sad and wonderful at the same time -- should give us all cause to consider how we view and treat our fellow human beings.

If you saw Gordon anytime in recent years, there's a good chance you were, if not repulsed, then at least put off by his appearance and his activities. He dressed in second-hand clothes, his pants sometimes held up by a rope or bungee cord. He collected cans and bottles around Medford and cashed them in for the deposit.

After Gordon died, we all discovered there was much more to this man -- about \$10 million more. Gordon Elwood, it turns out, was a multi-millionaire, a man who had saved and invested his earnings since childhood. He also was a man who wanted to help make a difference in the world.

So, while he passed through the later years of his life on the edges of society, he will make his community a better place for years and decades to come. Most of his fortune, \$9 million, was put into a foundation dedicated to helping some worthy local agencies, specifying the Salvation Army, Red Cross, YMCA and cat-rescue charities (among them, C.A.T.S.).

The foundation officers say they expect to award up to \$400,000 annually to the agencies and possibly to others in four southwestern counties.

It's a great story, but sad, too -- sad in that Gordon Elwood didn't get more enjoyment out of his success. His gift to the community comes too late for us to thank him personally.

Perhaps there's another gift that Gordon has given us -- the gift of understanding. How many times have we looked away as a down-and-out sort drew near? These are folks who often have many needs, perhaps chief among them the need for the occasional friendly word from their fellow citizens.

Don't assume that raggedy fellow you pass on the sidewalk has nothing to offer. Gordon Elwood taught us there's often much more to people than meets the eye. A kind word, a friendly hello. Maybe that's how we can best say thanks to Gordon Elwood for what he's given us.

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