

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

Festival at 40 — and the next 40

Sponsored content by The Cultural Trust

For 40 years, Festival of Trees has been more than a holiday tradition.

It's been a mirror — reflecting who we are, what we value and how we gather as a community.

Each ribbon tied, each ticket sold, each child who gasps at the magic as they lean close to the displays — all of it adds up to more than celebration.

It's an act of shared belief.

When the festival began in 1986, it was powered by people who believed the Quad Cities could build something lasting.

That belief hasn't dimmed. It's evolved ... into something brighter than ever before.

Today, Festival of Trees stands as proof that creativity and generosity can scale — that when art and philanthropy move together, they don't just decorate a season; they define a region.

The Quad-City Times continues to chronicle each new milestone, carrying forward a legacy of storytelling that connects generations. Quad City Arts keeps the heart of the festival beating, turning inspiration into opportunity for working artists and students across the community.

And The Cultural Trust — with the steadfast support of its trustees, trustors and the six Legacy Partners (Figge Art Museum, Putnam Museum & Science Center, Quad City Symphony Orchestra, Quad City Botanical Center, Common Chord and Quad City Arts itself) — safeguards what began as a fundraiser and now stands as a cultural cornerstone, ready for its next generation.



The next 40 years won't look like the last. They'll be bigger, brighter and more intentional. New traditions will rise beside the old ones. New champions will emerge. New audiences will be invited in. And when the lights go up each November, it will still feel the same — that unmistakable sense of belonging that only this festival can bring.

Because Festival of Trees has never just been about trees. It's been about people — and the culture they build together.

As “40 Stories in 40 Days” comes to a close and the final lights fade on this year's festival, take a moment to look around. To notice the joy you helped create, the art you've supported and the legacy you've kept alive.

From every volunteer who lifted, painted, wired and welcomed — to every guest who came to see the magic — thank you.

You've carried forward the spirit that began at a kitchen table and turned it into something this community can count on.

We'll see you next year — brighter, bolder and ready to keep building culture together.

Because culture matters here — and it always will.



40 STORIES IN 40 DAYS

Quad-City
Times