

Endowment created for Asylum Lake

BY BILL KRASEAN
KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

With the Asylum Lake preserve as a backdrop Monday afternoon, university, city and Kalamazoo Foundation officials formally announced the creation of a \$1.3 million endowment fund that will keep the 274 acres on Kalamazoo's southwest side set aside for hiking, running and cross-country skiing indefinitely.

Creation of the endowment fund, said Jack Hopkins, Kalamazoo Foundation president and chief executive officer, "is a great celebration for this generation and many future generations."

Hopkins, Mayor Robert Jones and Western Michigan University President Elson Floyd spoke briefly in a Tamsin Avenue residence that overlooks the preserve, which has been owned by WMU since 1975.

Over recent years it was the center of a debate between those pushing for economic development and those favoring preservation of open space.

Hopkins described the creation of the preserve and the endowment fund as an example of a cooperative partnership between the university, the city, the foundation and residents.

Floyd said the preserve's focus on passive recreational uses "is exactly where we want to be. We needed a creative solution for the use of the Lee Baker Farm, the Asylum Lake preserve and the Arboretum."

The endowment fund was created as part of a \$3.3 million Kalamazoo Foundation grant to WMU for its new College of Engineering and Business Technology and Research Park on the Lee Baker Farm property south of the preserve. As part of the deal, the foundation contributed \$1.1 million to the endowment, and the city of Kalamazoo contributed \$200,000.

Funds will be used to develop, operate and maintain the property for hiking, running, bird-watching and cross-country skiing. Interested people can donate to the endowment by calling the foundation at 381-4416. Donors are eligible to receive the Michigan Community Foundation Tax Credit.