

Historic 1875 One Room Schoolhouse Donated to Local Nonprofit



Board President Colleen Cooper (center) stands with local attorney John Brooke of Brooke & Struble and his Paralegal Emily Anderson. Brooke has volunteered to serve as the non profit organizations legal advisor. Photo provided.



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AUGUST 28, 2026

By Colleen Cooper—

MUNCIE, IN—Schoolhouse No. 3, one of Delaware County's treasured historic landmarks, has been officially donated by the family of the late Dr. Norman and Hermie Miller to the nonprofit One Room Schoolhouse No. 3, Inc.

The announcement was made during a private donor appreciation reception celebrating the nonprofit's first major fundraising milestone. During the event, supporters learned that the organization had exceeded its initial campaign goal of $52,000, allowing restoration work to begin this September to protect the 1875 brick schoolhouse from further deterioration.

Birgie Miller Gresham, daughter of the Miller's, and representing the family, attended the event to make the announcement. For the Miller family, the gift represents the continuation of a lifelong commitment to preserving a building that has been part of their family's story for generations.

Dr. Norman Miller, founder of Maplewood Animal Hospital and a respected veterinarian who served the Muncie community for decades, grew up just around the corner from the schoolhouse on the Miller family farm, where the family farmed for more than 100 years. Recognizing the school's historical significance, Norman and his wife, Hermie, personally undertook the restoration of the building years ago when it stood on the verge of collapse and possible demolition. Working with his brother, Perry Miller, other family members along with the community at that time as well, their vision saved the schoolhouse and ensured its survival.

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The one room schoolhouse – built in 1875, is one of few remaining one room schoolhouses in the country. Photo provided.

Following Dr. Miller's passing, his children began searching for a way to permanently protect the schoolhouse and continue their parents' legacy. They believed the best path forward was to place the property in the hands of a local organization whose passion matched their own. That opportunity came when community member Colleen Cooper shared her vision with the family to create a nonprofit dedicated to preserving the historic structure as well as transforming it into a vibrant community resource where history, education, and lifelong learning could come together.

The result was the formation of a 501(c3) nonprofit, One Room Schoolhouse No. 3, Inc., whose mission is to preserve the historic schoolhouse while creating meaningful educational experiences and community programming for people of all ages.

"The moment we heard Colleen's vision, we knew we had found the right connection," said Birgie Miller Gresham. "Our parents didn't save this schoolhouse simply to preserve an old building. They believed it represented the values of education, community, and hard work that shaped generations before us. Our family has complete confidence in Colleen and the other board of directors to carry that vision forward and ensure the schoolhouse continues inspiring future generations for another 150

years. They all have deep community roots and a passion in the mission which is vital for its success."

"This is far more than accepting ownership of a historic building," said Colleen Cooper, President of One Room Schoolhouse No. 3, Inc. "It is accepting a responsibility to honor Norman and Hermie Miller's legacy. We are deeply grateful for the trust their family has placed in us, and we are committed to creating a place where children can experience history firsthand, where adults can continue learning, and where our community can gather to celebrate the stories that connect us."

Cooper also recognized the assistance of attorney John Brooke of the Muncie law firm Brooke & Struble, a Cowan High School graduate, who guided the property transfer and legal process. Brooke grew up passing the schoolhouse on a daily basis, and he shares the commitment to ensuring this important piece of Delaware County history remains protected.

With the property now officially transferred, restoration efforts will begin in September. The first phase will focus on critical repairs needed to halt continued deterioration, including preservation work that will protect the building for years to come.

The work will be completed by S.A. Boyce, a respected local contractor known for its expertise in historic restoration projects, including work for the City of Muncie, Ball State University, and numerous historic private residences.

While celebrating this important milestone, Colleen Cooper emphasized that the restoration is only the beginning. Future plans include additional restoration projects, as well as bringing back educational field trips, history programs, workshops, community events, and partnerships with schools and organizations that will transform the historic schoolhouse into a living center for learning and community engagement.

Community members are invited to become part of this exciting effort by becoming members, volunteering, making a tax-deductible contribution, or sponsoring future restoration projects and educational programming.

Together, the Miller family's remarkable gift and the community's continued support will ensure that One Room Schoolhouse No. 3 remains a place where history is preserved, stories are shared, and future generations discover the enduring value of education, heritage, and community.

For more information about membership, tax-deductible donations, volunteer opportunities, or upcoming events, please visit **www.oneroomschoolhouseno3.org** or visit the organization's social media page on Facebook.

Schoolhouse No. 3 is located at 6501 S County Road 200 W, Muncie, IN 47302. Visits are by appointment only. Questions can be emailed to **oneroomschoolhouseno3@gmail.com** or directed by phone to 765-729-5177.



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