



## MEMORIES

## Through the Generations

Store keepsake items in beautifully crafted boxes

**A FIRST, LOST TOOTH. THE MOVIE TICKET STUB FROM AN UNFORGETTABLE DATE.** A photo of a great-grandparent. A military commendation. Often, these types of family mementoes are stored on a shelf, in a shoebox or two. Now Donna Yost, left, president and CEO of Troy-based The Life Chest, has fulfilled a decades-long dream by creating several finely crafted lines of what she calls “Life Chests,” in which treasured possessions can be stored — and shared — in elegantly designed, heirloom pieces that become part of a room’s furnishings.

“This is such a soulful way, in our touch-screen world, for people to hold meaningful items in their hands and share stories about them,” Yost says. The latest Life Chest undertaking? A special whiskey-and-cigar box that will fit into a Life Chest and has room for a bottle of whiskey, shot glasses, and premium cigars. Constructed of salvaged wood from Detroit by The End Grain Woodworking Co., the boxes promise to be unique.

The chests come in a wide variety of styles — from red lacquer with hand-painted details (the Zen Blossom) to the New Yorker, with a honeyed maple finish and studded leather strap accents. Unlike even the sturdiest of shoeboxes, each Life Chest is made to last for generations, with features such as a rich and protective velvet lining, a combination lock, hydraulic closers for safe and gentle shutting action, and a marble base for durability. Showroom: 3331 W. Big Beaver Rd., Suite 118, Troy. [thelifechest.com](http://thelifechest.com) — Honey Murray

## EVENTS

## LAKE EFFECT

Grosse Pointe War Memorial ballroom sparkles with fresh, new look



**SPECIAL OCCASIONS ARE EVEN MORE SPECTACULAR** than before at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial. Interior designer Tami Kessler, left, owner of Tamara Kessler & Associates Inc., added a variety of recent refinements to the space, which features a dramatic view of Lake St. Clair and the Alger House grounds and gardens. “This

is a magnificent venue, (and) it’s beautifully appointed,” says Kessler, a native of Grosse Pointe and daughter of noted architect William Kessler. A rich, dark stain on the floors enhances the parquet pattern, and the columns are now a warm gray, “to bring out elements that had been hidden before,” Kessler explains. A metallic finish was applied to the ceiling domes to create a silver leaf effect, creating extra sparkle for the chandeliers. Striated wallpaper adds interest, while new valances and modern blinds add drama.

“We were fortunate that the ballroom has such good bones to start with,” Kessler says.



## About the Grosse Pointe War Memorial

Built in 1910 for Russell A. Alger Jr. and his family, the Grosse Pointe War Memorial was once a spacious Italian Renaissance-style home called *The Moorings*. (Alger, son of Michigan’s Gov. Russell Alger, became interested in the automobile industry and perhaps had more to do with the moving of the Packard Motor Car Co. plant to Detroit from Warren, Ohio, than anyone else. Alger became a key investor and vice president of the Packard Motor Car Co.) Charles A. Platt was the architect, while Ellen Biddle Shipman was the landscape designer. After Alger’s death in 1930, the family wanted to find a way the house could be used to improve the quality of life in the community. In 1949, it was dedicated as a perpetual memorial to the 3,500 Grosse Pointers who served in and the 126 who died in World War II. A ballroom and auditorium were built in 1962, and the entire facility became the center of operations for the educational and charitable activities of the Grosse Pointe community. [warmemorial.org](http://warmemorial.org)