



Fort Foundation Focus

by Fred A. Rose, Volunteer Publicist

www.fortfoundation.org

Well, scholarship season has rolled around again! As I have previously observed, many of you know that an unusually large number, and dollar amount, of local college scholarships are awarded to Fort High School graduates — this year, a grand total of over \$300,000 in local scholarships! Of that total, over half of it is from funds managed by the Foundation. Those are impressive totals for a city of less than 12,000 and a school district with just over 900 High School students! Scholarships from outside the district approximately double the total amount awarded, but we are talking here about just local scholarships.

Last year at this time I discussed the origin of a couple of the scholarships in the Foundation. That column can be found on the Foundation's Web site, www.fortfoundation.org, if you care to read it. Those of you who have followed this column know that I have frequently applauded the residents of Fort for their generosity and general supportiveness when it comes to the types of projects supported by the Foundation and the very active service clubs and organizations in the community. But I think this year raises that bar even a little higher. There are three new scholarships in the Foundation this year! Yes, three more!

The three new scholarships are the Thrift Shop and Jean Reich Memorial Scholarship, the Robert and Judith Knapp Scholarship, and the Gene Halker Memorial Scholarship. Today I would like to feature the first of these scholarships, the Thrift Shop and Jean Reich Memorial Scholarship. I will discuss the other two new scholarships in my next column, to be published soon.

This scholarship is not technically a new scholarship, since the Thrift Shop organization managed it for many years while the Thrift Shop existed, but it is now endowed and managed by

the Foundation, which means that it will endure forever. I'm sure that many of you remember the Fort Atkinson Thrift Shop, a nondenominational charity resale shop in town from 1969 to 2007. It was run entirely by volunteers and all profits were donated to individuals in need, community organizations, and other causes. Jean Reich was responsible for the group establishing a scholarship at the High School, and she presented the scholarship each year. After her death her name was added to the scholarship. In 2007 the Thrift Shop organization disbanded and its building, at 222 South Main Street, was sold. The group wished that the scholarship would continue in perpetuity, so some of the proceeds from the sale of the building were contributed to FAF in the form of an endowment for this scholarship. In addition, very generously, the Reich family contributes a matching amount each year to the scholarship granted.

You know, there are very few things that you, as an individual, can do that can have as much impact on the community as a whole, and on its future, than to become a regular donor or supporter of a scholarship fund. You can donate to the Community Foundation's General Scholarship fund, or you and your family might even consider endowing a scholarship. I will elaborate on this last option in the next column.

Anyone needing more information, or who would like to make a donation to the Fort Atkinson Community Foundation, is asked to contact Helen Rose, Program Administrator, at 920-563-3210 (office), 920-563-4926 (home), or visit the Foundation's Web site at www.fortfoundation.org. If you are intrigued by the scholarship outlined here, or any of the many other scholarships supported by the Foundation, you can find details on the Foundation's Web site. Take a look when you have a minute!