



Fort Foundation Focus

by Fred A. Rose, Volunteer Publicist

www.fortfoundation.org

This column is the continuation of the one published in the Daily Union on Jun 17th, as promised. As I did at the beginning of that column, I would like to remind you of the large number and amounts of local scholarships awarded to high school seniors – this year, a grand total of over \$300,000 in local scholarships alone, well over half of which is from funds managed by the Community Foundation!

In that previous column I noted that there were three new scholarships created this year: The Thrift Shop and Jean Reich Memorial Scholarship, the Robert and Judith Knapp Scholarship, and the Gene Halker Memorial Scholarship and I went on to describe the origin of the first of those. Now I would like to continue with some detail about the other two.

The Knapp Scholarship, established by Robert C. and Judith L. Knapp, is specified to provide assistance to students who have the greatest potential for achieving their professional goals, regardless of financial need. Dr. and Mrs. Knapp, with their two young sons, came to live in Fort in 1986 after they both joined the faculty at UW Whitewater as professors of mathematics. In establishing the scholarship, they said that their sons, “benefitted from Fort Atkinson’s excellent school system and the advantages it offered them in academics and the arts.” Because of that, the Knapp’s said, “... and now it is time that we begin the process to give something back ... to help ... students to come.” They continued, “We have found Fort Atkinson to be an accepting and nurturing community. Many dedicated and progressive-thinking people live here.” The Knapp scholarship is available to students majoring in mathematics or related fields such as physics and engineering, or to students majoring in music.

The Gene Halker Memorial Scholarship was established by his family upon his death. Gene Halker moved with his parents to Fort as a child, attended the Fort public schools, and graduated from Fort High in 1944. After serving in the military he enrolled at UW Madison and graduated in 1949 with a degree in economics. Mr. Halker’s business career took him to northern Wisconsin where he purchased several radio stations and had other business interests. However, he retained a strong interest in Fort Atkinson, attending every reunion of the Class of ‘44, and always asking if there was something the community needed. When Mr. Halker died in June of 2007, his wife and children asked his school classmate and long-time friend, Capt. Wilbur Sundt, to

suggest an appropriate memorial to Gene. Capt. Sundt suggested the possibility of a scholarship in Gene’s memory through the Community Foundation. The scholarship that the family created is available to college undergraduates with junior standing, or graduate students, pursuing a degree in economics, business, literature, or any related field.

As I said in the previous column, 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.

With the national, and even international mobility of educated young people these days, there could come a time when no one from your family is living in the Fort Atkinson area. No matter how prominent you are, no matter how much impact you have had through your vocation and volunteer work, no matter how active you are in the community, there could come a time when the name is remembered by few. But, if you were to endow a scholarship, generations, in perpetuity, will know the family name. Because of the scholarship’s history, your name and your legacy in the community will be known to future generations.

Some of this may sound a bit exaggerated, but visit the Foundation’s Web site and look at the scholarships there. You will see that each of them contains a lot of information about the donor or person to whom it is dedicated. A scholarship bestows endless value to the youth of the community and it is a way to guarantee that even **centuries** from now the family name will be remembered by future citizens of Fort. You were here, and you left a mark!

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 either of the scholarships 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!