

Scholarship Opportunities at the River Falls United Methodist Church

The River Falls United Methodist Church (RFUMC) has been generously endowed by church members who have, through gifts and memorials, established a variety of scholarship funds that provide financial resources to be awarded to full-time undergraduate, or full or part-time graduate students each year. Some background information about each of these scholarships is provided below.

Eleanor Borner-Johnson Scholarship

Mrs. Eleanor Borner-Johnson was a long-time member of the RFUMC congregation. She has been described as a quiet gracious lady who was faithful in worship. Candidates for this scholarship must be members of the RFUMC and must maintain a minimum of 3.0 in their college GPA.

Albert and Avis Davidson Scholarship

Albert and Avis Davidson, who ran a farm in Kinnikinnic Township for many years, joined the River Falls United Methodist Church in 1952. They remained faithful members of the congregation for 46 years. Avis died in November of 1986, and Albert died in April of 1988. Mr. Davidson was described as a quiet non-assuming gentleman who was respected by everyone. He often enjoyed meeting with other men his age at the South Fork Cafe in River Falls where they would collectively “solve the problems of the world”. The Davidson Scholarship was established in 1989 and first awarded in 1990. Candidates for this scholarship must be members of the RFUMC and must maintain a minimum of 3.0 in their college GPA.

Clarence and Bertha Kuschel Scholarship

Bertha Kuschel was a life-long member of the River Falls United Methodist Church who “never missed church on Sundays”. She was a schoolteacher for many years, and she was active in the church’s women’s organizations, but suffered from loss of eyesight in her later years. Clarence and Bertha married in 1942, and Clarence joined the church in 1952. The two of them owned a farm for many years that later was sold to become part of what is now the Clifton Hollow Golf Course. When Clarence was setting up this scholarship and asked about whether there should be a minimum GPA requirement, he commented, “When I went to UWRF I never had any B average!” He made it clear that his main criterion was that the candidate be a worthy person who had been faithful in the United Methodist Church and wanted to receive a formal education. Candidates for this scholarship must be members of the RFUMC. Half of the recipients of this scholarship in any one year must be enrolled at UWRF, the other half may attend other colleges. It is preferred that students maintain a minimum of 2.5 in their college GPA.

Harry D. and Hazel Ross Scholarship

The Ross Scholarship Fund is the oldest of the church's scholarships. Harry Ross was employed as a tool and die operator in Chicago before he and his wife Hazel moved to River Falls after Harry's retirement. They joined the RFUMC in 1945. Hazel was very active in the church's women's organizations, and she and Harry were faithful members until Harry's death in 1962 and Hazel's in 1972. In 1979 sixteen students received the first of the Ross Scholarships. Candidates for this scholarship must be active members of any United Methodist Congregation and may attend any university or college. A minimum GPA of 3.0 must be maintained.

L. Gordon Stone Scholarship

The endowment for this scholarship was made possible by the family and friends of Dr. L. Gordon and Alpha Stone. Over a period of fifty years, starting with graduation from high school, Gordon Stone alternated between teaching for a year and attending college until he had earned a Ph.D. He rose through teaching in a one-room rural school, junior and senior high schools, served as a school principal, a city superintendent, and finally taught at the college level. The Stones came to River Falls in 1946 where he first served as Head of the Psychology, Personnel and Testing Services. He later became Dean of Education at UWRF. He taught classes in both Education and Psychology. In 1971 he was cited in a resolution by the Wisconsin Board of Regents for his leadership in Teacher Education. Dr. Stone retired in 1976 and died in 1985. Gordon and Alpha were married in 1930 and had five children. They were both active members of the River Falls United Methodist Church, serving on numerous boards and committees in the church and the community.

Candidates for this scholarship must be members of the River Falls United Methodist Church and must be enrolled at UWRF. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required. Because of Dr. Stone's involvement in education, strong preference is given to applicants who are accepted into the UWRF College of Education or who are on an academic track that leads into a teaching career.

Earl and Marguerite Sumner Scholarship

This scholarship fund was established in 2007 from the estate of Earl and Marguerite Sumner. It was their intent to establish a scholarship for United Methodist students who were attending Seminary or pursuing other "church-related" occupations such as a youth leader or education director. The selection of an awardee for this scholarship is a shared decision between the River Falls United Methodist Church and the UMC in Hudson.

In 2015 it was calculated that since the establishment of the first of these scholarships, over 540 students have been awarded scholarships totaling over \$358,000! The scholarships created by the above named individuals are lasting testaments to their belief in the importance of higher education and the United Methodist Church.

The information in this brochure was compiled from previous brochures written by Bill Ammerman, "Memoranda of Understanding" from the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation, Inc. in Sun Prairie, WI, and personal recollections by Rev. Don Stannard.

- David Rusterholz Jan., 2017