

Arthur O. Seher Endowment Scholarship



Arthur O. Seher came to Westfield in 1912 from New York City with his parents, Christian and Alma, his brother Alfred and sister Helen. He was 12 years old then. Overwhelmed by the pace of city life, Chris and Alma decided to become farmers, although they knew zilch about farming! The family all pitched in to build a house and outbuildings, plant fruit trees, and develop a garden in what was the cow pasture of their friends, the Gruberts, who sold them 23 acres of their land. The Gruberts and the Massachusetts Extension Service taught them what they needed to know.

When he lived in New York City, Arthur was already working. On his roller skates, he delivered wursts from his parents' pork store to local saloons. Once on the farm, he took on some specific responsibilities. Arthur raised chickens under a 4-H program and won awards for egg production. When he was old enough to drive, his father bought a truck to cart produce to Holyoke every weekday

where Arthur and Alfred developed "routes" of customers. This went on for many years and eventually Alfred's son Robert joined the routes and some other young helpers did as well.

In 1917 when the Sehers started a summer farm vacation business until 1938, "boarders" came, primarily from New York City, to spend anywhere from a weekend to the whole summer. Most days when the truck came back from Holyoke, it was quickly cleaned out and the boarders loaded in the back for bouncy rides by Arthur to go sightseeing, dancing at Hampton Ponds, roller skating at Babb's on the Congamond Lakes, or whatever else suited their fancy.

Arthur lived on the farm the rest of his life, but he retired from the business in 1950. He farmed for fun after that and took great joy in growing flowers and making bouquets which he gave as gifts to friends, acquaintances and businesses. Arthur especially enjoyed putting floral displays in the Westfield Athenaeum at holiday times. He was well known for decorations at the Westfield Fair. His annual "snake pit," made up of fanciful snake-gourds, dense greenery and spooky "stuff," thrilled children for many years!

There is a reason I chose to designate this scholarship for scholar athletes. Arthur loved sports! He organized games on the farm for the boarders and they played baseball, badminton, and croquet. Arthur played a mean game of Ping-Pong, too! Along with his sister and brother, he saw to it that the boarders also got off the farm for swimming, horseback riding, and golf. Arthur went to professional baseball games whenever he could. He loved going to the Westfield High School baseball games and followed those students carefully. Those whom he knew personally, he encouraged. When Arthur became very old and couldn't get around much, he could always manage to get himself to a Westfield High School game, and thus enjoyed live sports almost to the end of his 93 years.

When you receive this scholarship, Mr. or Ms. Scholar Athlete, think of Arthur. Think of a fun-loving, energetic, generous farmer who loved young people and saw in them the potential to be great people. He especially expected skilled athletes to be worthy of respect, to show good sportsmanship, and to be leaders. To the best of my knowledge, Arthur was never disappointed. I believe he would have been proud to have handed you this scholarship himself.

Written by: Joan H. Corell, niece of Arthur O. Seher
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