

Dr. Irving A. Fradkin, Founder of Scholarship America Dollars for Scholars®, Dies at 95

MINNEAPOLIS – November 21, 2016 – Dr. Irving A. Fradkin, the visionary leader responsible for founding the nation’s largest scholarship organization, died at home on Saturday, November 19, 2016 in Fall River, Massachusetts. He was 95 years old and still serving as an active member of Scholarship America’s Honor Roll Trustees.

Fradkin was born in Chelsea, MA in 1921. He was the youngest of seven children of the late Abraham and Eva Fradkin, who emigrated from Russia and Poland. It was Fradkin’s goal to follow in his father’s footsteps as a baker, and by age 10 he was working in his father’s bakery after school and on weekends. An accident during a neighborhood football game changed Fradkin’s life forever and he went on to become an optometrist with a practice in Fall River, Massachusetts.

Fradkin loved his job and his patients, and he liked to know everything about them – especially the young people. He would ask them, “What are your dreams?” He lamented that too many answered that they merely hoped to finish high school and get a job; not many felt that a college education was within reach. Fradkin felt this was a waste of the best assets in the community, and decided to run for school board in 1957 on a platform of “establishing a Dollars for Scholars community scholarship program.” Although he lost the election, he didn’t give up on Fall River’s students – and by spring of 1958, had raised nearly \$5,000, enough to give 4-year renewable scholarships to 24 graduating seniors.

Today, Fradkin’s former school board platform and initial Fall River Dollars for Scholars chapter has grown to a nationwide network of chapters and is part of Scholarship America, the nation’s largest scholarship and education assistance organization. Since its origins nearly 60 years ago, Scholarship America has awarded \$3.5 billion to 2.2 million students. Headquartered in Minneapolis, MN, the organization now employs 160 individuals across the country.

Fradkin’s fervent love of country, freedom and democracy motivated him to continue to dream of building a better America through education, and he never stopped moving toward this goal. He believed that education is the key to achieving the American Dream. He often said, “The most valuable resource this country has is not gold or oil, but the minds of young people.”

Dr. Fradkin is survived by his wife of 70 years, Charlotte (Sheinfield) Fradkin; their three children: Marlene, Robert and Russell and their spouses Blair Smith, Goedele Gulikers and Jane Fradkin; four grandchildren: Jeffrey, Karen, Jessica, Michael; and ten great-grandchildren.

Funeral Services will be held on Tuesday, November 22, 2016 at 12:00pm in Temple Beth-El 385 High St., Fall River. Relatives and friends are invited to attend. Burial will follow in Temple Beth-El Cemetery, Fall River.

Donations in Dr. Fradkin's name may be made to Scholarship America via its website (www.scholarshipamerica.org), or may be directed to Scholarship America, 7900 International Drive, Suite 500, Minneapolis, MN 55425.

About Scholarship America

For nearly 60 years, Scholarship America has worked directly with students, parents, colleges, businesses and communities to empower people to fulfill their college dreams. As the nation's largest private education support organization, having distributed over \$3.5 billion to more than 2.2 million students, Scholarship America is now working to further engage the private sector to support programs and policies that advance equity in postsecondary education and help students overcome barriers to access, persistence and attainment. More information is available at scholarshipamerica.org or by following @scholamerica.