

Barbara and Don Swanson Memorial Endowment Scholarship



This scholarship story is a story of true love. Barbara and Don Swanson were completely devoted to each other during their 51 years of marriage. Don was heartbroken when Barbara passed away on January 9, 2009. As he mourned the loss of his beloved Barbara, he found comfort in planning a special tribute to her. Don contacted CSF Westfield Dollars for Scholars and decided to establish a scholarship honoring their commitment to each other and to education. He promised he would include a bequest in his Will to fund this scholarship at the time of his own death. In September 2009, Don provided CSF Westfield with the story of this future scholarship and photos to accompany the story. Don Swanson passed away on March 17, 2015 and true to his word, this scholarship was funded posthumously.

I am writing this on behalf of my wife, Barbara and myself. We were married one month shy of 52 very good years. I always felt Barbara and I made a good "team." We met through mutual friends while I was serving in the Navy during the Korean Conflict. That meeting, and my eventual marriage to Barbara, was the best thing that ever happened to me. She was the kind of person and wife one felt so proud of, and I felt blessed to say, "We belong to each other."

Barbara was always there for everyone, especially for me. She was much loved by all those she touched as witnessed by the hundreds of people I heard from after her passing.

Barbara was a Reading Specialist in the West Springfield Public Schools. She was dedicated to helping her students reach their full potential. Her success was measured by the many, which over the years, returned to see her and express their gratitude for everything she had done for them. She was honored by the town when they placed her name on the West Springfield "Wall of Fame."

Our mutual love and hobby was traveling. In 1960, we took what was to become the first of about 35 cross country trips. When we completed our last trip in 2008, we had compiled a record that included a visit to every national park and monument in the United States. Highlighting our visits was hiking in all of the parks, including sojourns to the floor of the Grand Canyon and spending the night in the famous Phantom Ranch. Eventually we visited all 50 states. With friends, we also toured the United Kingdom. Barbara and I took several cruises, and even sailed on the famous "Love Boat."

As for myself, I was a teacher, Vice Principal and Principal in various schools in the Westfield Public Schools. One of my proudest moments was telling about the former Prospect Hill School. It was a K-6 building with a rich history. It was also the school that both my mother and I attended, and as fate would dictate, I eventually wound up as the Principal of Prospect Hill for seven years.

Together, Barbara and I spent a combined time in education that spans 73 years. In honor of the memory of my wife and on behalf of myself, I hope that everyone who receives this scholarship will live life to the fullest and I wish them the best of luck in their future.

Always remember:

Yesterday is already a dream,
And tomorrow is only a vision,
But today well lived, makes every
Yesterday a dream of happiness,
And every tomorrow, a vision of hope.

From the Sanskrit

Written by: Don Swanson, September 2009

Prologue by: Cynthia Neary, President CSF Westfield Dollars for Scholars, April 21, 2017

