Benton Community High School

# Class of 2026

# Benton Scholarship Foundation Awards

May 6, 2026

Benton Scholarship Foundation

Dollars for Scholars®

## *The Benton Scholarship Foundation is pleased to present the following permanent scholarships to the Benton Community High School Class of 2026.*

***DEB ALLMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was first awarded in 2000. Deb Allman was an elementary teacher at Benton Community from 1995-1999. She was the wife of Steve Allman and mother of Katie and Joel Allman. Deb passed away in 1999 after a courageous battle with breast cancer. A dedicated teacher, she made learning fun for her students. Deb was an inspiration to us all and will live on in our hearts.

***ATKINS LUMBER COMPANY SCHOLARSHIP*** – The Tom Lange family, owners of Atkins Lumber, reached permanent status in 2004. Their hope is to assist students in furthering their education.

***ATKINS TELEPHONE COMPANY SCHOLARSHIP*** – The Atkins Telephone Company awarded their first permanent scholarship in 1999. They continue to be a supporter of the BSF.

***CHRISTINE BALLARD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was created in 2015 in memory of Christine Ballard, who passed away March 12, 2015, from injuries suffered in an automobile accident. Christine, a 2012 graduate of Benton Community, was active in 4-H and FFA. She enjoyed helping others through her work as a CNA.

***ROY BECKER, SR. / BECKER TILING SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2010 by the Roy Becker Sr. Family and Becker Tiling.

***BENTON COMMUNITY 1971 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL TEAM SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2021 by the coaches, manager and teammates to honor the 50th anniversary of the 1971 State Baseball Championship. This scholarship is intended for a current senior player or manager of the Benton Community baseball team who is committed to furthering their education beyond high school and who has exemplified the "team above self" attitude that embodied the 1971 State Championship team. Coaches: Harry Robbins, James Laake. Manager: Greg Sindt. Players: Mike Beatty, Steve Gallagher, Randy Krug, Rick Krug, Ron Junge, Steve Junge, Doug Pippert, Doug Schallau, Paul Shutterle, Dan Strellner, Jon Theis, Roger Walter, Dave Wessling, Doug Wessling and Tom Wessling.

***BC CLASS OF 1980*** – The class of 1980 is honored to award this scholarship in memory of our classmate Joan England Feller, who died in 2016 chasing one of her many dreams. Joan was a soft-spoken woman, who participated in athletics, fine arts and student council. She was an active member of her church, where she loved to sing and play the piano. Her first dream was to go to college and become a teacher. Joan taught 23 years in schools throughout Iowa. In her classroom, she had a poster that read, "Believe in Yourself!" And

with those words, we pass on to you, the challenge that Joan would have said, "Believe in yourself." Dream big and continue to remember the ***Bobcat Spirit***, which will always be part of you.

***BC CLASS OF 2016*** – This scholarship was established in 2015-16 with the generous donations raised from the class's post prom fundraising efforts.

***BENTON COMMUNITY FINE ARTS SCHOLARSHIP*** – Awarded for the first time in 2014, established to recognize a student involved in Benton Community's excellent fine arts program. The recipient is active in one or more of the following school sponsored activities: band, choir, speech and theater.

***BENTON MUTUAL INSURANCE SCHOLARSHIP*** – Achieved permanent status in 2005. Benton Mutual Insurance Association's goal is to help provide students with the opportunity to further their education in their chosen field. Benton Mutual Insurance Association congratulates all the students who earned scholarships today and wishes them the best of luck in all their continued educational efforts.

***BENTON YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2024 to help support our athletes beyond their days playing soccer.

***JOSHUA BREJA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** - Established in 2025 by David and Mary Breja in memory of their son, Joshua, who passed away from colon cancer in 2024. He graduated from Benton in 1998, following in the footsteps of Mary (1977), and was joined by his sisters, Melissa (2001) and Gabby (2012). Josh married Christyn Carnahan and was blessed with two children, Wyatt and Bailey. Josh was active in football, 4-H, and dirt bike racing. His passion was working with his father Dave on the family farm started by Harold and Irene Parr to become a century farm. He also coached his son's flag football team. Known for his willingness to help others, his favorite quote was, "It is what it is." This scholarship is awarded to a student with great character, eager to pursue an ag career specializing in cattle.

***BRIDGEWATER FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Mary (Siek) Bridgewater graduated from Blairstown Consolidated Schools in 1955. In 1956 she married Eldon Bridgewater from Hopkins, MO. Together they raised their family on a farm outside of Blairstown. All ten of their children graduated from Benton Community Schools, and Mom always told the teachers at conference time, "The Bridgewaters will outlast you at Benton." Their children & grandchildren supported this scholarship in honor of their parents and grandparents to be a lasting legacy of the Bridgewater family impact on Benton.

***DEB BRIDGEWATER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** This is a scholarship in honor of Deb Bridgewater. Deb, and her husband Jeff, raised four daughters who were Benton Community graduates and benefited from the Benton Scholarship

Foundation to assist in their post-secondary goals. Deb was an avid sports fan and truly enjoyed cheering on her daughters in their chosen activities.

***JESSE & THERESA BRIES SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was established in 2015. Jesse and Theresa Bries have been residents of Newhall since 2005. They understand both the value and cost of higher education. With this scholarship they hope to support Benton Community and encourage others to take the path of life-long learning.

***LARRY AND APRIL CARLSON BOBCAT FAMILY AWARD*** – We believe in the potential of Benton Community graduates as they pursue their education. Our hope is that they carry forward the support of their home community and grow into positive, contributing members of the communities they join.

***HOWARD & ELAINE CONRAD SCHOLARSHIP*** – *"It's a Great Day to be a Bobcat"* was *e*stablished in 2014. Howard and Elaine were lifelong (65 years total) teachers at Benton Community High School. Elaine taught English and Howard history. Howard coached varsity baseball from 1979 to 1999, and freshman basketball from 1979 to 2016. We celebrate all that is good about being a Bobcat, persistence, hard work, optimism and spirit.

***TIM CASEY SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship achieved permanent status in 2012. Mr. Casey taught in the Benton Community School District for 27 years, retiring in 2016. With this scholarship, he continues to contribute to the future success of our students. "Education has given me the means to reach my dream (educating and, hopefully, having a lifelong influence on my students); and I am hoping this scholarship helps in a very small way to assist another in pursuing his/her dream."

***LILLIAN CHRISTIANSON STONER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Lillian Christianson Stoner graduated from Norway High School in 1901. She taught in the high school before leaving Norway in 1908. Her father was thought to have built the first grain elevator in Norway and built one in Watkins. Lillian and her husband lived in Albany, New York, where Mr. Stoner taught ornithology and Lillian assisted him in his work.

***L.H. "SHORTY" & EARLENE CLAUSEN SCHOLARSHIP*** – Shorty placed a high value on education and would be proud to know his wife, Earlene, established a scholarship in his name. He was a member of the first school board of the Benton Community School District. His five children, Tom (1967), Jane (1970), Meg (1977), Cara (1980) and Beth (1986) are graduates of Benton Community.

***COLEMAN/THOMPSON FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was established in 2010. David Thompson graduated from Benton Community in 1975 and farms in the Van Horne area. Theresa (Coleman) Thompson taught at

Benton Community Middle School for 31 years. David and Theresa are the parents of Ben (2011) and Beth (2013) Thompson.

***COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF BLAIRSTOWN SCHOLARSHIP –*** The Community Development Corporation of Blairstown is a group of local investors of agriculture and commercial property. Organized in the 1960s, the group continues to benefit the Blairstown area through betterment projects.

***AARON CRETIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2026. Mr. Cretin was a school counselor for 20 years, 19 of those at Benton Community. As a first generation college graduate, Aaron understood the value of education along with the significance that life lessons and experience provide. During his time as a coach and educator, he helped students develop their own passions in life while providing guidance with encouragement and kindness. Aaron's dedication to the ambitions of students was captured in how he ended every email with this quote by W.B. Yeats: "I have spread my dreams beneath your feet. Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

***RAY & GERTRUDE DETLEFSEN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Ray & Gertrude Detlefsen owned and operated Ray's Foodland in Norway from 1938 until 1989. They supported several community activities in Norway including the annual Halloween contest. They took a great interest in the many students they employed at the store and always encouraged good work ethics.

***RON & SALLY DONALD SCHOLARSHIP*** – Ron retired in 1999 after teaching for 33 years. He taught 27 of those years at Benton Community. He stated, "I give to the Benton Foundation because when I was a senior, one of my teachers gave me $100 for college. That made a tremendous impact on my life and hopefully I can now help others with their education."

***EASTMAN FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP –*** Phillip and Theresa have lived in the district since 2005. He has taught, coached, and administered in the district since 2003. Their four children attend and will graduate from Benton: Jason 2026, Paige 2029, Claire 2032, and Grant 2034. All are active in extracurricular activities provided through the school.

***JERRY AND DIANE ECKENROD SCHOLARSHIP*** – Jerry and Diane Eckenrod were lifelong teachers at Benton Community School starting in 1968. Jerry retired into 2000, Diane in 2007. Their three children Grant, Jason, and Dana are Benton grads and are now involved in education or coaching. "We feel fortunate to have been a part of the Benton family and want to give back. Because we all value Benton Community and education in general, we are happy to contribute to the Benton Scholarship Foundation. Go Bobcats!"

***DUANE & PAMELA ENGLAND SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2016. Duane and Pam's goal is to assist students in furthering their education.

***THE FINAL SEASON SCHOLARSHIP*** – Created in 2007 with funds from the movie, *The Final Season*, based on Norway School District's last baseball season.

***MITCH FISCHER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** In memory of Mitchell Fischer, Class of 2000. Mr. Allman's shop and woodworking classes (along with Mitch's father, who owns an automotive repair shop in Van Horne) inspired him to earn his Automotive Technology degree from Kirkwood Community College. Mitch spent time working in both fields until he passed away in December 2014. His parents, Mike (Class of 1973) and Sheryl (Class of 1975), and sister, Michelle (Class of 2002), established this award in his honor to help other Benton graduates pursue their passions.

***GAHRING MACHINE SCHOLARSHIP*** – This company, located in Van Horne, was one of the first to endow a scholarship with the BSF reflecting their concern for the students of Benton Community pursuing higher education.

***GARBERS FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was established in 2018 by Dutch and Judy Garbers of Keystone. Judy was a devoted elementary teacher at Benton for 30 years. Dutch was a proud member of Benton's "Chain Gang" for 30 years. With this scholarship, they hope to support students in pursuing their future endeavors and living a life that models the "Bobcat Way."

***MIKE GARNER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – The Mike Garner Memorial Scholarship honors a man remembered for his kindness, warm spirit, and his ability to bring a smile or a laugh to everyone he met. Mike, along with his wife Kandy, leaves a legacy through their five grandchildren, all currently attending Benton Community. This scholarship is awarded to a student who plans to further their education through a trade or post-secondary path. It recognizes individuals who reflect Mike's character by showing genuine kindness and compassion toward others.

***JACK HANNEN SCHOLARSHIP FOR COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDIES*** – A consistent donor to the BSF, this scholarship reached permanent status in 2013. BSF is Jack's chosen charity for his annual giving via his employer's, Microsoft Corporation, fundraising drive. "It's my honor to give back to the high school I'm proud to say I attended."

***HAROLD & MARJORIE HARTKEMEYER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – First awarded in 2014. Harold lived and farmed in or near Benton County his entire life. His children are Benton graduates; Keith (1973), Kevin (1975) and Kelsey (1980). Upon Harold's death in 2013, a scholarship was started in his name with memorial money and family donations. Kelsey states that Harold "had a quiet way about him and when he did speak, you listened." Keith adds "and he had a way of teaching about life with his own example."

***CHAD HENNINGS SCHOLARSHIP*** – Chad Hennings graduated from Benton Community High School in 1984. He is a 1988 graduate of the US Air Force Academy and served 45 missions flying in support of Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq. He played nine seasons for the Dallas Cowboys as a starting defensive lineman and participated on three Super Bowl Championship Teams. Since his retirement from the NFL, Chad has found success as an author, investor, management consultant and motivational speaker. This scholarship was established in 2006.

***WILLIAM & BARBARA HENNINGS FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP –*** Bill & Barb's four children are graduates of Benton Community and all were blessed to receive scholarships to help further their education. With this scholarship, they would like to give back to the future seniors at Benton to help further their educational journey.

***JESSE HILSABECK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** Jesse was a 2002 graduate of Benton. He graduated from Central College in 2006 with a degree in Sociology and Criminology. Jesse worked as a 911 Dispatcher for 18 years with Westcom Emergency Communications System, sending police, fire, and EMS help to 6 cities in the Des Moines area. He is credited with 9 life saving awards during his career, which was cut short due to his untimely death at the age of 40 as a result of a motorcycle accident. His final life saving act was as an organ donor. To honor Jesse's legacy and further support those with the same work ethic and care for others, Westcom established this scholarship for students pursuing a career in public safety. Congratulations and wear your blue and gold proudly.

***HOFER FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2011. The Hofers live on a farm north of Amana. Their two children graduated from Norway High School and received scholarships to help with their post-secondary education. They wish to give back in the same way to graduating seniors in our community. **"**Let education be your key to unlock many of life's greatest dreams!"

***HUMPHREY BOYS SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2009.

***ERIN & KATHY JANSS SCHOLARSHIP –*** This scholarship reached permanent status in 2017. Mr. Janss taught and coached in the Benton Community School District for 28 years, retiring in 2018. He was a 1977 Benton graduate, who was involved in baseball and basketball. He hopes that this scholarship can become a small stepping stone for someone pursuing higher education. Go Bobcats!

***KEITH & WENDY JUNGE SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2016, the Junges believe in Benton Community School District and appreciate the education their three children received at Benton. "We feel strongly that extra-curricular activities offered at Benton help in developing a well-rounded student. We are proud to have grandchildren attending Benton."

***MARY & DAVID JUNGE SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2018 by Benton Community graduates Mary Schafbuch (1976) and David (1974). Both believe their education at Benton provided a solid foundation not only to further their education after high school but also in running their business, Junge Control. The Junges encourage students to explore technical fields as well as agriculture, and to be innovators and leaders in their chosen field.

***RAEGAN JUNGE SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2012 by the Raegan Junge Family. In 2011, Raegan, a 6-year-old from Keystone, waged a campaign to raise money for victims of a tornado that hit Joplin, MO. Her efforts were named Viewers Favorite in The Weather Channel's Epic Christmas contest. Raegan's prize was a $5,000 donation from The Weather Channel to a tax exempt, non-profit organization of her choice - the Benton Scholarship Foundation. This scholarship was established by Raegan and her parents, Jerry, a BC graduate, and Crystal, so they can give back to the community who has supported Raegan and her efforts in helping others.

***RYAN JUNGE FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2024, Ryan Junge is a 1994 graduate of Benton Community. He has been a teacher, coach, and administrator in the district for 20+ years. The Ryan Junge Family Scholarship is to pay it forward to support graduating Bobcats with their post-secondary aspirations. Go Bobcats!!

***ANDREW KAUDER SCHOLARSHIP –*** Mr. Kauder is a teacher at the high school and has contributed to the foundation for many years. This scholarship reached permanent status in 2024. "I give to help students pursue their dreams!"

***MAE KAESTNER FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – The Kaestner family created this scholarship in memory of their mother, Mae, who passed away in 2020. She was a graduate of Newhall High School in 1948. Many of her children and grandchildren have attended and graduated from Benton Community High School. Mae was always interested in helping others and felt that education was a great method to accomplish that goal.

***GARY & AMY KAISER SCHOLARSHIP –*** Access to a quality higher education is important to the Kaisers, and they are excited to be able to support Benton Community seniors. Gary and Amy are 1975 graduates as well as their three daughters, Alison (1996), Andrea (1999) and Valerie (2001), who were fortunate to be awarded BSF scholarships that helped each achieve post-secondary degrees. Amy is a past BSF board member. They enjoy watching many nieces and nephews compete in Benton athletics, as well as two of their seven grandchildren.

***LOUIS & JOANNE KAISER SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2010. Louis and Joanne raised their six children on a farm near Keystone. All graduated from Benton Community High School. Eleven of their 15 grandchildren graduated from Benton Community; and 16 great-grandchildren will attend, currently

attend or have graduated from Benton Community. Louis and Joanne wanted to give back for the fine education their family received over the years.

***KEYSTONE NURSING CARE CENTER INC SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2019 to help Benton Community students pursuing a degree in the medical field. The Keystone Care Center offers services in the care center, home health, Meals on Wheels, outpatient therapy, independent living, and assisted living. Services are offered in Benton, Iowa, Tama, Linn and Poweshiek counties.

***DON KRUG FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2017. Don's five sons and two grandchildren are graduates of Benton Community; and he is a former BC school board member and 4-H leader. The Krug homestead near Atkins was settled by Johann Juitus and Anna Krug in 1866, making it an Iowa Heritage Farm. Always proud to be from Benton Community and the state of Iowa – one of the best places on earth. Your education is a treasure.

***JIM & GINA KRUG SCHOLARSHIP –*** Congratulations to all graduating seniors. Jim and Gina Krug had the opportunity to attend and graduate from college through the support of their parents and working. Today, finances and family circumstances sometimes block a hopeful student's path to higher education. The Krugs hope this scholarship helps the recipient to achieve their goals.

***KUBICHEK FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2017 for Charles and Evelyn Kubichek, lifelong residents and community leaders in Blairstown.

***LELAND & YVONNE KUCH FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2013, the Kuch family created this scholarship in memory of Leland, who passed away in 2012. Leland, a graduate of Van Horne High School, and Yvonne (Hennings), a graduate of Keystone High School, raised their family on a farm near Keystone and were very active in Benton Community Schools. Leland served on the Benton Community Board of Education, was a 4-H leader and a longtime official of girls' and boys' basketball. Yvonne was a teacher in the Benton Community District for many years.

***NATHAN "NATE" LANKOW MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** This award was established in 2022. Nate was a 1993 Benton graduate and avid reader, who owned over 1,000 books. He earned a Food Plant IPM certification in the Center for Urban and Industrial Pest Management Program from Purdue University. We are honored to assist young adults in continuing their education.

***KENNETH & ETTA LEE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2006.

***DON AND JAN LOGAN SCHOLARSHIP*** – The Logans were educators in Benton's elementary, middle school and high school for over 70 years total. For more than 46 years, Don has coached Benton football, and for over 25 years coached basketball. He also taught 16 years of adjunct classes for Kirkwood Community College at Benton. The Logans valued the opportunity to work with Benton

students and families, and are honored to help support Benton grads in their future educational endeavors

***MANSFIELD CHARITABLE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP*** – The Mansfield Charitable Trust has generously donated to the BSF each year since 2001.

***DEBBIE MANTERNACH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was created in 2011 by an anonymous donor, and friends and family of Debbie continue to contribute. Debbie passed away in 2010 from injuries suffered in a car accident. She was a freshman at Benton Community and was active in jazz band and marching band, cheerleading, soccer, and the Benton Blazers dance team. As an organ donor, Debbie gave the gift of life to many others, and this scholarship will continue her giving to others in her honor.

***TERRY & DORIS MARKWITZ SCHOLARSHIP*** – This award was established in 2007. Terry and Doris would like to congratulate all the graduates for their academic achievement. They encourage the seniors to look fondly back on your years at Benton and look forward with hope as you enter the next steps of your educational journey.

***MASONIC LODGE SCHOLARSHIP*** – The dispensation for the organization of the Blairstown Masonic Lodge was granted by the Grand Lodge of Iowa on August 25, 1866. The Charter was granted June 5, 1867. On June 4, 1998, Lincoln Lodge consolidated with Vinton Lodge No. 62. In May of 1998, Lincoln Lodge gave $50,000 to the BSF. Prior to that time, Lincoln Lodge had presented scholarships to Benton Community Schools each year.

***TAMIE MATHENY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in honor of Tamie Matheny, a Benton graduate who raised her family in the district. Tamie was a local EMT and volunteer firefighter. This scholarship was established to help a student pursuing a career in nursing, EMT criminal justice or firefighting.

***DENNIS & REBECCA MCCOLLOUGH SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2018. As a longtime Keystone Elementary educator, it has been Rebecca's goal to encourage students to achieve whatever educational level they choose to enrich their lives. As her former students know, she believes that work ethic and pride in achievement are the bedrock of their educational foundations. This scholarship is intended to assist a student in that quest.

***MCCORMICK-HURLEY FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established by the families of Bob and Julie McCormick and Bill and Cristina Hurley in 2018. Bob was a graduate of the Keystone High School Class of 1958 and Julie moved to the district to teach elementary school in 1967. Miss Julie taught pre-school for 40 years in Keystone. Their daughters Cristina (1988) and Megan (1990) and grandsons Colin (2017) and Seamus (2021) are proud "Bobcats." Bob instilled the belief in his family that "A college education is one asset no one can take away from you. Never underestimate its value."

***SHANNON M. MCDOWELL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established after Shannon's passing on July 7, 2017, from liver cancer. Originally from Blairstown and a 1992 Benton Community graduate, Shannon loved working with children and was a nanny for many years after graduating high school. It was while being a nanny, that she found her life's work and became a high school special education teacher in 2005 after graduating from Kean University. Established by her parents and siblings, this scholarship is to honor her and help a student that is pursuing a career in special education or education.

***MCKECHNIE FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2015 by the family of William and Betty McKechnie. William was a graduate of Atkins High School and Betty a graduate of Norway High School. They farmed in the Atkins/Norway area and their five children, David, Janice, Douglas, Sheri and Lori, are Benton Community graduates along with two grandchildren. The McKechnies ask the recipient aspire to the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "Intelligence plus **character** – that is the goal of true education."

***LEO J. MELL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Leo dedicated over 30 years of his life coaching and supporting the Norway baseball program. His love for the game and his devotion to his players will always be remembered.

***RICK & CINDY NOLAN SCHOLARSHIP*** – Rick, a 1975 BC graduate, and Cindy were married in 1976 and make their home in rural Van Horne. They raised three children in the Benton Community School District. Cindy has worked in the health field. Rick farms and their two sons are now farming with him. They have one daughter who has worked with at-risk children.

***JIM NOTTGER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** Jim Nottger graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with degrees in Biology and Earth Science. He taught science classes in Minnesota and Iowa schools for many years, finishing his career at Benton Community. He also coached football and track in Minnesota and Iowa. Passionate about teaching, Jim helped students understand weather, constellations, planets, and the environment. Selected to attend the University of Northern Iowa's Lakeside Lab program, he spent his time there preparing lessons for his teaching career. A true outdoorsman, Jim taught others to respect the outdoors and take care of the planet.

***ALBERTA OWENS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Alberta was very fond of Benton County. After graduating from Iowa State University, she lived here all of her life. She was always ready to help a cause in Benton County, especially if it benefited young people. Therefore, donating to the BSF was important to her.

***MELISSA PALMERSHEIM MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship is in memory of Benton Community student, Melissa Palmersheim. Melissa passed away in 2000, her junior year of high school, from injuries sustained in a car accident on her way to work one evening after school. Melissa was a dedicated student and a member of the National Honor Society. After high school, she

planned to attend college with aspirations of becoming a physician's assistant. Her parents established this award with the hope it will help another Benton Community student achieve their college goals.

***EVELYN (SORENSEN) PETERSEN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2022 by Evelyn and her husband Rubert's children, Paul (1968), Peggy (1969), Nancy (1970) and Ross (1978), who all graduated from Benton. A long-time Benton elementary school teacher, Evelyn dedicated much of her life to the education of thousands of students. From a humble upbringing as a child of Danish immigrants in Chicago, she saw the value of education as a key to a successful future. She was the first in her family to achieve a college degree. Evelyn steadfastly believed in the fine arts and a post-secondary education. It is hoped this scholarship will carry on Evelyn's legacy and serve as a stepping stone to the successful futures of Benton students for many years to come.

***LILLIAN PINGEL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** 2013 was the first year for this scholarship. Lillian grew up on a farm near Keystone and graduated from Keystone High School in 1945. She is remembered for her willingness to care for others when she was needed.

***RUDOLPH PINGEL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – 2005 marked the first year for this scholarship. Rudy, a lifelong resident of rural Keystone, passed away in 2003. He served his country in the Army from 1942-1946, after which he farmed until he was 70 years old. Rudy liked to spend his time dancing, buying clothes, and going to different nursing homes to talk with others. His generosity was widespread. His estate gave to over a dozen entities and 18 of his heirs.

***IRENE POHLMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Irene passed away in 2007. She worked in the Keystone school as a head cook for 25 years. With only an 8th grade education, she always regretted her lack of schooling, but was so proud of the 13 college degrees that her children and grandchildren earned. So to honor her and her regard for higher education, the family dedicates this scholarship in her name.

***WAYNE & ELLA POTTER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2019. Wayne and Ella lived most of their married life just east of Van Horne. Ella came from a large family and this scholarship is to help students continue their education the way she and her siblings could not do. Having no children of their own, they are sharing through the Foundation.

***PRUSHA FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Jo and Todd Prusha believe education creates opportunities that are unlimited. As graduates of Benton Community, they appreciate the investment that the school district made to them and to their children's lives. Todd and Jo are grateful for BSF's partnership with Benton Community's payroll deduction, for their opportunity to provide this scholarship for other graduates of BC.

***RABE HARDWARE SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2016. Rabe Hardware has been a family owned and operated company located in Blairstown since it was founded in 1979.

***JERRY RABE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – First awarded in 2015 in memory of Jerry Rabe. Jerry was a lifelong resident of Blairstown and graduate of Benton Community's class of 1976. His sons, Ben, Mark and Daniel, graduated from Benton Community and each received a BSF scholarship. His wife, Diane, states that she and Jerry believe all students pursuing a higher education deserve scholarship opportunities like those provided through the Foundation.

***RAUSCH FINANCIAL SERVICES SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was established in 2006 by Al and Mary Rausch. It is now supported by Benton graduates Todd (2000) and Alicia (2001) Rausch, owners of Rausch Financial Services. Similarly to Al and Mary before them, Todd and Alicia believe that supporting the post-secondary education goals of Benton graduates is of utmost importance.

***JOHN REINHARDT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was established in 2013 by the family of John Reinhardt. John attended Blairstown School through the 11$^{th}$ grade and graduated in 1966 with the first consolidated class of Benton Community Schools. His wife, Ann, and daughter, Tricia, a 1987 graduate of Benton Community, established this scholarship to honor his commitment to Benton Community.

***HAROLD RITSCHER & MARY ADAMS FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was started in 2010 to honor Harold's 70$^{th}$ birthday and Mary's 60$^{th}$ birthday. Harold's three children, Wayne (1980), Alan (1982) and Marie (1989) are Benton Community graduates.

***KELSEY RITSCHER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** — This scholarship was established in 2026 by Kelsey's (Class of 1980) husband, Wayne (Class of 1980), and daughters Lacey (Class of 2004) and Ellie (Class of 2007) following her passing in January 2025. Kelsey was a longtime assistant coach for the Benton Community High School and Middle School Cross Country and Track & Field programs. She also served on the Benton Scholarship Foundation. Kelsey saw high school graduation not as a sad time, but as an opportunity for kids to spread their wings and fly. She loved watching this be made possible through the BSF, so it is only fitting that this award supports students in doing just that.

***H. O. SCHLOEMAN MEMORIAL & RUTH SCHLOEMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS*** – Established in 2004. Henry Schloeman (1892-1983) and Ruth Jones Schloeman (1891-1987) were active in the Norway community and Benton County for more than 60 years. Henry was a director of Benton County Savings Bank for over 50 years. He also served on the board of Lenox Mutual Insurance Company and was president of South Slope Telephone Company when it went into service in 1958. Ruth came to Norway as a high school teacher after attending the University of Iowa. She was very artistic and was

also very active in the community. Their motto was, “Service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy.”

***LINNIE SCHLOEMAN/YOUNG CORN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2006. Linnie E. Schloeman was the first woman Superintendent of schools in Benton County. Grant Wood’s famous “Young Corn” painting was painted as a memorial to Linnie E. Schloeman. Linnie was a junior high math teacher at Wilson Junior High in Cedar Rapids. Her students and a few teachers collected around $200 and asked Grant Wood to paint a tribute “Young Corn” at the time of her death in 1930. The site of the painting is in Iowa County north of High Amana across from the Lenex Cemetery where she is buried. The Schloemans, long-time residents of Norway and dedicated servants to Benton County, have continued to give back to the people of this area.

***BRUCE SCHULTE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was first awarded in 2004. It was established by Bruce’s family after he was killed in a farm accident in 2002. Bruce was a graduate of LaSalle High School and farmed in the Norway area all his life. He loved to work with young people, especially helping with FFA and 4-H projects.

***JASON SEBOLDT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – 2005 was the first year for this scholarship. Jason was a 1988 graduate of Benton Community and a member of the Benton Community Athletics Hall of Fame. Jason passed away Sept. 4, 2002. His friends: Matt Miner, Chad Wauters, Todd Becker, and John McGivern started an annual golf outing in October of 2004 at Tara Hills Country Club to raise money for a scholarship to be awarded in his memory. Jason’s family and friends would like to congratulate you for showing excellence in achieving this award. “God bless you in all your future endeavors. Life is awaiting you to achieve the best that you can be and we hope that this will help.”

***JUSTIN & ANNA SELK FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2026. Justin is a 2002 graduate of Benton Community and Anna has served as a teacher and administrator in the district since 2012. Their son, Carson, was a recipient of BSF scholarships in 2025 and they felt called to support others just as he had been supported. Through this award, the Selks aim to invest in students as they pursue their future endeavors and encourage them to find ways to make meaningful contributions in their communities as they start the next phase of their journey.

***MAJOR KIMBERLY SEMELROTH-SPECK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – In memory of 1991 graduate Kim Semelroth, who passed away in February, 2014, after a courageous battle with breast cancer. She was a dedicated student, athlete and a member of National Honor Society. She was constantly furthering her education, received numerous master’s degrees and in 2012 earned her PhD in clinical psychology. Her mother and brothers, with the help of family and

friends, established this award to honor Kim's love of knowledge and education and to help another Benton Community graduate achieve their dreams.

***LORELAI SHEPHERD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE ARTS -*** This scholarship was created in 2023 by friends of the family and Lorelai's family plan to contribute to in the future. Lorelai passed away in 2023 after a hard-fought battle with cancer. Although she had big plans for her freshman year with cheerleading and color guard, she focused her efforts and loved her role on the dance team. This scholarship is established to recognize a student involved in Benton Community's excellent fine arts program. The recipient of this scholarship is active in one or more of the following activities: dance, band, choir, speech and theater.

***DAROLD & PAULETTE SINDT FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was first awarded in 2004. The three children of Darold and Paulette Sindt were among the first to benefit from the Benton Community merger. The Sindt family has a long history of supporting higher education.

***BEN & NINA SMITH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Nina graduated from Vinton High School in 1928. Ben and Nina were married in 1935 and lived on a farm outside of Van Horne. Ben passed away in 1990 and Nina stayed on the farm until 1993 when she moved to Vinton. She was a member of the First Baptist Church of Vinton and a longtime member of the Historical Society and the Izaak Walton League. Nina passed away in March of 2005.

***SOUTH SLOPE COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATIONS SCHOLARSHIP*** – Achieved permanent scholarship status in 2011. South Slope is proud to support the local schools: academically, athletically, and in the arts. "Higher education is imperative in today's work environment and we congratulate all students who choose to further their education!"

***DUSTIN M. STODDARD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – 2006 was the first year for this scholarship. It was established by the Jim and Cindy Stoddard family in memory of their nephew and cousin Dustin, who died in a boating accident on July 17, 2005. Dustin was a 1998 Benton Community graduate who was involved in football and baseball. Dustin's future goal was to one day own and operate his own transmission and auto repair shop. "Life is not measured by length, but by depth."

***PATRICE PICKART STRELLNER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – this Fine Arts Scholarship was established in 2017 by the Pickart family. Patrice a 1985 graduate of Benton Community who had a gift for academics, fine arts, participating in cheerleading and several clubs. She inspired many youth with her passion for dance by opening Patrice's School of Dance as well as sharing her beautiful singing voice at church services and community activities. "We can't always choose the music life plays for us, but we can choose how we sing and dance to it!"

***HAROLD & KATE THOMPSON FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP –*** Harold and Kate were born and grew up on their family farms near Van Horne. They attended one-room country schools and graduated from Van Horne and Newhall High. Their children Susan, Steven, Sandra, Sharon, Scott, Stella, Shirley, Sally, and Sara attended Central Lutheran and graduated from Benton with the foundation and skills needed to earn a college degree. They were thankful for the help received from local businesses and organizations. "Good luck and God's blessings to each graduate as you pursue your education goals."

***RUSSELL & LAVONNE THOMPSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in loving memory by Russell and LaVonne's children Cynthia (Class of '67) and Douglas (Class of '71). Russell graduated from Blairstown High School in 1940 and Lavonne (nee Koopman) from Newhall High School in 1944. They married in 1947 and spent most of their lives farming and working in the Van Horne area before retiring and moving to town in 1981. LaVonne enjoyed the many years she spent working at the Keystone and Van Horne Centers. They were avid fans of Benton athletics for many years. This scholarship is to support students who follow their dreams in farming or continue their education.

***SHELDON & BERNICE THOMPSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2017, the Thompson family created this scholarship in memory of their parents Sheldon and Bernice. They both graduated from Van Horne School, were married in 1948, and spent 68 years together farming just north of Van Horne. They raised five children who all graduated from Benton Community. Three daughters pursued careers in education, one son continues to operate the family farm, and another son worked with the National Forest Service. The family wishes to encourage and support students desiring careers in education, farming, or natural resources.

***THYS AUTOMOTIVE FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2019 by Dawn and Joel Thys along with their children Mallory, Jaden and Jordan. The Thys' understand how important education is and know that financial barriers can be overcome with the help of their scholarship. It is also a great way to give back to the community that supports their local business. Go Bobcats!

***TIM & KERI TOURO FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – *Established in 2023*

***BRUCE TOWE MEMORIAL FFA SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was established in 2013 by the family of R. Bruce Towe. Bruce graduated from Norway High School and farmed in the area all his life. He enjoyed driving a school bus for Norway and Benton Community for over 50 years. Bruce was an avid supporter of 4-H and the school's Future Farmers of America chapter. Bruce's family established this scholarship to honor his commitment to agriculture and students involved in this organization.

***TOWNSLEY FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP*** – Established in 2017 in honor of the Townsleys' commitment to educational opportunities at Benton

Community. Eric was a math teacher and coach at Benton Community High School for nine years; and Andrea was a fourth grade teacher for eight years and an instructional coach for three years at Benton. Both have a strong commitment to the importance of education and value the students, staff, and community support at Benton. Their daughter, Emma, is a 2024 graduate and son, Kaiser, is a current student. This scholarship is awarded to a student pursuing an education major.

***MR. & MRS. OTIS TUTTLE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – Otis Tuttle graduated from Norway High School in 1907. He attended Coe College, then transferred and graduated from Iowa State University. He served as an officer with the Army in WWI, then farmed near Norway for 57 years. In May 1921, he married May Collins, a home economics teacher in Norway. Otis was very dedicated to the community, contributing generously to the Norway Public Library and other community projects. He loved baseball. His one regret was that he and May were unable to have children of their own, so he became interested in helping other children. He often said, "I try to keep abreast of the young folks and their activities for that is the way to stay in touch with the community." Otis died at the age of 103.

***ROYAL & HAZEL TUTTLE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – The original Tuttle Scholarship was established by Royal & Hazel Tuttle in memory of their son, William, who died in a farm accident in 1951. Royal graduated from Norway High School in 1910 and attended Coe College. He married Hazel Gilchrist in 1924 and they settled on the family farm near Norway. He and Hazel had five children. Royal was a WWI veteran and a member of the Last Man's Club. He organized the Florence Hawkeyes 4-H Club and was active with the club for 40 years. He was active in the community and loved baseball. Royal touched the lives of many young people in Norway and always had a positive attitude. He died at the age of 93.

***PAMELA VAN ETTEN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP –*** Established in 2021 in memory of Pamela Van Etten. Pam had a deep love of music. It is our desire to award it to a Benton Community graduate who wishes to pursue further education in any area of music, whether it be instrumental or vocal.

***VAN HORNE COMMUNICATIONS SCHOLARSHIP*** – Van Horne Communications is proud to have reached permanent status in 2006. We are glad to be a part of the Benton Scholarship Fund to encourage students to further their education.

***VAN HORNE MEDICAL CLINIC SCHOLARSHIP –*** The Van Horne Family Medical clinic, part of the Virginia Gay Hospital organization, offers a scholarship to a senior pursuing a career in nursing or human medical care.

***DR. DONALD & VERNA WAGNER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – This scholarship was created in 2009. Dr. Wagner was a veterinarian for many years in the town of Atkins where he and his wife, Verna, raised nine children, Mary, Ann, John,

Mike, Carol, Laura, Donna, David, and Julie. All of their children graduated from Benton Community, which provided them with a solid foundation in academics, fine arts, civic activities, and sports. This preparation helped all of the Wagner children pursue higher education and careers to lead successful lives. The scholarship is given to help students with their financial needs as they begin their college careers.

***DAVID WEICHMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP*** – David was an attorney and longtime resident of Newhall. He was a pilot in the United States Air Force during World War II. Before his death in 2000, David requested that a scholarship be set up to help area youth further their education.

**The following banks have reached permanent scholarship status and continue to make contributions to the foundation.** (*The year following the name indicates the first year's contribution.)*

Atkins Savings Bank, 1990

Bank Iowa, 1995

Benton County State Bank, 1990

Chelsea Savings Bank, Van Horne, 1995

Hills Bank & Trust Co., 2016

Keystone Savings Bank, 1990

Palo Savings Bank, 1995

Watkins Savings Bank, 1995

# BSF Honor Roll

The Benton Scholarship Foundation's Honor Roll recognizes the generous contributions from individuals, families and businesses that have contributed a total of $10,000 or more in lifetime gifts to help Benton Community High School students further their higher education goals.

All gifts, large and small, help the foundation meet its mission. Each year, the board strives to gather more donations than the previous year so that the foundation can continue to award all deserving seniors meaningful scholarships. The current endowment is over $2 million.

**$1 million +**

Marjorie McDowell Estate

**$100,000+**

Mansfield Charitable Foundation

David Weichman Estate

**$50,000**

Masons, Van Horne

**$40,000 +**

Palo Savings Bank

Tim and Keri Touro

**$20,000 +**

Dean Hofer Family

McKechnie Family

Jim Nottger Family

Alberta Owens Estate

Thys Automotive Family

**$15,000 +**

Ron & Sally Donald

Rudolph Pingel Estate

Lillian Pingel Estate

**$10,000 +**

Atkins Savings Bank

Roy Becker Estate

Benton Community 1971 State Championship Baseball Team

Benton County State Bank

Shorty & Earlene Clausen

Howard & Elaine Conrad

Final Season, Inc.

Jack Hannen

Harold & Marjorie Hartkemeyer Memorial

David & Mary Junge Family

Mae Kaestner Family

Leland & Yvonne Kuch Family

Leo J. Mell Family

Rabe Hardware

Watkins Savings Bank

## About the Benton Scholarship Foundation

Our mission is to help provide higher education for Benton graduates through the generous donations from businesses, patrons, and friends of Benton Community, in the form of scholarships. Gifts totaling $3,000 or more become a permanent scholarship in the name of the donor's choice and continue to be awarded every year.

The Benton Scholarship Foundation is a Dollars for Scholars Chapter, a program of Scholarship America. Scholarship America is a nonprofit with a mission to mobilize America through scholarships and other educational support to make postsecondary success possible for all. Scholarship America works to engage the private sector in programs and policies that advance equity in postsecondary education, helping more students overcome barriers to access, persistence and attainment.

### Benton Scholarship Foundation board members

*President – Cristina Hurley*

*Vice President – Rita Taylor-Stewart*

*Treasurer – Carrie Newton*

*Secretary – Theresa Thompson*

*Steve Allman / James Brecht / Stacie Gorkow / Gina Krug*

*Brooke Kupka / Jake Rabe / Keri Touro / Debie Towe / Sue Wheeler*

**For information on establishing a permanent scholarship**

Please contact a local board member;

Visit our website: www.bentonia.dollarsforscholars.org or write to

***BENTON SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION***

***PO BOX 129, VAN HORNE, IA 52346***