Emeritus Faculty Member and Wife Create Scholarship in Son’s Memory

John H. Behling (B.S., 1954; M.S.W., 1957; Ph.D., 1961), an emeritus faculty member and current lecturer in the College of Social Work, and his wife, Nancy Shaw Behling (M.S.W., 1957) of Columbus, Ohio, have established a legacy in honor of their son, Matthew, who died in March 2005. Matthew’s brother, Paul, is also a graduate of the College of Social Work.

The Matthew Carl Behling Memorial Scholarship, created with additional contributions from friends and family members, is awarded to a graduate student in social work interested in pursuing a career in the mental health field. The Behlings then established an endowment of $25,000 in Matthew’s name for future scholarships to begin in 2007.

According to his parents, as a young man Matthew was very gregarious and loved backpacking in the Smoky Mountains with family and friends. He hiked much of the Appalachian Trail, alone and with family and friends and also biked the Blue Ridge Parkway.

In later life, Matthew could best be described as an artist. He wrote words and music to his songs, teaching himself the guitar and piano, and recording them. He wrote poetry and was published in many small literary magazines. Much later in his life, he began painting, first in oils, then acrylics. He won awards for his writing and art.

As many artists do, he struggled with the expectations of society and with various illnesses. He never lost his unique sense of humor or his courage.

Shawna Green of North Ridgeville, Ohio, was honored to be the first recipient of the Behling scholarship. “Receiving the scholarship was definitely a privilege. To me, this was not only a monetary symbol of helping with tuition, though this aspect is obviously important and helpful,” she said. “More important, it feels wonderful to be part of celebrating Matt’s memory. I will be involved in the fields of mental health and public policy—and I have the Behlings to thank for this opportunity.

“I have also gained two warm, loving friends in Nancy and John, who treat me similar to the way they treat their own children,” Green added. “This scholarship is helping to shape my future and has made the path I have to travel much easier.”