New Scholarship Benefits Students Focusing on Geriatric Social Work

When Steve Loewengart’s mother, Lenore, passed away in May of 2010, he wanted to honor her memory in a special way. As Mr. Loewengart thought about what mattered most to Lenore, who escaped Nazi Germany as a teenager, he wanted to explore the possibility of establishing a scholarship at Ohio State’s College of Social Work. He began working with Jennifer Heller, the college’s Director of Development, to create a scholarship that would not only pay tribute to his mother, but make a difference to social work students for years to come.

Mr. Loewengart explained that his mother realized that, under different circumstances, she would have become a social worker.

“My mother was born in Hamburg, Germany, where she was a politically precocious child. As a Jew in early twentieth-century Germany, she observed how intolerance and corruption can destroy lives,” Mr. Loewengart said. “She was lucky and emigrated to the United States at age 17. Although she worked and went on to marry and raise a family, she never forgot the political passion of her youth and wanted to contribute in spite of her lack of completed formal education. She was always up-to-date on political and policy issues.”

He went on to say, “My mother always talked about how she would have been a social worker had she had different opportunities.”

While raising a family in her adopted country, Lenore found time to be involved with social issues. She volunteered at Planned Parenthood, in hospitals, and on crisis lines. Her activism and involvement continued throughout her life. As a resident at her retirement community, Lenore was active in residents’ issues and was also a sounding board to others in the community.

“She was a great listener, and helped people with their challenges,” Mr. Loewengart said.

Jennifer Heller felt honored to help Mr. Loewengart memorialize his mother in such a special way. They worked together to create the Lenore Loewengart Memorial Fund, which provides scholarship support to master’s student focusing on geriatric social work in the College of Social Work.

“It’s great to help someone realize his vision and make it come alive through philanthropy,” Jennifer said. “To watch a person’s legacy continue through an investment in our students is powerful.”

Nikki Miracle is the first recipient of an award from the Lenore Loewengart Memorial Fund. The Loewengarts—Steve, wife Victoria, and daughters Gina and Sophie—met Nikki at the College of Social Work 2011 Scholarship Luncheon on May 25. After earning her MSW, Nikki plans to work in hospice care and with geriatric clients.

Mr. Loewengart was pleased with the May event. “The awards luncheon was so impressive… wonderfully done,” he said. “I didn’t hear the words about my mother as it was a very emotional time and virtually the anniversary date of her death. Nikki is a delightful recipient.”

To learn more or to contribute to the Lenore Loewengart Memorial Fund, contact the College of Social Work Office of Development at 614.292.8879 or 614.247.6688.

If you’re interested in learning more about giving to the College of Social Work’s student scholarship funds, please click here.