Lady-Dreama Gordon, a student at Ohio State’s College of Social Work, is a 2009-10 Emerson and Miriam Wollam Scholarship recipient and has become part of an enduring family legacy at Ohio State.

Emerson (BS 1933, social work) and Miriam Wollam (MA 1964, social work) shared a unique idea of family that would include not only their four children but many Ohio State students as well—newly arrived from far shores, in need of help with language, culture, and a place to stay. Emerson and Miriam welcomed them in.

The Wollams’ daughter Kristin Goodwillie (BA 1968, French) remembers: “My parents had at least one international student living with them at any given time during 1956-68. I remember helping (Dr.) Susan Wu learn English.”

In 1986, Kristin and her siblings Robert Wollam, Gretchen O’Connor and Karen Sewell honored their parents by endowing the Emerson and Miriam Wollam Scholarship. The scholarship became a living testament to the Wollams’ lives, supporting and inspiring social work students at Ohio State.

More than two decades later, Ohio State alumni Dr. Tzu Fann Shao (BS 1961, electrical engineering) and Dr. Susan Wu (MS 1959, engineering) added generous gifts to the Wollam endowment. They, too, were part of the Wollam family. As young students newly arrived from China, each was warmly embraced by the Wollams. Today, their gifts will expand the Wollam legacy to reach more students for generations to come.

“It was not easy, during their lifetime and in their community, for Mr. and Mrs. Wollam to be at the forefront of human rights and social justice. They believed strongly in serving their communities. Their children knew this and created the Emerson and Miriam Wollam Scholarship. We hope recipients will find the scholarship helpful in achieving their goals and will find inspiration in one of Mrs. Wollam’s priorities for a good life—the optimism to dream, even if it is an impossible dream, that there will some day be peace and justice and equality for all people.”

—Dr. Tzu Fann Shao
Dr. Shao later retired from Texas Instruments. Dr. Wu became one of the first women in the U.S. to obtain a PhD in Aeronautical Engineering and is a leading authority on magnetohydrodynamics, a more efficient process for producing electricity with less pollution than coal-burning methods.

Lady-Dreama Gordon also carries on the Wollam family legacy at Ohio State while creating her own family tradition. Her father, James Gordon, graduated from the social work master’s program in June 2009. When Lady-Dreama receives her master’s degree in 2010, father and daughter will launch a non-profit social work agency together.

Emerson and Miriam Wollam would be proud.

To date, 22 students have received $23,792 in Wollam Scholarship support.