

Agnes Essman Brody Memorial Endowed Scholarship

Type: Endowed

Amount: Varies depending on investment income/loss (approximately \$5,500)

Offered: One per year

Deadline: Refer to Allen College Institutional Scholarship Application

Established: 2009

Special Criteria: Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) student, enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours

Helping less-privileged students pursue their dreams/550

Agnes was born in the family farmhouse near Dumont, Iowa, in December of 1934. As she grew up, Agnes Essman quickly showed an interest in helping others. While the norm for many farm kids during the mid '30s and '40s was to remain on the farm, Agnes wanted to become a nurse—and she pursued her dream.

After finishing high school early, Agnes enrolled at the Allen Memorial Hospital School of Nursing at the age of 17, graduating as an RN in 1955. She then pursued post-graduate psychiatric training at Chicago's Cook County Hospital, followed by obstetrics training in Jersey City, NJ, just across from New York City.

“In those days, it was really a big deal for a farm girl to be working in a large city,” said Jackie Neuberger, a technology and staff development specialist for West Des Moines public schools and one of Agnes' two daughters.

When her post-graduate work was complete, Agnes returned to the Waterloo area, marrying husband Jack Brody in 1957. She worked first as a nurse for Dr. Andrew Smith in 1965, and later as a nurse for Dr. Michael Deters. In her later years, Agnes also served as a Parish Nurse at Central Christian Church in Waterloo.

“One achievement really stood out for mom during her 43-year nursing career,” said Neuberger. “She worked for two different doctors, and she saw both of them through the course of their retirement.”

Nursing was always the first love of Agnes, according to her son, Dr. Jeffrey Brody, a radiologist practicing in Winston-Salem, NC. “She influenced a great number of friends and family members to go in to nursing, and they all graduated from Allen,” said Brody.

Just two months after her retirement from nursing, Agnes was diagnosed with stage-four lung cancer in November of 2008. After spending a month at her son's house and another with her youngest daughter, Agnes moved to West Des Moines in March 2009 to live with Neuberger. In the last phase of her life, Agnes spent two-and-a-half months in long-term nursing care, before she died in September of 2009.

“Many on the staff who cared for her at The Life Center in Des Moines were also trying to get their nursing degree at the same time,” said Neuberger. “Despite her decline, she looked forward to having the aides come in so she could ask them about their studies and quiz them on what they were learning.”

“Even in her sickest times, she was always looking for someone to help,” said Agnes' other daughter, Dr. Jill Brody, an ophthalmologist in Macomb, IL. So Neuberger, Jill and Jeffrey Brody decided to honor their mother by endowing the Agnes Essman Brody Memorial Scholarship. Recipients of the annual scholarship will be Allen College students carrying at least six credit hours who need financial help to complete their training.

“Nursing was always part of her life—it was the way she lived her life,” said Jeffrey. “The scholarship is a way to help carry on her good works.”

The Allen College Foundation gratefully acknowledges the commitment of Agnes Essman Brody's three children. Their generosity will help those less fortunate to pursue the dream of their mother—to serve others by becoming a nurse.