

Dr. Vernon H. And Dorothy J. Plager Nursing Scholarship

Amount: \$500

Offered: One per year

Deadline: Refer to Allen College Institutional Scholarship Application

Established: 1988

Special Criteria: BSN student, preference may be given to a graduate of a Waterloo high school.

This scholarship was originally established by Dorothy (Dottie) Plager in memory of her husband, Dr. Vernon Plager, who passed away in 1988 to help deserving students pursue a career in nursing. Following Dottie's passing at the age of 100 in 2023, the scholarship name was updated by their family to honor both parents and their lifelong commitment to healthcare.

Dr. Vernon Plager married Dottie Hostetter in 1944. They had two sons, David and Robert, and three daughters, Kathy, Karen and Patty.

Dr. Vernon Plager, born in Grundy Center in 1919, graduated from the University of Iowa College of Medicine in 1943. He completed his internship and residency in internal medicine at Harper Hospital in Detroit and a residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Women's Hospital in Detroit. Dr. Plager was an obstetrician/gynecologist in Waterloo for 37 years. He served on the Allen Memorial Hospital Board of Directors, was past president of its medical staff, and held leadership roles in numerous medical organizations. He was instrumental in advancing maternal health services, including serving as medical director for Allen's Family Planning and Maternal Health Clinic (now known as Allen Women's Health Center).

Dr. Plager was past president of the Black Hawk County Medical Society, past president and secretary of the Iowa Clinical Surgical Society and a past board member of the Waterloo Chamber of Commerce and the Minnie Crippen Home.

Dottie earned her nursing degree from Harper Hospital School of Nursing in Detroit and practiced nursing before moving to Waterloo. Her dedication to healthcare extended beyond her profession—she served six years on the Allen Foundation Board, was instrumental in establishing UnityPoint Health – Allen Hospital's Level II birthing center and founded a grief support group after Vern's passing. She was also deeply involved in community organizations, including PEO, Black Hawk Medical Society Auxiliary, Cancer Society Board, Cedar Valley Hospice Friends, the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Board and Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Diplomats.

Healthcare truly runs in the Plager family: all three daughters became nurses, two of whom graduated from Allen Memorial Hospital School of Nursing.

Dottie once said, "I wanted to honor Vern, and OB was the love of his life. He loved to bring those babies into the world. Healthcare professionals are kind and generous and compassionate, and they love what they're doing. Especially nurses. They don't like to see people suffer, so they reach out. It takes a special kind of person."

Through this scholarship, the Plager family's legacy of compassion and service continues to inspire future generations of nurses.