



Springfield Foundation
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COMMUNITY Catalyst

Fall 2021

SERVING THE CLARK COUNTY COMMUNITY SINCE 1948

Power of the Pen Founders' Award Fund in Memory of Frank and Lorraine Merrill

In 1985, writer and educator Lorraine B. Merrill had a vision: how wonderful it would be if schools recognized and celebrated writing as much as they recognized and celebrated team sports.

Lorraine envisioned a series of interscholastic writing tournaments across Ohio, with schools forming creative writing clubs to prepare students for these events. Young authors not only would enjoy the thrill of competition, but they also would experience the same camaraderie, skills development, and support afforded to school athletes.

Lorraine made her vision a reality with the first interscholastic tournament for middle school students at Nordonia Junior High School in the 1985-1986 school year. The Nordonia tournament helped her earn recognition as a Christa McAuliffe Fellow by the U.S. and State Departments of Education in 1988. The grant she received was designed to foster educational programs exemplifying Christa McAuliffe's pioneering spirit.

The grant provided Lorraine with a year's sabbatical to bring to life her vision of blending innovative teacher training with interscholastic writing competitions as a means of strengthening academic achievement among students at the middle school level. This was accomplished in 1988-1989 with substantial funding support from the Gund, Knight, and Cleveland Foundations.

The challenge then became how to take this fledgling program in a little corner of Ohio, and expand it into a groundbreaking statewide operation. This was where Frank's talent and skill proved pivotal. When the program began, the term 'World Wide Web' didn't even exist. Classrooms had no computers or smart boards. Frank was never intimidated by the transformational

birth of the digital age, rather, he embraced it. He was an early leader in creating computer programming, including the elaborate scoring system that are used in today's tournaments.

Lorraine and Frank poured more than 30 years of their lives into Power of the Pen as they worked tirelessly to expand the program throughout the entire state of Ohio. Lorraine provided the creative inspiration: raised funds; built a board of trustees, state committee, and network of volunteers and staff; implemented professional development; and communicated closely with coaches. She developed the holistic training and criteria used by writing coaches and judges. Frank worked behind the scenes to support each of these endeavors, as well as manage registration, scoring, the website, and the business aspects of running a nonprofit organization.

Lorraine's belief in the power of middle school students' voices was unwavering. Reflecting in 2016 on Power of the Pen's connection with Christa McAuliffe, Lorraine noted the similarities between the program's young writers and astronauts: "They have donned the wings of imagination with which to dream, the audacity to believe. And the courage to soar." Thanks to Frank and Lorraine, tens of thousands of Ohio's young writers have been given the opportunity to soar.

Family members have established the Founders' Award in Memory of Frank and Lorraine Merrill with the Springfield Foundation to honor annually an exceptional writer. Few things would give Frank and Lorraine greater happiness than to know that, long after they are gone, Power of the Pen will continue to nurture young voices.



“They have donned the wings of imagination with which to dream, the audacity to believe. And the courage to soar.”

– Lorraine B. Merrill

– courtesy of **Power of the Pen**

2021-2022 Scholarship Stats

THE SPRINGFIELD FOUNDATION IS PROUD TO AWARD **398 TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS** FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



THANKS TO YOU **\$613,250** WAS AWARDED TO LOCAL STUDENTS FURTHERING THEIR STUDIES

For those looking to apply, the 2022-2023 Springfield Foundation scholarship application will be available online at www.springfieldfoundation.org from December 17, 2021 through February 18, 2022.

Scholarships are an Anchor, Keeping Students in School and on Track

Mr. Robert Farish was born in South Vienna, moved to Springfield, graduated from Springfield High School, and later lived in New Carlisle. He was a World War II veteran



and was a co-owner of The Robert Farish Company, General Contractors. Mr. Farish left a gift of \$200,000 in his will to the Springfield Foundation, to establish a fund to provide education and training in the building trades for residents of Clark County. Through the help of the Springfield Foundation, the Robert M. Farish Family Building Trades Education Fund Scholarship Program has awarded over \$150,000 for scholarships and projects. This Fund's balance is currently over \$285,000, meaning it will continue to make awards for many years to come.



Mr. Jake Martin, interviewed below, is a Senior Project Manager at Neyer (Commercial Real Estate Development) in Cincinnati, and is a four-time recipient of this scholarship.

How did you learn about the scholarship?

JM: My mom brought it up to me when it was printed in the Springfield News-Sun. My senior year in high school was in 2006 and I was looking to further my involvement in construction after attending JVS for carpentry. I researched college programs and only a few had construction management programs. I decided on Bowling Green.

How has the scholarship aided in your education and career?

JM: For me, as a first-generation college student, it helped a lot. My parents gave me lots of opportunities, but we didn't have a ton of money. The scholarship was a huge help, especially since I took on the whole expense. It kept me in school. I graduated in four and a half years (in 2010) and I was offered a job six months before I even graduated. I've worked on everything from \$30 million to \$200 million dollar projects from the start of design and preconstruction all the way through to completion.

What did this scholarship mean to you?

JM: Having this scholarship was like having an anchor to keep me focused and keep me in school. Having that extra push to retain the scholarship, kept my head in the right place to graduate on time. It helped me land a job and kept me on track.

What advice would you give someone starting off in your career or with the scholarship process?

JM: My advice would be to go all in, take it seriously, and learn as much as you can. Stay focused on your end goal. Stay focused on your future from the beginning. I remember looking at my textbook at JVS. There was a table showing career progression in building trades. It said, after a four-year degree, you can become a Project Manager or an Executive at a company. I circled that, thinking "I want to achieve that." And here I am doing that now!

Fall New Funds

Ashfaq and Afshan Ahmed Foundation

Family Advised fund established by Ashfaq and Afshan Ahmed to support local non-profit organizations.

Robert G. and Ruth E. Bayley Unrestricted Fund

Established to support charities within our community through the Springfield Foundation's grantmaking process, providing an opportunity to support the most critical needs within our community.

Helen J. Brumfield Scholarship Fund #2

Established upon the passing of Helen J. Brumfield, this Fund provides a renewable scholarship for graduates of any Clark County High School student pursuing a degree in the field of education.

Donzil Hall Scholarship Endowment Fund

This scholarship, established by the Donzil Hall Scholarship Endowment Committee, awards a one-time gift to deserving athletes graduating from Graham High School in honor of the great Coach Hall.

High Street UMC Youth Programs Endowment

Established to provide unrestricted support for the Youth Programs at High Street UMC.

B-W Greenway Community Land Trust Endowment Fund

Established to monitor the condition, support the maintenance and the restoration of the wetlands and woodlands of B-W Greenway Community Land Trust's property in Clark County.



If you would like to set up a fund at the Springfield Foundation, contact Sarah McPherson at **937-324-8773** or sarah@springfieldfoundation.org.

Welcome to new Springfield Foundation staff!



Raphael Allen, a Detroit, MI native moved to Yellow Springs, Ohio after being adopted at the age of 15. He attended Wittenberg University out of high school where he played Football and ran Track. Later, he transferred to Wright State University where he obtained a double Bachelor's and Master's degree. Raphael is pursuing his passions of not only building up underserved and disadvantaged populations but doing what he loves the most, which is youth outreach. Raphael joins the Springfield Foundation team as the Director of Community Outreach.



Sarah McPherson comes to the Springfield Foundation as Director of Marketing and Development after working at the Springfield Arts Council for nearly nine years. Before moving to Springfield, Sarah was the Executive Director of the Atlantic Avenue Local Development Corporation in Brooklyn, New York. While in NYC, Sarah also directed and stage managed many theatrical productions. She moved there after graduating with a BFA from the School of Theater within Ohio University's Honors Tutorial College. Sarah is excited to continue her work serving the Springfield and Clark County community through the Springfield Foundation.



Springfield Foundation

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Snap it!

Don't forget to include the Springfield Foundation in your estate planning. To learn more, visit our website or call our office.

Three trustees end their tenure on the Springfield Foundation Board



Darrell Kitchen joined the board in 2014 and served on several committees while on the board. He also served on the Executive Committee as the Vice-President and President. The foundation has benefited greatly from Darrell's extensive not for profit experience.



Brian Smith has been on the board since 2017 and has served as the Foundation's Treasurer and been on several committees. Brian brought a wealth of financial knowledge to the board and will be missed.



Steve Neely joined the board in 2013 and served on several committees. Steve was on the Executive Committee and served as Vice President and President. Steve has served on several boards in the community and his insight was much appreciated.

The Foundation appreciates the time and commitment that Darrell, Brian and Steve have made. We know they will continue to be involved with the Foundation and wish them all the best!