

The Drews Family Gives Back through a Scholarship

David and Lisa Drews recently established a scholarship fund to honor his parents, Al and Virginia Drews. One 4-year, \$10,000 scholarship is awarded each year to a Lakeshore High School graduating senior planning to attend a prestigious in or out of state college/university (Big Ten caliber or higher) and demonstrating the highest level of personal expectations in his/her college and professional career.

“We decided to honor my father and mother for all they've done for us,” David Drews said. “It was through their encouragement and support in pursuing a college education that my four brothers and I have been able to live out our dreams. We wanted a way to help others do the same, and this scholarship program, administered by the Berrien Community Foundation, is the perfect means to do it.”

Encouraging their sons to pursue college educations came naturally to Al and Virginia Drews. During high school, Al (R.A.) Drews suggested to his father that he would like to go to college. His father pulled out his paycheck from the Cooper and Wells hosiery factory and simply said "You don't need an education in this country, you just need to work hard". After six years of working in a Whirlpool factory and serving his country in Korea, Al Drews realized greater opportunities were afforded those with college educations. As a result, he went to Lake Michigan College for an Associates Degree.

Thereafter, he worked for over 30 years as a designer for Whirlpool's laundry group. During this time, he saw first hand the many additional opportunities afforded those holding four-year degrees. As a result, he instilled in his five sons the need for a college education. He always said "You can be anything you want to be, if you put your mind to it".

His wife, Virginia, was there every step of the way providing support of the same objectives. When the going got tough and any of her sons questioned pushing onward, Virginia's kind and supportive words gave the encouragement needed to continue. In the end, the aspirations for their sons became reality. Each has a Bachelor's Degree, and three have Master's Degrees from top educational institutions. One is a sales professional, another a marketing professional, yet another a civil engineer, and two are financial professionals.



David Drews

“In my case, it is simply amazing to me that a kid from Stevensville could get a Bachelor’s degree at Michigan State, an MBA from the University of Michigan, and use that education to help grow a small US-based display and exhibit company into the 20th largest advertising/marketing agency in the world doing business in every major economy around the globe,” shared David Drews, “My parents’ support was the beginning of this amazing journey for me.”

The Drews and their five sons epitomize the American Dream that can be attained with college educations. Scholarships were key in making college education affordable and allowing the Drews' sons to live out their dreams.

David was especially appreciative of a Kiwanis Club scholarship. “During my senior year at Lakeshore, I made the decision to attend Michigan State University. Since I needed to pay for college myself, I pursued every scholarship available. When I received a \$750 scholarship from the Kiwanis Club, I felt like I had won the lottery! Though it did not cover all my expenses, it greatly helped,” David said, “To my surprise, when I sent a thank-you note at the end of my freshman year with a copy of my transcript, the scholarship was renewed. Each year this happened, totaling \$3,000! I couldn’t believe my good fortune.”

“Now, it’s time to ‘pay back’ those that helped me by providing the same opportunity to other students of Lakeshore High School,” David shared, “We also wanted to honor my parents for their leadership, persistence, and positive reinforcement given to us. The Drews Scholar program is a wonderful way to do this.”

The application and additional information about the Drews Scholar scholarship are available on the Berrien Community Foundation's web site (www.berriencommunity.org, Scholarship page) or through the Lakeshore High School counseling office. For more information about the Berrien Community Foundation’s charitable work, please call 983-3486.