



Shawnee Scholarship Program Update

Together We GIVE, So They Can SUCCEED

Winter
2024

Welcome to the first Shawnee Scholarship Program Update for 2024! This edition announces the Ron Huber Scholarship, shares some insights from donors and past scholarship recipients, and introduces you to Abagael Wood, SHS school counselor and a valuable member of our Advisory Board.

In the Spring of 1927 the first graduating class of fourteen students received their diplomas from Shawnee High School. Since that day thousands of young people have walked in the doors of Shawnee High School and walked out as graduates. In 2027 Shawnee will celebrate 100 years of student success.

To highlight this significant milestone, the Lima Shawnee Alumni Legacy Scholarship Program was established.

This scholarship program provides a way for 100 years of Shawnee classmates and generations of Shawnee families to join fellow alumni to celebrate their time at SHS and build a legacy of support for future graduates. It is a great opportunity for donors to honor the special people at Shawnee who contributed toward their success. It is also a way to honor the many generations of family members who have attended Shawnee across the decades.

To date, 18 Shawnee graduates have received scholarships, providing \$34,000 in aid to deserving recipients. Please join us in supporting Shawnee graduates. [Donate now!](#)

The Ron Huber Scholarship

The Lima Shawnee Alumni Legacy Scholarship program is privileged to announce a new named scholarship. This scholarship is in honor of Ron Huber, a Shawnee coach, teacher, and administrator who dedicated over thirty years to improving the lives of Shawnee High School Students.

Ron is a 1962 graduate of Lima Senior High School. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Bluffton College and is a member of the Bluffton University Athletic Hall of Fame. An outstanding tennis player, Ron was undefeated in regular season play during his college tennis career, with his only loss in the quarterfinals of the NAIA national tournament. He went on to win the Lima city singles and doubles titles multiple times in the 1970s.

Ron began his thirty-year association with Shawnee in the Fall of 1967. Over the next thirty years he was a Social Studies teacher, tennis coach, and assistant principal at SHS before retiring from Shawnee in the Spring of 1998.

Coach Huber's Shawnee High School teams won 12 Western Buckeye League boys titles and 8 WBL girls crowns. He coached a state-champion doubles team and a three-time individual state champion. Dozens of his former players went on to play college tennis, many at the Division I level. His high school coaching record was 446-127, at one point the eighth best among Ohio tennis coaches.

More than just a tennis coach, Ron was an excellent teacher, and in 1990 was named Ohio History Teacher of the Year. After he earned his master's degree in educational administration from the University of Dayton, he became assistant principal of Shawnee High School. Upon retirement in 1998, Ron was able to devote more of his time to another of his passions – rare books – and today

operates an on-line bookstore specializing in used and rare books. Still, he couldn't leave tennis behind, and in 2011 Ron returned to Bluffton University as the women's tennis coach, resurrecting the program after a two-year absence.

Ron's commitment to the students whose lives he touched is still evident today. Michael Jones, a 1975 Shawnee graduate, state qualifier as a member of the tennis team while at Shawnee, and currently an attorney in Westerville, OH, is one of the originators of this tribute. "Coach Huber was an outstanding teacher and coach," said Mr. Jones, "but first and foremost he is a great person. As I realize how fortunate I was to attend Shawnee and experience the positive influence Coach Huber had on my life, it is truly an honor to be a small part knowing that Coach Huber will be forever remembered and associated with helping a deserving student fulfill his or her dreams."

Jim Goldman, also a 1975 SHS graduate, and Mr. Jones' doubles team partner at the state championships, credits Coach Huber as an inspiration for his love for the game. "It has been my good fortune to have had such a wonderful coach and mentor," said Mr. Goldman. "As I reflect on my playing days at Shawnee, Ron was a catalyst for many wonderful life-long memories. This 'pay it forward' scholarship is consistent with Coach Huber's efforts over the years to positively impact all those he touched."

The Ron Huber scholarship is open to all Shawnee graduating seniors and will provide a \$2,000 grant to any graduate continuing their education at a two- or four-year university, vocational school, or trades-based program. Additional consideration will be given to those students involved in community or extra-curricular activities, maintained a job outside of school, or had other unique qualifications.

Dr. John Stechschulte is a 1973 SHS graduate and one of the driving forces behind the Ron Huber Scholarship. A four-year member of the tennis team, John summarizes quite well the reason for this tribute. “Coach Huber has always been a treasured teacher, tremendous coach, and trusted school colleague. He is known for his deep and genuine care of those with whom he interacts. That is why he can remember everyone at SHS, and even tell a funny or touching story about our fellow students and teammates as well as our teachers. SHS will always remember and thank Mr. Ron Huber.”

The Ron Huber Scholarship Fund is actively accepting donations with the hope that as it grows, it will be able to provide much needed support to many graduates in the years ahead. To make a contribution to The Ron Huber Scholarship Fund, or to find out more about the Shawnee Scholarship Program, please visit www.LimaShawneeScholarshipFund.org. *Named scholarships are a wonderful way to honor the special people at Shawnee who contributed toward their success. It is also a way to honor the many generations of family members what have attended Shawnee or simply a way to “pay it forward.”*



Steven J. Gordon, a 1993 graduate and recipient of the Shawnee Distinguished Alumni Award, has provided scholarship support to Shawnee graduates for over a decade.

His family moved from Pittsburgh to Lima in 1986 when Steve and his brother, Dave, were about to enter sixth and second grades, respectively. It didn't take long for Steve to become acclimated to Shawnee. “My parents were very thoughtful regarding the timing of the transition and moved us at the beginning of the summer so that we could have an opportunity to make new friends before the school year started in August,” Steve recalls, making the move comfortable. While in high school, Steve participated in football and was an active member of the student government. During his four years in student government, he remembers his interest in philanthropy began to take form personally when he helped organize various fundraisers, along with the annual blood drive at Shawnee.

Upon graduation from Shawnee, Mr. Gordon earned a bachelor's degree with an emphasis in finance from Penn State University. At Penn State, Steve was an Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity member and served as President of the Interfraternity Council his senior year. Steve also actively participated in Penn State's Dance Marathon, one of the nation's largest student-run philanthropies that benefits the Four Diamonds Fund, annually raising over \$15 million for children afflicted with cancer. “While the event takes place during one weekend in February, it takes almost a year to plan and fundraise. The whole campus shuts down for the weekend, and you stand on your feet for 48 hours. No matter how tired you are or how much your feet hurt, spending the last few hours with the children is an experience I will never forget,” said Steve. Today, at Penn State, an endowed scholarship bears his name for undergraduate students majoring in finance.

After Penn State, Steve joined the prestigious Wall Street firm Bear Stearns. While at Bear Stearns, senior employees were required to allocate 5% of their annual compensation to philanthropic causes. “Once I was promoted to Managing Director, I knew immediately that I wanted to give back to my high school and help provide financial support for college. I recognized I was so fortunate for my friends and my experience at Shawnee.” Role models at Shawnee have also played a key role in Steve's life. He cites football coach Dave Heineman, Student Government advisor Kathy Naab, and Principal Don Wade as individuals who contributed to his appreciation of his time at Shawnee. And Shawnee graduates have benefited greatly. Since 2010, Steve has provided over \$125,000 in financial support to nearly one hundred Shawnee High School graduates.

Today, Steve, his wife Ariele, and their three children, Sammy, Ryan, and Leia, live in New York City, where Steve is a Managing Director of Pearlmark, a commercial real estate private equity firm. While ever involved with all his family's activities, Steve still takes the time to work on behalf of many charitable causes, including being a valuable member of the Lima Shawnee Alumni Legacy Scholarship Program Advisory Board. ***Thank you, Steve, for your devotion to family, faith in Shawnee, and dedication to making the world a better place.***

Donors to the Lima Shawnee Alumni Legacy Scholarship Program feel compelled to give for many different reasons. Many have a sense they are only temporary stewards of the money they have earned or inherited. All, however, know their gift can change lives. They understand that they are making an investment in the future of Shawnee graduates. While their gift may bring them joy and satisfaction, they also know they are helping solve a pressing and urgent problem – the ever-increasing cost of education.

Everett S. Kirk III, is one of those donors. Mr. Kirk is a 1971 graduate of Shawnee. “Butch”, along with his brother and two sisters, attended grades 1-12 at Shawnee. His two daughters and son also attended Shawnee Local Schools for all twelve years. In addition, he has had five grandchildren attend Shawnee.

“Life is a great adventure after all” is one of Mr. Kirk’s favorite quotes. “I had a new teacher every year,” said Butch, “and each teacher was a mentor.” He particularly remembers a comment made to him by his sixth-grade teacher, Mr. Deerhake - “Someday you will be a leader.” His high school football experience also was “A great life lesson learned in unity, team spirit, community, and to never give up.”

Evidence of leadership, faith, integrity, and entrepreneurial spirit are important criteria for **The Kirk Family Foundation Scholarship**. After graduation from Bowling Green State University in 1975 with a BS in Business Administration, Butch coaxed his grandfather, Everett S. Kirk, out of retirement and together they founded International Tank Service, Inc (ITS). “We started out at my grandfather’s kitchen table with the clothes on our back,” said Mr. Kirk. Today, Butch serves as President and CEO of ITS, one of the nation’s most respected full-service, above ground storage tank providers. Headquartered in Lima, OH, where he works alongside his three children. ITS has collaborated with many Fortune 100 companies, including Chevron, Marathon Petroleum, Phillips 66, Valero Energy, DuPont, Proctor & Gamble, IBM, GM and GE. With field offices across the United States, ITS also provides services in both Canada and Venezuela.

“I didn’t really want to go to college,” said Mr. Kirk, “but I knew, to get a good job or be ‘successful’, I had to. In high school, I was a B and C student. In college I was a B and C student. You don’t have to be a 4.0 student to be successful in life. It’s hard work, it’s sweat, it’s don’t give up. You can do this.”

“When I started the business,” said Butch, “I had people tell me ‘In order to be successful you have to cheat a little bit to stay in business’ and that’s the biggest lie of all.” He went on to say, “Just do the right thing. Follow the Golden Rule.”

A lifelong resident of the Lima area, Mr. Kirk is involved in many community organizations past and present. He currently serves as Chair of the Board of Trustees at Rhodes State College, Board of Trustees member for the John Keller Foundation, and member of the Heir Force Community School Board. He is past president of the Lima Family YMCA, past president of the Lima Rotary Foundation, past fund chair of the Boy Scouts of America, and a past member of the board of directors for Allen Lima Leadership. Mr. Kirk is also a member of the Lima Community Foundation Board of Directors and an Advisory Board member of the Lima Shawnee Alumni Legacy Scholarship Program.

Any final messages? “Have a strong belief in God; you’re going to need some outside help.” ***Butch Kirk, thank you for all you do, for the example you set, and for providing much needed support to Shawnee graduates.***



MEET ABAGAE WOOD, SHAWNEE HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Abagael “Abby” Wood is one of a select group of individuals in the challenging role of supporting, guiding, and advising Shawnee High School students. While many former students remember personal interaction with their assigned guidance counselor, today’s high school counselors find themselves in a very different role. “The role has evolved”, said Ms. Wood. When asked what she feels may be one of her most important roles, Abby said it is “to be a support for students and to help them figure out the best path to pursue after high school.” When asked about her greatest challenges, she replied that it was maintaining a balance between the role of a traditional guidance counselor with today’s need to help students deal with mental health challenges, in and out of the classroom. “We are often, more than not, a mental health support.” She made special note that her role is not to provide mental health counseling, but that it is important that school counselors “get to know all the students” and have a rapport with them. “We do a lot more talking, being an advocate to them, and helping connect them with resources. It’s not just scheduling, checking grades, and getting them tutors.” When asked how student life has changed since she was in high school, she observed that “Society has changed. Kids deal with anxiety, struggles with just getting to school, issues with social media, and family units continually changing.”

Tell us a little about yourself... “I grew up in Malvern, Ohio,” said Ms. Wood, “with a population of around 1200. I spent K-12 in the same building and was voted ‘Most Likely to Stay in Malvern’.” In high school, Abby was a four-year member of the basketball team, yearbook editor, National Honor Society, Student Council, Choir, Foreign Languages club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and an office aid.

Having had the opportunity to earn 20 college credits while still in high school, she went on to Ohio University and received a degree in Child and Family Studies. Her initial goal was to become a Child Life Specialist; a bridge between social worker and nurse, before switching to a non-profit focus. She did an internship with “Kids on Campus”, a grant-funded program where she worked with high school students. It was then that she decided to pursue her current role as school counselor and ultimately received her Master of Art & Education from Malone College.

How did you find your way to Shawnee? After college, Abby had the opportunity to fill in at Massillon Jackson High School, covering a medical leave and then a maternity leave for two of the school counselors. While there she recognized her passion for the role. In college, two of her four-year roommates were from Delphos, so when a high school counselor position opened at Shawnee, she was already somewhat familiar with the area. Abby is now in her fourth year at Shawnee, having been hired on St. Patrick’s Day in March of 2020.

Any particular impressions about Shawnee? Being from a small town and small school, she learned at an early age “what it meant to be in a community where everyone came together and supported each other.” She expressed a similar feeling about Shawnee, where people “value education and work to prepare students for college, vocational school, or the military. I appreciate that.”

With all her responsibilities, Ms. Wood also graciously shares her time and expertise by being a member of the Lima Shawnee Alumni Legacy Scholarship Advisory Board. “I am very thankful to be a part of this group. It’s been a way to feel more connected to the community and to the school and has helped me get to know the history of Shawnee. I am very grateful.” *Thank you, Abby, for all you do.*

Where do we go from here? Please read the following message from our scholarship recipients:

“The price of education can be incredibly daunting and overwhelming. Not only has the scholarship support made the financial burden of college much more bearable, but it has also encouraged me to challenge myself to the utmost degree knowing that I have supporters who believe in me and my ability to succeed. This financial support has pushed me to get more involved, work even harder in my classes, and stay productive throughout the hard times, because I hope to make those who financially invested in me proud.”

“Thank you to all who have donated. The assistance you have provided is immensely impactful. To those who have had the thought of donation cross your mind, thank you already for just taking the time to consider such a selfless and remarkable effort. The financial burden each student takes on when deciding to pursue a college degree is daunting, but by financially donating to committed students, you are investing in future teachers, health care professionals, lawyers, and CEOs. With these students already being equipped with a Shawnee education, they will no doubt be successful in any endeavors they will encounter, but your financial contribution, that communicates to that student that you believe in them and are willing to support them in reaching their goals, can truly be the difference that pushes that student to become a leader of this world.”

Contributions are the lifeblood of our mission, and we need your help! The program has a goal of reaching a \$1,000,000 endowment before the celebration of the 100th Shawnee High School graduating class in 2027. To reach that goal we need the help of everyone who has a stake in the future of Shawnee and its students. To date, we have raised over \$600,000 in contributions and provided \$34,000 in scholarships! You have helped us reach this point and for that, all of us associated with the program are most appreciative.

But we still have \$400,000 to go! We hope you will consider a contribution to the Shawnee Scholarship Program this year. A contribution of any size helps support Shawnee graduates. **To make a donation, go to www.LimaShawneeScholarshipFund.org.**

Best wishes,
Tom Orchard, SHS 1970
Chair, Lima Shawnee Alumni Legacy Scholarship Program
info@LimaShawneeScholarshipFund.org





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