

Winifred J. Simpkins/Spirit of Nursing Scholarship

My Mother, "Winnie," was a person of great strength and influence as well as a role model for her daughters and other young women. My Mother was also a Registered Nurse. She believed in her profession and always encouraged my sister and I to become nurses. She felt women should have no boundaries or limits in the "corporate" world and that a woman could be anything she wanted to be. My Mother largely shaped the person I became, and influenced my decision to become a Registered Nurse.

My Mother was tragically killed in a car accident shortly after she retired from the life-long career she loved so much. I honestly can not recall the number of people that came to the funeral to pay their respects. The number of people whose lives she had touched in some fashion was incredible. More than one Nurse came through to tell me stories of how my Mother had inspired them and encouraged them. More than one of her past patients came through to tell me how my Mother had held their hand in their time of need. More than one Doctor came through to tell me how much they had depended on my Mother to assist them. More than one family member and friend told me of times they called her for help with their sick children in the middle of the night. Losing her affected so many.



Some time after the funeral, I knew that although my mother was gone I did not ever want her to be forgotten. With this in mind, I chose to establish a Nursing Scholarship, in her name, through the Starke County Community Foundation. Although she is gone, she will continue to influence, encourage, and perhaps inspire residents of Starke County to follow in her footsteps to join the profession of Nursing. She left very big shoes to fill.

I loved my Mother very much and was overwhelmed with grief at her loss. My only regret is that at the time of her death, I was not thinking clearly about a legacy for her. We had not planned for this to happen and certainly did not expect her time to be so short. In retrospect, I wish I had the presence of mind at the time to request donations to a fund to be established for her in lieu of flowers.

-- Kathy Norem