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JONESBORO – A Jonesboro man's passion for helping individuals impaired by physical challenges has inspired his family to endow a scholarship program in his name at Arkansas State University.

The Maurice Ward Rehab Scholarship is now available to full-time students majoring in occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech or athletic training.

Carol Ward of Jonesboro wanted to provide scholarship assistance to students who have potential to aid others, much in the way her husband did during his career.

"Today I am pleased, along with my son Chris, his wife Shelby, and my granddaughter Averie, to endow a rehab scholarship in the College of Nursing and Health Professions in memory of my late husband, Maurice Ward."

Ward, who died in 2001 following a five-year battle with prostate cancer, was a Marine Corps veteran. He worked in the shoe repair business for 18 years before joining the staff of Jonesboro Prosthetic and Orthotic (JP&O) Laboratory in 1992.

"While working for David Yates at JP&O, he was sent to Northwestern University to obtain his certification in orthotic footwear," Mrs. Ward continued. "His passion was helping people challenged with cerebral palsy, especially children, and post-polio patients."

In addition to formal education, there are personal qualities those earning the scholarship will need.

"I would like the recipients of this scholarship to know that, along with their degree, a spirit of service and compassion is needed in the field of rehabilitation," she continued. "It was Maurice's passion for helping people attain their potential that drove him in his work. Maurice worked hard all his life and his family always struggled financially. I know that he would be proud this scholarship will aid students who are having a difficult time paying for their education."

Dr. Susan Hanrahan, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions, commented on the significance and generosity of the endowment gift.

"This is a perfect tribute to the memory of Maurice. He was a man who loved working with patients and moving them to a higher level of function through his orthotic interventions," Hanrahan emphasized. "He also worked well alongside so many other health care providers to achieve those maximum patient outcomes.

"He cared about the people and his work. This gift will allow students to carry on his spirit in their studies and their practice," she added. "My thanks to Carol and her family for establishing a scholarship program through this very special gift."

Earnings from the scholarship endowment will support the scholarship, which is renewable for one year if the recipient continues to meet criteria. Selection is made by the College of Nursing and Health Professions Scholarship Committee.

For additional information on scholarship endowments and other methods for assisting deserving Arkansas State students, contact the Office of Development at the Cooper Alumni Center, 2600 Alumni Blvd., or call (870) 972-3940.

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Photo caption: Carol Ward (center) visits with Dr. Susan Hanrahan, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions, and Dr. Jason Penry, vice chancellor for University Advancement.

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