

THE VIRGINIA WALL SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Virginia B. Wall

In 1986 the Chillicothe High School classes of the fifties held their second Maxi reunion. Virginia Wall and Coach Bob Fairchild had coordinated the first Maxi in 1981 and served as co-chairmen of the event. Five years later the two of them were serving in the same roles once again. Fairchild was himself a graduate of the fifties and a former student of Virginia Wall. At the Maxi II Reunion program held in the Chillicothe High School auditorium on June 14, 1986, Master of Ceremonies Chuck Haney announced that the planning committee wished to honor Virginia Wall in a special way. They had decided to establish a scholarship in her name, with an initial funding of \$500 from the

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YES, I want to make a donation to the Virginia Wall Scholarship fund and I understand it is tax deductible.

NAME: _____ AMOUNT \$ _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Detach this portion and send it with your donation to:

Virginia Wall Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 463, Chillicothe, MO 64601

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Maxi funds. It came as a complete surprise to Virginia Wall, but it certainly did not catch her without words. "Well," she exclaimed in response, "talk about giving flowers to the living!"

When the program was over, many of the attendees made their way to the stage and added their donations to the fund. That night alone brought over \$500 in additional funds and more soon followed. The Constitution-Tribune promoted and publicized the scholarship and donations began to come in from other classes, friends, parents, and even some anonymous donors.

The law firm headed by Don Chapman, Jr. (who was also a former student of Virginia Wall) handled the legal work to set up a "not-for-profit foundation." Don provided the service at no charge and even offered the use of a meeting room for the annual business meetings. The first meeting of the Virginia Wall Scholarship Fund was held in that room on October 29, 1986. The by-laws provided for at least five directors plus Virginia Wall as an ex-officio member. Because Miss Wall was still a teacher at the high school, she would not become a voting member of the board until her retirement. The new directors (all from the fifties classes) were Charles (Chuck) Haney, president; Dottie (McQueen) Yeomans, vice president; Earle Teegarden, Jr., Treasurer; Bonnie (Boude) Mitchell, secretary; and Charlotte (Miller) Alexander, board member. Total beginning funds of the corporation amounted to \$2792.74.

A second meeting was held on November 5th of that year and the treasurer reported the first large donation received in the form of a check for \$1000 from Mrs. Mildred Litton, mother of the late Jerry Litton, U.S. Congressman and 1955 graduate. A letter was drafted at that meeting that was to go out to all the fifties graduates

with a coupon to be used for donations. A third meeting was held on December 4th to examine and accept the by-laws and by the time the fourth and final organizational meeting was held on December 12, 1986, the treasurer was happy to report a new balance of \$7690.74.

The by-laws required that at least one scholarship be given each year to a graduating senior in an amount of at least \$500. The number of scholarships and amounts could be increased according to the funds available. Requirements for applicants included ranking among the top 10% of the graduating class, completing four years of English, and attending Chillicothe High School for four years. The applicants were also to submit a written application to be reviewed by the board of directors. The first scholarship for \$500 was awarded in the spring of 1987. After that time, the amounts were increased as additional funds became available, and in 1994 the board was able to add a second-place award. There have also been times when ties in the voting have resulted in duplicate awards. In 2008 the amounts were increased to their present levels of \$3000 for first place and \$2000 for second. The phenomenal growth of the fund has allowed the amounts to leap from a beginning of \$500 each year to the current \$5000 per year.

Donations have continued to come in throughout the twenty-three years since the organization's beginning. Various classes have made donations following their reunions in honor of their own class; some donations have been made as memorial designations in honor of deceased graduates or sometimes in honor of their parents or other relatives; many graduates include the scholarship fund with their annual charitable donations; and one particular anonymous donor made sizeable gifts in honor of Miss Wall's years of teaching. In all cases, Virginia Wall writes thank-you notes to all donors, acknowledging

their contributions and personally thanking them. In fact, the fund recently had to reorder a new supply of note cards to replace the hundreds that she has written.

In 1991 Virginia Wall retired from teaching and joined the board of directors as a voting member and in 2003 Scott Stephens (class of 1973) was added to the group. In 2008 founding director Dottie Yeomans Maberry retired from the board and in April, 2009 Margaret (Grouse) Deatz (class of 1963) joined as a new member. The most recent change was made in November of 2009 with the addition of Brent Turner (class of 1976). The by-laws stipulate that all board members, with the exception of Virginia Wall, must be graduates of Chillicothe High School.

The committee from the Maxi II reunion had no idea what they were setting in motion in June of 1986. "Incredible!" is the term that Chuck Haney uses today. Chuck has served as president of the organization until this year, 2009, when Virginia Wall reluctantly assumed the presidency and Chuck became vice-president. With the awards made to the graduating class of 2009, the Virginia Wall Scholarship Fund has granted the amazing amount of \$52,850 in a total of forty one coveted Virginia Wall Scholarships.

Donations to the scholarship fund are always welcome and may be made to:

**Virginia Wall
Scholarship Fund
P.O. Box 463
Chillicothe, MO 64601**