



It Doesn't Take Straight A's to Earn a Scholarship at YC

Don and Barbara Michelman have varied interests at Yavapai College, and in their philanthropy.

"I think we took our first course over 15 years ago with OLLI, shortly after we moved here and have always enjoyed it," Don says. He also joined the Yavapai College Foundation (YCF) Scholarship Committee roughly a decade ago, which led to a leadership position. "I've been on the [Foundation] Board now for 9 years and have held several offices."

Barbara is involved with the Prescott Chapter of the American Association of University Women who work closely with YCF to support a scholarship for female students in STEM as well as a fund that helps students with childcare expenses at the Del E. Webb Family Enrichment Center at Yavapai College.

"While volunteering with Prescott Area Habitat for Humanity we got the idea to start a scholarship. Here are families that can barely afford a home; how are they going to afford going to college? Let's find a way for that," Don says.

Don and Barbara started the JOBB Scholarship in 2015 – named after their parents June, Otto, Bob and Betty – and have additionally designated a residual percentage of their living trust to be split between their endowed scholarship and the Fund for YC (unrestricted funds to be used in the area of greatest need). JOBB is for students in any area of study at Yavapai College, as long as they have demonstrated financial need and maintain a passing grade in their classes.

"One of the reasons that I like a scholarship based on financial need is that when I was going to school, all the scholarships were based on grade points. Engineering students typically don't have high grade point averages, so I didn't qualify for any scholarships," Don explains. "Also, when I went to graduate school, there were no scholarships based on financial need, so I had to take a student loan. My student loan was equal to what I earned the first year out of school. It took me quite a few years to pay that off and it was tight. I mean, *really* tight.

"So, I thought, if I can help somebody get started, then that's what I would want to do."

By working closely with the Yavapai College Financial Aid Department, YCF can confirm financial need through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) whereas third party organizations like community foundations and clubs don't have access to that information. "If you truly want your money to go to those with the most financial need, creating a scholarship through us can give you that peace of mind," says YCF Executive Director Mary Talosi.

Don and Barbara have a few charities near and dear to their hearts that will benefit when they pass on. It encourages them to know their gifts to Yavapai College and Yavapai College students make an impact.

“You may start off thinking you’re making a gift to help some student with what they want to do at the college here,” Don says, “but then you get the thank you letters and you’re looking at those and you realize something like this can change the trajectory of somebody’s life. We’re not just helping them graduate. We are changing a life out there. And in a way – with an education – that effects them positively down the road, and down the road, and so on ...”