

Lasting Tributes through CSM Memorial Scholarships

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Often, there is nothing beyond grief that a family can imagine following the passing of a child. The memories are strong, the hurt unbearable. But for several Southern Maryland families, the creation of a memorial scholarship fund to benefit students at the College of Southern Maryland has provided a sense of hope and healing. In creating a scholarship in memory of a former CSM student with dreams and aspirations, these families are not only providing a lasting tribute to their children, but are also supporting the dreams and aspirations of others. Here are their stories.

Brock Nikolas Guerrieri Memorial Scholarship, established Feb. 20, 2009

From the day he was born, John and Caroline Guerrieri, of Chesapeake Beach, had big dreams for their son Brock. In Brock they had a son who loved the outdoors, loved the water, loved sports, loved travel—and loved sticky rice. He also loved helping people. It was that love of people that led him to consider a career in nursing, which began with him enrolling in the pre-nursing program at the College of Southern Maryland.

“Brock always gave more of himself than he got back from others. He was a helping kind of person—a giving person,” said Caroline Guerrieri. “He wanted to go into nursing for that reason.”

Unfortunately, Brock’s dream of being a nurse would never be fulfilled as he died last November in a car crash. The Guerrieris remember spending the next few months in a fog.

“Over time we began thinking of ways to remember Brock in a positive way,” John Guerrieri said. “We already had a [financial] plan for his college and thought that maybe someone else could benefit—someone else could take on the nursing career that Brock would have had.”

In February 2009, the Guerrieris created the Brock Nikolas Guerrieri Memorial Scholarship Fund to support a second-year Calvert County nursing student at CSM. This fall will be the first time it is awarded to a CSM student in Brock’s memory.

Neale Chaney Slater Endowment Fund, established July 24, 2006

“Neale was the fourth generation of our family that was a member of the Mechanicsville Volunteer Fire Department,” said his mother Ellie Slater of her son’s passion for public safety work. “Neale’s great-grandfather and grandfather were among the founding members of that fire department.” Neale was also a member of the Mechanicsville Volunteer Rescue Squad. Ellie Slater said that she wanted to continue to support the things that Neale liked, and so the Neale Chaney Slater Endowment Fund was established with that in mind.

Neale Slater, who attended CSM as a student in the fire science program and who was a Maryland State Police cadet, died in April 2005 following a car crash. He was always into fire and rescue work, said his mother, but when he joined a state trooper friend on a patrol, he was hooked on police work.

Neale Slater had attended Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy in Leonardtown and graduated as the school’s top military student. He had also taken classes at CSM. The scholarship joins LHJNA and CSM by giving scholarships to CSM students who are graduates of the academy, who are members of a volunteer fire department or rescue squad, or who are students majoring in criminal justice or fire science.

A recipient of the Neale Chaney Slater Endowment Fund, Don Coleman of Chaptico, knew of Neale Slater while at LHJNA and learned of the scholarship through a mutual friend. “It is very generous and brave of them to do this after something as horrible as the tragedy of losing a son,” Coleman said of the Slaters. “I think it is very nice that [Neale] will be remembered by the people who will receive the scholarship.&r

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