

The Bill McKnight Legacy Scholarship

This scholarship was created by Steve Parsons for arts and humanities students of the queer community living in Kitsap/Bainbridge Island areas (preferred).

About the Creator:

Steve Parsons met Bill McKnight eighteen years ago and the friendship was instant. They met through what was then called Seattle AIDS Support Group (now Compassion & Choices of Washington), when they were both grieving the loss of people in their lives due to AIDS. Steve and Bill decided to meet for coffee, to know each other better and to work through their grief together. What started out as a valuable friendship became a story of true romance.

Bill McKnight had a successful career as an artist and designer for architecture firms and even large companies such as Nordstrom. He ended his career with his own business—Bill McKnight Design—based on Bainbridge Island and run by Steve. They were successful and worked with many families on the Island, even though he says Bainbridge wasn't always as gay-friendly as it is today. Bill encouraged Steve to found OutKitsap, a former grantee of Pride Foundation that supported the LGBTQ community in Kitsap County.

“When people are in love,” Steve says, “there is a respect and integrity between people—straight, gay, black, white, whatever. People could see that in us, and they wanted to be around us.” Bill McKnight passed away from cancer four years ago.

Through his grief, Steve Parsons decided to start a scholarship fund with Pride Foundation in honor of Bill. “The Bill McKnight Legacy Scholarship for Arts and Humanities,” he says proudly. “He was so gentle and shy, yet he had many words when it came to talking about design, poetry, and art. He was passionate about art.”

Steve explains about the scholarship fund, “People want to honor him. When they give freely, it’s a validation of our relationship and how much they adore him. It’s not about me, it’s about him. It’s a part of our love story... It’s all about love.”

Steve Parsons lives in Palm Springs, California & Bainbridge Island, WA.

