

The Bendiner-Morgenson Scholarship Fund

This scholarship was created by Doug Morgenson in 2001 to support students pursuing a career in human services, health sciences, or visual arts.

Words from the Creator:

This scholarship was established in honor of Bill Bendiner, my partner from 1978 until his death in 2001.

Bill and I first became acquainted with Pride Foundation in the 1980's. He subsequently helped Pride Foundation set up a rudimentary donor database in the early 1990's. As a result of that contact, we became aware of the good work and good deeds of the organization as well as the staff/volunteers. We both became committed to supporting the foundation. We were touched by the mission to raise the level of dignity and tolerance of everyone towards one another. Although not necessarily unique as a human rights organization, Pride Foundation was personally unique for us.

When Bill died from the long term effects of HIV in 2001, I wanted to use a portion of his insurance proceeds in a way he could be remembered and that would make him happy. But, perhaps more importantly, I felt this fund could serve as a source of support and personal validation for those who might not be fortunate enough to have that in their everyday lives. As a young kid in the Midwest, I was certain that I was alone in the world and had to protect what I considered to be my secret and look out for myself. I was distrustful of others. It was a very isolating childhood and early adulthood. It also took an emotional toll and the perceived need to lead a double life was angering. My hope is that this scholarship will enable others to feel less isolated and better able to pursue a productive and happy life both personally and professionally.

I cannot overemphasize that this scholarship isn't really about the money. Rather, it is meant to help others realize they are not alone. As I look at all the social changes we have experienced in the past 20 to 30 years, and especially in the last five to ten, I cannot help but reflect upon the wasted energy and effort that was required by me and millions like me simply to live our everyday lives free of condemnation from whatever source. In school, in the military, and in careers, we all endured a lot of needless grief and hassle.

The world, while still far from perfect, is better off because of Pride Foundation and similar organizations and individuals. So, I have a reason to feel good and empowered by supporting said efforts.

Doug Morgenson lives in Seattle, Washington.