

The Frank W. Ross Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship was created by author Jason Schmidt in 2015 to support LGBTQ and allied students under 21 years old who are living in poverty and have experienced housing insecurity, homelessness, or life within the foster care system.

Words from the Creator:

Frank W. Ross was born in Seattle, Washington in 1918 and worked primarily in public education, both as a teacher and school administrator. After a long career of public service in education, Frank retired in the 1980's and began volunteering with Senior Rights Assistance and the Chicken Soup Brigade, an organization that provided home support to people living with HIV/AIDS. Frank's work touched thousands of people, and his legacy lives on in the lives of generations of families whose lives are vastly improved by the seeds of kindness that Frank planted during his long career as a professional and a volunteer. Frank passed away in 2007.

In the course of his volunteer work with the Chicken Soup Brigade, providing basic services to people living with HIV/AIDS, Frank began caring for my father, Mark, who was suffering from end-stage AIDS. As a senior in high school, I had no plans for college or employment after my father passed away. Frank took me under his wing, guided me through the college admissions process, and helped me apply for financial aid. He also provided me with direct financial support, as repayment for a similar favor that had been done for him when he was a young man. He only asked that I pay the favor forward by helping someone else someday, explaining the origin of the tradition, and asking that person to continue paying the assistance of that long-ago patron forward. When I wrote a memoir about my childhood, including my experiences with Frank, a portion of the proceeds from that memoir went to establishing this scholarship.

The purpose of this scholarship fund is to provide education and opportunities to individuals who wouldn't otherwise have access to them and to encourage recipients to pay the gift forward. Those who receive assistance from this fund should be encouraged to succeed and excel in life, but they should also understand that the existence of this scholarship, and the opportunities it represents, is made possible through a tradition of giving. The recipients of this scholarship fund are therefore also encouraged to join that tradition, pay it forward, and make a positive difference in someone else's life someday.

Jason Schmidt lives in Seattle, Washington. To learn more about Jason and his relationship with Frank Ross, read his critically-acclaimed memoir, ["A List of Things that Didn't Kill Me."](#)