

Two New Educational Funds Established Honoring Loved Ones

The Gladys Douglas Educational Fund ~ *Written by Ian Douglas*

“Education, education, education” my mom, Gladys Douglas, a long time resident at the New England Deaconess Association (Deaconess) would often say in her somewhat labored post-stroke aphasic speech. Clearly my parents had a high regard for education and Gladys in particular valued the possibilities that education could provide for an individual.



Growing up in a working class home in Fitchburg, Massachusetts in the 1930's and 1940's, Gladys's educational opportunities were somewhat limited. Upon graduation from Fitchburg High School she trained as a nurse at what was then the Wellesley Hospital School of Nursing. As a pediatric nurse Gladys had a very fulfilling career serving the needs of children and their families for many years. Later in life, with additional training, Gladys continued to work with children as a tutor for emotionally disturbed and learning challenged high school students. To the end of her life Gladys thus saw herself as an accomplished nurse and teacher. And she never tired of making the connection between her nursing background and the many fine nurses at Deaconess.

Gladys took real joy in the professionalism and loving care provided by the nurses and staff at Deaconess. Nothing would make her happier than to see Deaconess staff grow and take on more responsibilities and challenges. I can so remember Gladys pointing out staff members who had begun at Deaconess in the dining services and then later, with additional education, became health aids and/or licensed nurses. There was nothing that would make Gladys more proud than to see people she knew and loved better themselves through ongoing education. For her, “education, education, education” was a ticket to success and happiness.

And so at the one-year anniversary of Gladys's death, we her family wanted to thank the staff of Deaconess for all that you gave to her during the twelve years she was a resident. The best way we could honor Gladys was to help provide ongoing opportunities for “education, education, education” for the Deaconess staff. To this end we have established The Gladys Douglas Educational Fund. The income from this modest fund will provide resources for continuing education and training opportunities for one or two Deaconess staff each year who will be named annually as Gladys Douglas Scholarship recipients. Perhaps over time other families might also establish similar educational funds in memory of loved ones. In so doing, the incredible staff at Deaconess will be acknowledged, celebrated, and encouraged through further education. What better way to thank the staff of Deaconess for all of their tireless efforts and loving care shown to our loved ones?

The Andy and Esther Skilling Alzheimer's Fund



Andy and Esther Skilling had a long and committed relationship with Deaconess Abundant Life Communities (Deaconess). They had been dedicated supporters of Deaconess long before they became the first residents to move into Newbury Court in 1993. Always concerned and active in their efforts to help Deaconess be its best, a fund was established in 2005 by Esther Skilling for the purpose of providing Alzheimer's education and training to Deaconess staff following the death of her husband.

When Esther passed away last year, the Skilling family made the decision to honor their parents by establishing the Andy and Esther Skilling Memorial Fund. Their gift will provide dedicated resources for Alzheimer's training and materials. The music room in **The Gardens** Memory Support Neighborhood on the Concord Campus was also dedicated in their honor. This room is now home to the Skillings' collection of books and music boxes where a plaque reads:

*In Loving Remembrance of Andy and Esther Skilling.
They served everyone they knew.
Newbury Court Residents 1993-2007*