Ben Sherrill was a faculty member and chair of the Social Work program at Northwest Nazarene College (University) from 1972 to 1986. During his tenure of leadership the social work program was developed, expanded and credentialed. Approval of the program by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) was granted in 1979. Ben was both a friend of students and an advocate for his students.

Ben served the college and his students through June 1986, when full accreditation of the Social Work program by CSWE was extended for seven years. He then accepted employment at Casey Family Program (Boise office) as a caseworker. Professional competence, diligence and loyalty characterize his career. He exhibits high standards of performance and expects the same for his social work colleagues.

Ben, born to the marriage of Ernest and Lear Sherrill, grappled as a child and teenager with the issues of injustice and empowerment. His family’s moves to different sections of the country exposed him to many different ethnic groups and subcultures. These experiences prepared him well to seek involvement with vulnerable and needy persons. His education at Bethany Nazarene College (Southern Nazarene University) with a B.A. in Sociology and Psychology (1963) allowed him to gain employment as a parole counselor at McLaren School for Boys in Salem in 1963. While in Oregon, he enrolled in a Master’s of Social Work program at Portland State University, graduating in 1972.

Ben and his wife, Nita, have three children, Dana, Melissa, and Kirk. All three children have chosen careers in human services, reflecting the concerns and compassion of their parents.

Ben’s former students, colleagues, friends, and family members who regard him a model of a superior social worker have funded this scholarship.

Criteria for the Award

1. Commitment to serving others;
2. Demonstration of academic ability;
3. Nomination by the Social Work Scholarship Committee;
4. Full-time student majoring in social work and approval for upper division classification by the Social Work Department.