Merilyn Stark Thompson first came to Northwest Nazarene College in 1962 as a college freshman. She graduated four years later with a degree in English and then married her sweetheart Robert (Bob) Thompson. Their home was blessed with three children, Michelle, Jason, and Mindee, whom they raised in both Nampa and Kelso, Washington.

Merilyn returned to NNC in 1970 as a professor of speech and forensics coach. She also served for several years as Junior Class advisor. Student evaluations have been full of evidence of her energy and kindness. Over her years of teaching she developed deep relationships with her students, many of whom call and visit her on a regular basis just to talk and share what is happening in their lives.

In 1996 Merilyn Thompson assumed her duties as Registrar. There is universal praise for the order and humanity she brought to that role. However, there was also a sense of sadness that such an excellent teacher no longer was in the classroom. In explaining the work of the Registrar’s Office, she said, “We listen to students and try to hear what they are saying beneath the words they are using. We believe that our office helps to develop Christian character in students by helping them become more accountable for their actions as well as solving academic problems. We believe our task...is to demonstrate the life and teachings of Christ through our own actions and interactions with students.”

In spite of some health issues and the untimely deaths of her husband and son in recent years, Merilyn continues to serve the Lord joyfully. She has a zest for living and is always up for a trip to the coast, camping, or shopping. There is hardly ever a time when she is not smiling. Her willingness to laugh, listen, and encourage makes her an asset to her family, her friends, her colleagues, and especially her students. Her daughters said, “She is not only an excellent mother and friend but also an example of what it means to truly be grounded in Christ. She has taken the graceful lead in our family to not only speak of but show us what it means to live in faith and let the joy of the Lord be her strength.”

This scholarship was established by her friends and former students to honor her 27 years of service to NNU by helping worthy students experience the same rich heritage of scholarship in the context of Christian commitment.

Criteria for the Award

1. Recipients are to be students who meet general scholastic requirements, show potential for academic success and degree completion, and demonstrate a growing Christian character.

2. Students must be declared majors in the Department of Communication Studies, actively intend a career in an area of public communication, speech-communication education, or mass communications, and have a minimum 2.5 GPA.

3. Financial need shall be a consideration in the awarding of this scholarship.

4. Recipients may receive the award in successive years, not to exceed four years.

5. Nominations for this award are to be made through the Department of Communication Studies and the Office of Financial Aid.

A most satisfying way to honor a loved one or friend is to invest in a life yet to be lived.
Gifts to NNU’s Endowed Scholarship Program become a “helping hand” to students as they prepare for their vocations and for lives of service to others.
For more information, contact the Office of University Advancement. NNU, 623 Holly St., Nampa, ID 83686. Phone (208) 467-8772.
Northwest Nazarene University admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.