

The Jim Barkman Memorial Scholarship

Jim Barkman was a man who truly loved his work and always helped anyone in need. Children held a soft spot in his heart, and he dedicated his life to serving young people.

Jim was born in Fulton County and graduated from Talma High School in 1963. He received his bachelor's degree from Manchester College in 1967 and later earned his master's degree from Ball State University. He married his second wife, Stephenia, while serving as Principal at Riddle Elementary School. She was a third grade teacher at the time and later moved to sixth grade, where she still teaches.

He served Riddle Elementary school for thirty-six years, where he taught fifth grade for eleven years before becoming Principal in 1978. He occupied the principal position for 25 years and was also the transportation director for the school system. The dedication he showed to the school and students was unrelenting, and he almost never took a day off.

"Jim was up early and ready every day, even when it was a snow day, because he had to go in and discuss closings," Stephenia said.

Other than being a teacher and principal, Jim was also a member of the Bethlehem Baptist Church, Rochester Optimist Club, and the National Principals Association. His dedication to service organizations, the agricultural community, and the church were widely recognized. Jim was also a lifetime farmer and a 4-H member since childhood. He was a very family-oriented man and had two children, two step-children, five grandchildren, and four step-grandchildren.

When Jim passed away on July 5, 2003, a scholarship fund was started in his honor. Stephenia wanted people to be able to commemorate Jim at his funeral by donating to a charitable organization, so she decided to start a fund with the help of the Community Foundation.

"I wanted something that would carry on Jim's legacy," she said. "I am so fortunate to have the Community Foundation. I couldn't do it without them."

The Jim Barkman Memorial Scholarship is awarded to qualified students who have gone to high school in Indiana for four years and is graduating from Rochester High School.

"The scholarship is designed to go to those who help themselves by helping others," Stephenia said.

To be eligible, students must have also previously attended Riddle Elementary School at any time and must have good academic performance and be involved in school, work, and the community.

