



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



For 30 years, William “Bill” Polito taught English at the Gates-Chili High School. He did not start college with the intent of becoming a teacher, but he was well read, smart, tenacious, loyal, and curious. He realized these traits would help guide him to a life he could be proud of and that would sustain his interests as life unfolded.

Bill spent much of his youth working jobs ranging from gas station attendant to working for trucking companies loading and unloading freight. He could have easily made a living in some of those jobs, but he wanted to be the first in his family to attend college. In 1960, he enrolled at Macalester College in St Paul, MN, with the thought of becoming a lawyer.

School was expensive, so he spent his summers and breaks working to save money to pay his tuition and living expenses.

It was during his college years that Bill became the individual and teacher that so many friends and students considered one of their best. School wasn’t always easy because he had to work so hard to pay tuition and living expenses. Classwork would interfere with his job duties, but he persevered because he believed in his choices and made it work.

To offset living expenses he roomed with people in similar situations, making many lifelong friends as a result. When a course was difficult, he worked the hours necessary to pass and worked with his professors to make sure he was working at the necessary level.

As an English teacher, Bill had the opportunity to use his mind on a daily basis. All teachers must work with people from all levels of society, all levels of intelligence, and all personality types - this is where Bill found the most joy in teaching. He recognized in every student that there was a capable and successful individual with their own thoughts, hopes and dreams.

Bill valued all of his students, especially individuals others might have already given up on. A’s are nice to have, but a person is more than their grades. What is their background, what obstacles have they had to overcome, do they treat others with respect, do they work hard? Bill often reached out to these students to try and encourage their personal growth.

This scholarship has been established to help a student Bill would have striven to help. The ideal candidate will be a tenacious, thoughtful, and industrious individual.

The William “Bill” Polito Memorial Scholarship Fund is administered by the Rochester Area Community Foundation. Information and applications can be found on the Community Foundation website, www.racf.org/scholarships.