**RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE TIME**

*Radford University is a place where investing in leaders of education has always been a primary goal.* Our innovative programs at RU prepare teachers, administrators, counselors and others for professions in general education, special education, physical education and community settings. Dr. Patricia Shoemaker, Dean of the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) said, “CEHD has been helping to shape the future since Radford University’s 1910 inception as a teacher preparation institution.”

This goal of nurturing future teachers is also at the heart of the **Hattie M. Strong Foundation (HMSF),** established in 1928. HMSF operates two programs, the first being the scholarship program aimed at college students enrolled in teacher-training programs at selected partnering institutions. The second program offers charitable grants that serve at-risk school-aged children enrolled in public or public charter schools in the Washington, D.C. area.

**How did Radford University and HMSF’s relationship come about?**

Well, it didn’t come about in a typical way as you might imagine. It was actually HMSF who found RU through searching the Internet for universities that were established as normal schools. Radford was founded in 1910 as the State Normal and Industrial School for Women. HMSF reached out to RU, visited campus and met with Dean Shoemaker. Through this encounter, a relationship between HMSF and RU was born. To date, three students at Radford University have each been honored with a $5,000 scholarship.
These scholarships help reduce financial pressures when outside employment is curtailed by the rigor of full time work in the classroom. This allows recipients to focus on their education and training without the stress of how they are going to pay for expenses and tuition.

Who was this Hattie M. (Corrin) Strong? Strong, born in 1864, supported herself and son by creating a combination hospital and hotel for gold miners in Alaska. She overcame challenges through her high energy, range of interests and ingenuity, and had a number of careers, including nurse, physician’s assistant, ticket agent and supervisor of a men’s club. After marrying Henry Alvah Strong, the first president of Eastman Kodak Co., in 1905, she vowed to dedicate the rest of her life to helping the less fortunate by establishing gifts and service agencies in the United States, Europe, Asia and Africa.

Hattie’s vision and the scholarships that HSMF provide today impact the university as well as the students who are fortunate enough to receive them.

In order to apply for the scholarship, student teachers must have a minimum 3.0 GPA, provide letters of recommendation and write an essay for the RU selection committee members. If a student teacher is selected as the recipient – the student...
teacher must remain in touch with HMSF to let them know how they are doing in their career.

“The HMSF is an organization of such joyous human beings, that it has been a pleasure and honor to work with them and have them select our education students as recipients of their generous awards. They are dedicated to teacher advocacy and development, at a time when teachers are often underappreciated,” said Fran J. Steigerwald, Ph.D., LPC, associate dean and director of field experience at Radford University.

Sigrid Reynolds, Vice President of HSMF, said they are always responding to the needs of the time and the foundation is always changing. When talking about Hattie, Sigrid expressed that “Hattie was a visionary woman and the foundation has continued to be a visionary institution.”

Radford University is fortunate to have foundations like HSMF who also believe in the vision and importance of education and our educators of tomorrow.

Q & A WITH BRITTANY WILLIAMS

Award recipient for 2012-2013

How did this scholarship impact your professional development?

Winning this scholarship greatly impacted my professional development. It allowed me to remove my energy from stressing about paying for school and actually place that energy in school. This blessing has allowed me to jump head first into the education pool. I have been able to spend more time building working relationships with individuals within the school.
because I haven’t had to rush to work every evening. More than anything, the Hattie M. Strong scholarship has greatly impacted my professional development by reminding and confirming for me, that I am not the only one with a philosophy built on hard work’s link to success.

**What did it mean to you to win the $5,000?**

Winning a $5,000 scholarship never seemed possible. I’ve always lived a life in which I clocked in as many hours as I could in order to pay the bills and there usually wasn’t much left in my pocked afterwards. This scholarship has changed that! For an entire semester, I have been able to fully reflect and submerge into my work within the elementary schools. I haven’t had to worry about tuition payments or anything like that! With that being said, this scholarship has done more than just pay a semester of my tuition. It has lifted an unbearable burden.

**Why did you choose your profession and what are your plans for the future?**

My desire to teach has been present since I was about 5 years old. It’s the only thing I’ve ever really wanted to do! It wasn’t until high school, however, that I realized it was what I needed to do. I went through a lot growing up. I did not have the cookie-cutter childhood that so many have. With a drug-filled, abusive home life, I somehow developed the belief that I had no right to go after my dreams.

My sophomore year of high school completely rocked my mental state. I was put in an English class with a teacher who was in no way ordinary. He made it clear from the beginning that he didn’t care who we had been the year before and that he only cared about who we chose to be each individual day. He held true to that agenda and after a year of being my teacher, he had taught me that I was worth dreams and goals.

From that point, I have been running face first toward my dream of becoming a teacher. It is what I love, but more than anything, I now know the impact that just one teacher can have on a student. And I want to be that one teacher!
After graduating in December 2012, I plan to apply to the surrounding counties of the New River Valley. I have faith that God is going to lead me where He needs me and as long as I give it my all, everything will work out.

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