

**The following is the story of the Gordon W. and Agnes P. Cobb Scholarship Fund of East Tennessee Foundation as described by Agnes' first cousins, Colonel Jerry Patterson and Judy Nolan:**

The Gordon W. and Agnes P. Cobb Scholarship Fund of East Tennessee Foundation (ETF) was established through a bequest left by Agnes P. Cobb Yoakum as a tribute to her late husband, Gordon Cobb, and to the field of medical science. The largest scholarship at East Tennessee Foundation, it offers \$10,000 per year renewable for up to four years.

Agnes P. Cobb's parents were divorced when she was a young girl, and her maternal grandmother, who owned a general store in Maryville, raised her. Her grandmother believed in hard work and passed this trait on to Agnes. Agnes worked in the general store after school, on weekends, and on holidays. She learned the value of hard-earned money. She wanted to go to college, but could not afford it, so her grandmother lent her half the funds to attend the University of Tennessee. Agnes was required to work to earn the remainder of the funds necessary to go to college. Agnes graduated with highest honors from the University of Tennessee College of Pharmacy in 1951, and became one of the first female pharmacists in Knoxville.

Agnes began her pharmaceutical career at Ellis & Ernest Drug Store in Knoxville, including working part-time there to help finance her pharmacy education. Gordon and Agnes were classmates in pharmacy school at the University of Tennessee. Not long after graduating from pharmacy school, Gordon and Agnes Cobb operated Sonner's Drug Store in Knoxville, which they owned. After Gordon's death due to medical complications in 1973, Agnes continued to operate the drug store for a number of years. When she retired, Agnes sold the drug store and the proceeds eventually became part of the endowment for the Cobb Scholarships.

The Cobbs believed in hard work, education, and concentrating on doing a superb job in everything they did, continuously improving their performance. In honor of her late husband and her commitment to medical care in Tennessee, Agnes P. Cobb established the Gordon W. and Agnes P. Cobb Scholarship Fund of East Tennessee Foundation in 1996. The scholarship criteria reflect the Cobbs' commitment to health care, to their community and to the future of Tennessee. Scholarship recipients must pursue a health care and/or medical-related field of study. The Scholarship is designed to benefit graduates of high schools in Blount, Loudon, and Knox Counties. This is because Agnes was born and raised in Blount County, Gordon was born and raised in Loudon County, and together they owned a pharmacy in Knox County. Because the future of health care in Tennessee was so important to the Cobbs, one of the criteria is that the recipients attend a college or university in the state of Tennessee. Finally, it is the intent of the scholarship to recognize outstanding academic achievement while providing financial assistance to help those students who may not otherwise be able to afford a medical education. In addition, students from a single family parent household are given some preference in the selection process.

Colonel Jerry Patterson and Judy Nolan, first cousins of Agnes Cobb, have been instrumental in the success of the Gordon W. and Agnes P. Cobb Scholarship from inception. They helped guide Agnes in her decision to create a scholarship as a fitting tribute. They have served on the scholarship selection committee since the first scholarship was awarded in the fall of 1999. When asked about the most rewarding part of being involved with the scholarship, both Colonel Patterson and Judy talk about helping outstanding students realize their dreams. "Seeing students succeed is our greatest pleasure," they agree. Judy describes the satisfaction of meeting the recipients and then following their progress throughout their academic careers. Health care related undergraduate majors are very challenging, and with the help of the Cobb Scholarship, recipients are able to focus on their studies, work fewer hours at outside jobs, and present a competitive application for medical or other post-graduate health education. Colonel Patterson

says, “It is very rewarding to see the outstanding youth in these three counties and to know our future is in good hands. It gives us vicarious pleasure to see them succeed in studies and in life.”

Each year a reception is held for the recipients of the Gordon W. and Agnes P. Cobb Scholarship and their families, attended by Colonel Patterson and Judy Nolan. This reception provides an opportunity for the students and Cobb family members to meet each other. Over the years students have kept in touch with the Colonel and Judy. They have been invited to weddings, medical school “white coat ceremonies,” and continue to enjoy taking Cobb recipients out for lunch. The Colonel and Judy agree, “We are always looking for ways to cheer them on!”

Judy and Colonel Patterson also believe that the Gordon W. and Agnes P. Cobb Scholarship contributes to our region by providing opportunities for outstanding students to gain a medical education and then give back to the community. It may also provide an incentive for high school students to study hard and do well in hopes of earning the scholarship.

When asked what advice they would give to individuals considering establishing a scholarship fund at East Tennessee Foundation, the Colonel and Judy are in agreement. “Keep it simple. Set the goals you want the scholarship to achieve. Then establish the criteria that will lead to those goals being achieved. Don’t add superfluous requirements that do not lead to achievement of those goals. Make it easy for the East Tennessee Foundation to administer the scholarship. They do a good job of it.”