



New York City Post's Scholarship Program

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Editor's Note: The following article, "New York City Post's Scholarship Program" by Brig. Gen. Walter O. Bachus, USA (Ret.), was published in the January-February 1979 issue of *The Military Engineer*. Founded in 1955, the New York City Post's Scholarship Fund (long supported by the Post's Annual Dinner Dance, which began in 1940) is the largest and oldest-running scholarship program in the Society, and remains dedicated to the principles and spirit handed down from its first chairman, Col. Joseph Markle, USA (Ret.), which are detailed in this *Historical Perspective* and echoed among its current-day leaders, as featured in this issue in *Post Best Practices* (pages 90-91). When engineers build, they build to last!

The Society's New York City Post has a Scholarship Program that many members have labeled without equal. The Scholarship Fund, established in 1955, has grown to an inviolate principal in excess of \$725,000. In 1978 alone, the Fund awarded 52 scholarships of \$750 each, aggregating \$39,000, to engineering students in 39 colleges and universities. All awards were made out of income produced by the Fund's inviolate principal. In 1979, scholarship awards of \$750 each, aggregating \$43,500, will be made to 58 engineering students, all out of income.

How the Program came about and the driving forces behind such an impressive effort are worth reviewing. The Society has long advocated the sponsoring of scholarship programs at the post and regional levels. Many have been established; still more are only in the embryonic stage. There are obviously many lessons to be learned from the experience of the New York City Post. Especially meaningful are the basic philosophy, managerial direction, and the techniques and methods employed by the post. A brief review should provide valuable guidelines for other posts which are just organizing a scholarship program or for other posts which are considering ways of expanding an existing one.

The New York City Post's Scholarship Fund was created to help worthy and needy students of engineering. Repeatedly stressed were the needs: (1) to encourage and help make possible the pursuit by engineering students of their engineering studies as they emerge as professional engineers in our society; (2) to promote the continuing development of a reservoir of competent engineers equipped to meet

and solve increasingly complex technological problems; and, (3) to help keep our country strong, secure, and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

During its first six years (1955 through 1960), the Fund was largely in the hands of the Sponsorship Committee of the post. Some \$20,000 had been accumulated and scholarship awards were few in number and small in amount. The beginning of a dramatic change took place with the designation in 1961 of Col. Joseph Markle as chairman of the Sponsorship Committee. Colonel Markle's job was to raise money for the Fund. His leadership, drive, and motivation have been the generating force behind the Program ever since.

By the end of 1962, the Fund's principal was raised to just under \$50,000. However, Colonel Markle was dissatisfied with the existing fund-raising process; he felt it was much too slow. Colonel Markle believed that something radical had to be done to build up the principal of the Fund to far more substantial levels at a faster pace. He believed that the principal of the Fund should be made inviolate to prevent invasion of principal for any reason, and that scholarship awards should be made only from income produced by the principal of the Fund. After almost a year of persistent effort and over formidable opposition, Colonel Markle persuaded the officers and directors of the post to declare the principal of the Fund inviolate. With that accomplished, he proposed, in December 1963, the creation of a "Name Scholarship"





Program. The proposal was adopted and, concurrently, the first “Name Scholarship” was endowed by Colonel Markle’s own law firm in his honor. At the firm’s request, the scholarship was called “The Colonel Joseph Markle Scholarship.” This “Name Scholarship” Program became the impetus needed to lift the Fund to the level it has reached today. Colonel Markle is convinced it will continue to lift the Fund to far greater proportions in the years to come.

Here is how the “Name Scholarship” Program works. The donor, whether an individual, a corporation, a partnership, or a group of individuals, may endow a “Name Scholarship” with a single tax-deductible gift of not less than \$10,000. The donor may elect whether the “Name Scholarship” shall bear the donor’s name or another name designated by the donor; for example, “The John Doe Scholarship,” “The XYZ Corp. Scholarship,” etc. Thus, a single gift of \$10,000 means that each year, in perpetuity, the gift will be awarded as “The John Doe Scholarship,” “The XYZ Corp. Scholarship,” etc. In effect, by making that single gift, the donor is making an additional gift of not less than \$750 every year thereafter to a worthy and needy student of engineering. No doubt this annual amount will, as it has in the past, continue to increase as the principal of the Scholarship Fund increases.

The “Name Scholarship” Program has had a strong appeal to donors. They have expressed great satisfaction from their participation in the Program and being identified in perpetuity with it. This is understandable when one considers the inherent merit of the objectives and purposes which, it is confidently expected, will carry the Fund to greater heights.

Colonel Markle and his committee decided that the scholarship recipients would be engineering students selected by the deans or directors of the engineering schools on the basis of worthiness and need. Therefore, as a matter of policy, neither the post nor the Sponsorship Committee has participated in the selection of award recipients. Such a policy assures objective choice, prevents the use of influence or favoritism, and protects the character of the Fund as a tax-free corporation under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

The New York City Post is proud to be able to report that since 1963 every dollar contributed has gone into the Fund intact and is promptly put to work; not one cent has been deducted for the cost of raising the funds. Administrative costs are inconsequential and come out of income. The concept of inviolate principal, adopted before the “Name Scholarship” Program was launched, assures that the principal, and the awards made from income, will continue to grow over the years in both amounts and numbers. This policy has been most successful and is especially important in these inflationary times.

Another unique feature of the management of the Scholarship

Program is the emphasis it gets at the New York City Post’s annual dinner dance, which is publicized as being “for the benefit of the Scholarship Program.” Money raising efforts for the Scholarship Fund are in large measure built around this affair, though solicitation of “Name Scholarship” endowments is a continuing process. The dinner dance normally is held in November at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. Attendance at the dinner dance has increased steadily each year; some 800 attended in 1978. An interesting and meaningful highlight of the affair is the presence and introduction of a number of the scholarship recipients.

Colonel Markle reports that, as of the end of 1978, 58 “Name Scholarships” will have been endowed with an inviolate principal in the Fund that will exceed \$725,000. He has every confidence that his avowed goal of driving the principal of the Fund to \$1

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million will be reached in the near future, and hopefully before he relinquishes his leadership role in the effort. He emphasizes that the need for scholarship help will always far exceed the ability of the Fund to meet it, and therefore the ultimate dollar goal must of necessity be open-ended and without bounds.

Colonel Markle’s deep sense of dedication to the maximal attainment of the objectives and purposes of the Fund, and of The Society of American Military Engineers, makes us confident that he will be glad to help other posts with advice based upon his experience in building the New York City Post Scholarship Fund to its current proportions. His initial plan was to use his own post as a pilot for the entire Society with the hope that many more posts would follow.

In 1968, some 10 years ago, when the principal of the Fund stood at approximately \$200,000, Colonel Markle was awarded The Society’s highest individual award, the Gold Medal, for his work at that time on the Scholarship Program. Growth of the principal from \$200,000 in 1968 to an amount now in excess of \$725,000 is evidence that his efforts and enthusiasm in behalf of the Fund, the New York City Post, and The Society have not diminished. So, in part, this article pays tribute to this outstanding American Military Engineer and to his untiring efforts, dedication, and leadership in The Society’s New York City Post. Having great Americans like Colonel Markle within our ranks enriches The Society and makes us proud to be associated with an organization that is “Dedicated to the National Defense.”

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