

# 172-year-old lodge creates legacy with \$15K endowment to BC3

Students from all BC3 locations can apply for \$200K in scholarships beginning Wednesday

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(Butler, PA) Butler County's 172-year-old and last Independent Order of Odd Fellows lodge, the vast majority of its 24 members of retirement age or beyond, has established what its office holders and Butler County Community College administrators say will be the fraternal organization's legacy through its first financial gift to an institution of higher education.

Connoquenessing Lodge No. 278's endowment of \$15,000 to the BC3 Education Foundation will result in one of 12 new scholarships available to BC3 students in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Students attending BC3's main campus in Butler Township or its additional locations in Brockway, Cranberry Township, Ford City, Hermitage and New Castle can apply for the foundation's 128 named scholarships totaling more than \$200,000 by visiting [bc3.edu/scholarships](http://bc3.edu/scholarships) between Wednesday and July 1. Awards will be determined by Aug. 1.

Seventy percent of BC3 graduates are debt-free as a result of BC3's affordability, financial aid and scholarships.

## Lodge official: Scholarship "will exist forever"

The Connoquenessing Lodge was chartered Nov. 8, 1847, by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, grew to nearly 400 members in the 1950s and was once among chapters in Bruin, Karns City, Parker, Slippery Rock, West Sunbury and Zelienople, and among two in the city of Butler, said Alvin Walters, lodge secretary.

"There used to be a lodge in nearly every town," said Daniel Veith, of Butler, who as noble grand is leader of a Connoquenessing group whose building was once located on South Main Street in Butler and whose members now meet at a center in Lyndora.

Added Walters, of Grove City: "We're decreasing every year to the point that we wanted to have a legacy for us. At some point we may no longer exist, but (the scholarship) will exist forever."

The lodge chose BC3 because “it’s an affordable education. And it’s a beginning,” Walters said, and selected the college’s Nursing, R.N., program because it “helps the community,” said Rex Hurd, lodge treasurer.

The lodge’s \$500 annual scholarship is intended for a second-year, full-time student in BC3’s Nursing, R.N., program who has earned a minimum of 30 credits, has a grade-point average of 3.0 and who demonstrates financial need.

“The nurses are on the front line to take care of the sick,” Hurd said. “We felt the community college will be around forever. And the nursing program will be there too.”

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows visits the sick and provides relief to the distressed, Veith said, and has assisted numerous nonprofit organizations in Butler County, Walters added.

The financial gift to BC3 is the lodge’s first to an institution of higher education, Veith said.

“A lot of organizations do things that don’t necessarily have their name on it,” said Michelle Jamieson, associate director of the BC3 Education Foundation. “And with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the scholarship is a nice way to have their name on something that they know is going to be around forever.”

BC3’s scholarships average approximately \$500, said Ruth Purcell, executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation.

“That’s pretty significant to our students,” Purcell said.

It is to Deni Mealey, who said she would not have been able to attend BC3 and pursue a degree in Nursing, R.N., had it not been for the scholarships she has received.

## Receiving scholarship “a blessing,” BC3 student says

“I couldn’t have done it myself,” said Mealey, 21, of Karns City, a 2017 graduate of Karns City High School who in the 2019-2020 academic year received the first Nancy A. Zirnsak Scholarship, created by David Zirnsak and awarded to a second-year BC3 Nursing, R.N., student who lives in Butler County and who has a minimum grade-point average of 3.0.

“This is a community member who took their hard-earned money and donated it so I could try and succeed,” said Mealey, who plans to graduate debt-free in May and begin a nursing career in long-term geriatric care.

“It’s absolutely incredible. It’s a blessing. And then you have that tie to the community that, my goodness, this person totally helped me. And they didn’t have to.”

## 11 other scholarships to debut at BC3

Nancy Jean Rose, a former BC3 faculty member and director of the college's graphic arts and photography programs, created five scholarships – Barnes "Pete" Allen Jr., BC3 Class of 1997; Margaret J. Rose; Robert C. Rose; Stephen L. Rose, BC3 Class of 1997; and Elizabeth S. Rose-Gould – that will be awarded by the BC3 Education Foundation for the first time in 2020-2021.

Others include those created by Dr. Thomas Ten Hoeve, who served as BC3's second president from 1970 to 1984, and Suzanne Ten Hoeve; Budget Blinds of Butler; the Wainwright family; the women's auxiliary of American Legion Post 117, Butler; and Thomas Ward.

The first Sarah Kasunic Nursing Scholarship – created by family and friends of the 2016 graduate of BC3's Nursing, R.N., program who was one of two pedestrians killed by an automobile in Tennessee in March 2019 – will also be awarded in 2020-2021.