

Gifts to BC3's Pinkerton scholarship hit \$60K

Jan. 19, 2021



Millie Pinkerton, of Butler, is shown Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021, on Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township. Contributions to the Dale Pinkerton Leadership Scholarship, established with the BC3 Education Foundation in honor of her late husband, a former BC3 trustee, reached more than \$60,000 in the year since his passing.

(Butler, PA) It's a Friday morning in mid-January, and Millie Pinkerton is shuffling through the day's mail, the bills and the unsolicited promotions, and glances out the kitchen window through which she and her husband of 59 years would watch birds, the wrens and the woodpeckers, and the cardinals that, she says, "come in pairs."

She opens an envelope, its return address Westlake, Ohio, and slides out a card, its cover a watercolor drawing of a blooming flower, its red, orange and yellow petals encircling a lavender pistil.

“Dear Millie,” Kathy writes cursive in black ink, “as the new year begins, both Dave and I are thinking of you and Dale. It’s a perfect, quiet time of year to reflect on our blessings, for gratitude for much of our happiness. Since Dale’s funeral service, one of Dave’s favorite expressions is ‘fantastic.’ It brings a smile to my face every time he says it, as we both think of Dale.”

“That was one of his favorite words, ‘fantastic,’” Pinkerton said of her husband, a former Butler County Community College trustee who passed away one year ago this week at 79.

Fantastic can also describe the community’s support of a scholarship established in his name with the BC3 Education Foundation.

“He wouldn’t have believed it,” said Pinkerton, of Butler.

Contributions to the Dale Pinkerton Leadership Scholarship, created after Pinkerton’s death Jan. 19, 2020, reached \$60,600, according to Lynn Ismail, the foundation’s interim assistant director and its financial manager, before its first two \$1,000 awards to BC3 students were allocated and brought its principal to \$58,600.

“It’s just overwhelming”

Nearly 105 individuals, organizations and businesses have donated gifts ranging from \$50 to \$8,815, Ismail said.

“He would have been humbled, embarrassed,” Pinkerton said of her husband, a former two-term Butler County commissioner, community supporter and businessman. “It’s just overwhelming. I mean, I know there are people out there who loved him.”

The award was established at BC3 where, Pinkerton said, “We both knew students can get a good start at a reasonable price and have all these scholarships.

“I am just so proud of BC3. Look at that sign on campus. No. 1 for five years. Plus the fact that these students can go to BC3 and get the beginning of their education and they can transfer their credits. It’s a gem. We are just so blessed. ... I think it’s the best place in the world.”



Dale Pinkerton, a former Butler County Community College trustee, two-term Butler County commissioner, community supporter and businessman, passed away Jan. 19, 2020.

She referenced BC3 being ranked as the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania five times since 2015 and most recently for 2020 by BestColleges.com.

The college's tuition was among the most affordable of 43 regional colleges and universities in 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Education, and its credits transfer to public, private and online four-year colleges and universities.



Morgan Frishkorn, of Butler, is shown Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021, on Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township. Frishkorn, a BC3 biology major, was the first BC3 student to receive the Dale Pinkerton Leadership Scholarship. The 2020 Knoch High graduate also completed the Butler County Youth Leadership Program in 2019.

**“Dale’s impact ...
will go on forever”**

The BC3 Education Foundation offers more than \$200,000 in named scholarships, among those now one in honor of an ex-officio trustee at BC3 from January 2007 to December 2011.

“I think the tremendous response and the very high level of donations really speak to Dale,” said Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3’s president. “Dale gave so much to this community in so many different ways. And that is the case for the college also.

“Dale’s impact not only on the community, but specifically on BC3, just continues to go on and frankly, will go on forever.”

As an endowed scholarship, the Dale Pinkerton Leadership Scholarship is permanent.

Of the 138 named scholarships available to students from the BC3 Education Foundation in the 2020-2021 academic year, 116 are endowed.

The Dale Pinkerton Leadership Scholarship has attracted “widespread and diverse support,” said Ruth Purcell, who retired Dec. 31 as executive director of the BC3 Education Foundation and under whom the first Dale Pinkerton Leadership Scholarship was awarded in fall 2020 to 19-year-old Morgan Frishkorn. The second will be awarded to a student in fall 2021.

“The results of what we do are pretty apparent to people who are involved in the community,” Purcell said, noting that a number of community leaders assisted with raising funds for the scholarship. “They see our product, and I think Dale was very impressed with our leadership.”

“I won’t have to be in debt”

Frishkorn, of Butler, never met Dale Pinkerton, but remembers “He was the clown in the little car in the parade” that raised funds for children at the Erie Shriners Hospital.

The Dale Pinkerton Leadership Scholarship is available to BC3 full-time freshmen who have successfully completed the Butler County Youth Leadership Program.

Frishkorn, a 2020 Knoch High graduate, graduated from the leadership program in 2019 and works as an aide who feeds dementia patients at a local healthcare provider.

The \$1,000 award will allow the biology major to graduate debt-free from BC3 and, as a member of a family with a golden retriever, pursue her goal of becoming a veterinarian.

“It felt good,” Frishkorn said of opening her own mail and reading a letter announcing she had received the award. “It was a relief. I won’t have to be in debt. It was nice to know that what I do is appreciated, and it just made me open my eyes to the community again.”

“He really cared about people”

The Leadership Butler County Class of 2017 established as its project the free Butler County Youth Leadership program, according to Amanda Fleming, among 25 graduates of Leadership Butler County in 2017 and who serves as a youth leadership program board member and as BC3’s college business services specialist.

The Butler County Youth Leadership program, according to its application, “focuses on providing students exposure to issues, resources and opportunities for service in the Butler County area, as well as educating students on the concept of community leadership.”

The youth leadership program is available to juniors in Butler County high schools and in charter schools. Those who complete the program and enroll at BC3 are also eligible for a \$500 scholarship from the BC3 Education Foundation’s unrestricted funds.

Nearly 75 students have graduated from the program, whose workshops can include those on leadership and personal development skills, developing personal branding and networking, government, and successful entrepreneurs and businesses in Butler County.

Like Frishkorn, Fleming had never met Pinkerton.

“From what I know of him, and from talking to Millie, he was just a breath of fresh air,” Fleming said. “He was full of life. He was always looking to do things for people. He really cared about people. And Millie, she is the exact same way.”

Like those cardinals that come in pairs.

“What a perfect couple,” Kathy finished her handwritten message, drawing tears to Pinkerton’s eyes. *“We hope you know how much we admire your strength. You must come from good stock.”*

“Love, Kathy and Dave.”