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From: Heather A Young
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Subject: PRESS RELEASE: Miller Scholarship Encourages Students to Pursue Community Pharmacy Practice

Included below is a press release highlighting the Sidney E. Miller Endowed Scholarship.

In honor of Sidney Miller's memory, his family established the Sidney E. Miller Endowed Scholarship for Ferris students pursuing a career in community pharmacy practice. Miller, a long-time resident of Muskegon, Mich. and the former owner of Watkins Pharmacy & Surgical Supply, graduated from Ferris State University's College of Pharmacy in 1957 and was a proud alumnus. The scholarship represents his commitment to independent community pharmacy practice and encourages students to pursue this path.

Any media requests regarding this release can be directed to Heather Young, News Services Communications Specialist.

To read the online version of this story, visit:
<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2015/may/miller.htm>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Heather Young
Ferris State University
News Services Communications Specialist
heatheryoung@ferris.edu, (231) 591-5604

Miller Scholarship Encourages Students to Pursue Community Pharmacy Practice

For many pharmacists, owning your own business is the American dream. For Ferris State University alumnus Sidney Miller, that became a reality when he bought Watkins Pharmacy & Surgical Supply in Muskegon, Mich.

Family and colleagues remember Sid, who passed away in March 2013 at the age of 85, as a loving father and husband, an entrepreneur and a behind-the-scenes community leader. As a business owner, Sid provided affordable prescription and home healthcare supplies to Muskegon area residents. He also served as president of the Western Michigan Pharmacists Association and was a member of the Lion's club.

The Miller family chose to honor his love of education and Ferris' College of Pharmacy by establishing the Sidney E. Miller Endowed Scholarship for students seeking the same path he did.

Sid served in the U.S. Army in Korea and Okinawa, Japan, from 1946 to 1948 during World War II. After the war, he earned a degree in Pharmacy from Ferris. He eventually settled in Muskegon, and in 1968, he purchased Watkins Pharmacy.

Friends from the College of Pharmacy remember Sid, who graduated in 1952, as a proud Ferris alumnus.

"Sid had a special relationship with the college," said Stephen Durst, dean of the College of Pharmacy. "He frequently attended college events and was a terrific ambassador for the Pharmacy program. He was very loyal and proud to be an alumnus of the college."

The scholarship also represents Sid's commitment to independent community pharmacy practice. It will be awarded annually to a full-time student in the College of Pharmacy who demonstrates interest in independent community pharmacy practice through an internship with an independent community pharmacy and membership in Ferris' student chapter of the National Community Pharmacists Association. Preference will be given to eligible students that demonstrate financial need; academic merit will be a secondary consideration.

According to the NCPA, independent pharmacies dispense nearly half of the nation's retail prescription medicines.

"As a community health practitioner, my father provided counsel on the treatment of a variety of health-related concerns," said Charlie Miller, Sid's son and surgical supervisor at Watkins Pharmacy. "He was well-known and even provided advice to many local physicians."

In the 1950s, when Sid was finishing Pharmacy school, there were roughly 2,000 independent community pharmacies in Michigan. Today there are only about 800 pharmacies, based on estimates from the Michigan Pharmacists Association.

However, independent community pharmacy practice accounts for about 60 percent of the type of practice that graduates will go pursue, according to the NCPA student chapter at Ferris.

"Since independent pharmacies have smaller administrative structures than large chain pharmacies, they have a greater ability to innovate and try new practice techniques, which could give them a competitive edge against larger corporations," said Eric Roth, director of professional practice at the Michigan Pharmacists Association.

Furthermore, owning an independent community pharmacy requires an entrepreneurial commitment, which is something that Sid did very well, according to Durst. The consummate entrepreneur, Sid, answered the call of market demand and added a physician and hospital supply division shortly after purchasing the business.

Today, Watkins is run by his two sons, Charlie and Darren, and serves the medical supply needs of roughly 300 repeat customers in the physician and hospital markets and maintains a 13,000 square foot warehouse allowing for rapid shipment to all its customers. With the launch of their website, they entered the world of e-commerce and now ship their products worldwide.

"Today's independent community pharmacists are doing so much more than running a local drug store," Durst said. "They are serving healthcare needs in nursing homes, assisted living settings, free health clinics and so on. The future is dependent on their interests and their entrepreneurial skills, in their ability to be innovative and find those areas of unmet needs and fill them."

Durst believes that Sid is a role model for other students.

"You can see that in his own family and in providing this scholarship, which will help the generations that follow," he said. "It will ensure that students will be able to continue the tradition."

Married for 60 years, Sid and his wife, Rita, whom he met at Ferris, had seven children: Charlie, Shawn, Barry, Steve, Tanya, Lura and Darren.

The Miller family legacy of Ferris alumni that began with Sid continued with his daughter Lura Gariepy ('95), son-in-law David Gariepy ('95), son-in-law Ken Uganski ('94) and granddaughter Kayla Uganski ('13) – all graduates of the College of Pharmacy with the exception of David, who graduated from the College of Engineering Technology.

"Independent community pharmacists fill a critical role in healthcare for many communities," said Carla Miller, executive director of The Ferris Foundation. "The scholarship will work to support the education of future independent community pharmacists, and in turn they can go on to serve the well-being of patients within a community."

For more information about the Sidney E. Miller Endowed Scholarship or to make a contribution, contact The Ferris Foundation at (231) 591-2365 or fsufdn@ferris.edu. For additional information on the foundation, visit www.ferris.edu/foundation.

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Heather Young

News Services and Communications Specialist

University Advancement and Marketing

Ferris State University

ferris.edu

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