

**Decarsky Foundation  
Derby High School Scholarship  
To Honor Bonnie Sweet Walsh  
(1963 DHS Graduate)**

Applicants must complete the application form and submit it in one envelope with the following: certified copy of the most recent high school transcript; letter of support from a teacher, administrator, employer or other adult (who is not a family member) explaining why he/she feels you are qualified to receive this scholarship.

**Applications must be typed. Handwritten applications will not be considered.**

**Send to: Derby High School Counselor's Office  
Attn: Decarsky Foundation Scholarship Committee  
920 N. Rock Road  
Derby, KS 67037**

**Questions?** Call the Derby High School Counselor's Office at 788-8510

Name  Email

Address

Phone Number(s)  Intended course of study

School you would like to attend next year. 1<sup>st</sup> Choice

School you would like to attend next year. 2<sup>nd</sup> Choice

**Please describe causes to which you have volunteered your time while in High School. Indicate total amount time spent volunteering for each cause.**

**Job(s) held outside school. Please indicate how long you worked at each job and how many hours a week you averaged at each job:**

**Extra-Curricular Activities:**

**Decarsky Foundation Scholarship**

**Applications must be typed. Handwritten applications will not be considered.**

**Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.**

1. What are your goals, both immediate and long-term?

2. What have you learned/gained from volunteerism, extracurricular involvement and work experience?

3. Do you intend to work while attending school? If so, approximately how many hours a week?

4. Describe your financial need for this scholarship.

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The Decarsky Foundation Scholarship recipient will be selected in the spring of the year.

The scholarship will be awarded annually with the recipient having the opportunity to apply to the Derby High School (DHS) Selection Committee for annual renewal for three additional years if attending a four-year university or for one additional year if attending a community college. For attendance at a four-year university the annual scholarship amount will be \$4,000.00 (with renewals, total scholarship value would be \$16,000). For attendance at a community college the annual scholarship amount will be \$2,500.00.

FURTHER, if a scholarship recipient graduating from a community college elects to continue his or her education at a four-year university that recipient may apply to DHS Selection Committee for renewal of the scholarship annually for two additional years with an annual scholarship amount of \$4,000.00.

The DHS Selection Committee will for annual scholarship renewals use substantially the same criteria as was used for the initial scholarship award.

The scholarship may be used at any community college or university in the state of Kansas.

**Selection Committee and Process**

The Decarsky Foundation Scholarship Selection Committee (DHS Selection Committee) will be determined by the Derby High School administration and is comprised of not less than 3 members, nor more than 5, with the Decarsky Foundation having the option of appointing one member to the committee.

The Derby Community Foundation will administer the fund, awarding the scholarship check(s) each year. The scholarship amount will be sent directly to the post-secondary institution to be attended by the recipient. The DHS Selection Committee will oversee eligibility of each scholarship recipient and monitor recipient's performance.

**Student Eligibility**

The Decarsky Foundation Scholarship will be awarded to a Derby High School graduating senior, either male or female, who has maintained a 2.75 grade point average, demonstrates a sincere affinity for entrepreneurship and a free enterprise system, and has been engaged in at least some level of gainful employment during high school.

The recipient must meet performance requirements established by the DHS Selection Committee, which as a minimum shall include carrying a 12 hr semester load and maintaining a GPA of 2.75.

**Honoring Bonnie Sweet Walsh**

BONNIE SWEET WALSH graduated from Derby High School in 1963 and, as Bonnie has stated, she most likely would not have been financially able to pursue a post-secondary education had not a DHS counselor advised her that a scholarship could be made available at Wichita State University. After graduating from WSU with a BS Degree in Education, Bonnie pursued graduate studies at University of Colorado, UC Berkeley and Golden Gate University. She obtained her Certified Financial Planner (CFP) license and has served as financial consultant for many companies in the San Francisco bay area. She has held several positions over the years in private industry as controller or CFO for companies in the energy, banking, and biopharmaceutical fields.

**About the Decarsky Foundation**

THE DECARSKY FOUNDATION is a Private Foundation, formed in 2007 by Tomp and Vicki Decarsky and approved by IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization, with one of its major interests being the support of our community with educational scholarships.

The following was written by Bonnie Sweet Walsh, in whose honor the Decarsky Scholarship was established.

A little reminiscing...

Born 1945 in Omaha, Nebraska—I was to become the middle child, with an older sister and younger brother. Shortly after birth, we moved to a farm outside Huron, South Dakota, where my father tried his luck at farming. Not too many memories from those early years except that it was exceptionally cold in winter and hot in summer.

One of my strongest memories on the farm was my disappointment at not being able to go to school with my sister—a one-room schoolhouse with about a dozen kids from 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and I was only five. I would sit in the kitchen with my mother while she was doing laundry (the detergent smell is still with me) making her tell me the words in the newspaper that I did not know. I would circle all the words I did know—mostly the “and’s, the’s, or’s”, and other easy ones. One day I was allowed to go to school for the day and was so disappointed that the students “didn’t even know what 2 and 2 was!” (one of my parents’ favorite stories). Guess those were the early signs that my future would be in numbers!

As it turned out, just when I was old enough to finally go to school, I was handed another delay—polio! It was prevalent at that time and my parents knew what was happening the morning I awoke and was unable to walk. I just got out of bed one day and my left leg would not support me. I didn’t know what was up! Instead of going to school I was to spend some time in the hospital. For such a small town, there was an entire hospital floor with mostly polio-stricken children. I remember befriending a boy named Ricky who was in an iron lung. The nurses took me to see him every day. Although I was one of the lucky ones, able to eventually go home with minimal after-signs, I know that Ricky was not so lucky. I digress, but my point was that I still felt so disappointed at not being able to go to school.

Farming didn’t work out so well and when I was seven we moved to Wichita where the aircraft industry was active and my father was able to find work. I did very well in school—actually was somewhat embarrassed at being able to learn so much easier than the other students. Eventually, I realized that I had a God-given gift of being a good learner and felt obligated to make the best of it. It was an obligation that I would feel the rest of my life.

I continued to do very well academically through high school. My parents believed that a high school education was the ultimate and that, for a girl, the next step was marriage and maybe a job. They believed that college was for the rich and that it was much more important for the boy in the family to be academically successful than for me to do so.

By some stroke of luck, after aptitude tests and vocational studies, my high school counselor informed me that I had earned a scholarship to the University of Wichita! I was absolutely “clueless” about what this meant, but eventually realized that this was my way out of life as it had been for me. (My father had been out of work many times when the aircraft industry slowed down, and my mother was what we now call a “stay at home Mom”.) I did not want to live my life in this manner and somehow knew that “education” was the key to a better situation.

Although my family moved to Colorado while I finished high school, I was able to eventually make it back to Wichita to start my college education. This is a story in itself, but in summary, I bought a car, packed up and started off to college. The frame of my car fell onto the pavement only one block from home (how embarrassing!) and I had to wait for my brother-in-law to weld it back so I could again leave for college a day or two later.

When I arrived in Wichita, I had little money (not to mention no car insurance and an expired drivers' license) but relied on an earlier promise from a local public accountant that I could work for one of his clients when I got there. (With hindsight, I think this was not a promise that he felt he would have to keep.) When I turned up in Wichita ready for college and a job, he pulled through by finding a job for me. This begins the next important chapter in my life.

I was introduced to the self-described "Pollack" who would be my employer, mentor, parent, professor, philanthropist, whatever it took—to get me through college for the next 4 ½ years. Tom patiently prodded, kicked butt, fired me at least twice and eventually made sure I got that college degree! (for which I am forever grateful!)

After graduation from WSU, I moved back to Colorado for a few years where I completed enough graduate courses in accounting to sit for and pass the CPA exams. With a 3-year old daughter in tow, I moved to California--having been offered a job at PMM San Francisco, the largest CPA firm in the world! This was during the early 70's when the women's liberation movement was gaining momentum and opportunities for women were opening up. The PMM audit division hired 3 women that season—a new concept for them—and I was one of them. The other two resigned within a few months and I felt that if I didn't succeed they would never hire another female to the audit staff—a heady obligation to take on!

After 5 successful years at what is now KPMG, I held a number of positions in private industry—as Controller or CFO for companies in the energy, banking, biopharmaceutical, and non-profit fields. During this time, I also studied financial planning at the University of California and obtained my Certified Financial Planner (CFP) license. For the past 15 years, I was a financial consultant for many companies in the San Francisco bay area. I now work for a foundation that is committed to reinventing the public school system in America, especially for children of color and poverty, to make every child ready for college, life and work. This is a very rewarding mission to be a part of since it has been so important in my life.

Aside from being financially successful and independent, a very important goal in my life has always been to be a good mother and provider. My oldest two daughters have graduated college and have successful careers in medicine and in media arts. My youngest are twins and are in college and on their way to complete bachelor degrees. For me, as the first in my family to go to college, this is an important accomplishment and one that should make my "Polish mentor" proud.

Enough reminiscing for now.

Love,  
Bonnie