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TOP STORY

## OUR OPINION

# Late teacher's generous gift to WKU is an example

Oct 1, 2017

We can all learn from the example of the late Beulah R. Winchel, a teacher who worked hard, lived modestly and left her alma mater, Western Kentucky University, with an estate gift of more than \$2.5 million.

Winchel left home at 18 years old at the start of the Great Depression with only a \$100 bill in her pocket and her father's best wishes.

Despite what must have been a tough road to success, Winchel lived with enough grit to leave her mark on the world.

Before passing away in 2015 – and living to the age of 103 – Winchel worked to establish a trust in her name.

That trust will be used for a scholarship for aspiring educators like herself, benefitting WKU's elementary and middle-grades education library and the upkeep costs on a collection of her donated belongings. Additionally, the trust will help finance the operation of Winchel's farm in Breckinridge County, which the university is determining how to use.

Winchel could have left her estate gift to anyone, but she wanted it to go to the university that she credited for so much of her success in life.

“I was willing to consider a gift to Western because of my experience there as a student,” Winchel said in a 2001 interview, according to a news release. “If I hadn’t gone to Western, I wouldn’t have been able to experience the things I did later in life.”


That level of commitment and generosity is something we should all try to emulate in our lives. Winchel’s story is a testament to the impact we can have when we work hard and sacrifice what we can.



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Her commitment to the university she loved wasn’t a one-time thing, but a choice she made repeatedly throughout her life.

And that choice will pay dividends for WKU and the community and region it supports.

Her’s are big shoes to fill, but we should try.

We believe that WKU President Timothy Caboni put it best: “What a wonderful way to celebrate and honor someone’s life,” Caboni said. “I’m sorry I didn’t get to meet Ms. Winchel, but I am very grateful for her forward-thinking approach and willingness to include the university in her estate plans. Because of her generous bequest, the university will be able to continue transforming the lives of our students and serving as an integral piece of the southcentral Kentucky community.”