Richard and Jeanne Ahlquist Community Service Scholarship
Greater Worcester Community Foundation

In 2005, Richard and Jeanne Ahlquist’s eight children created this scholarship to honor their parents’ 60th wedding anniversary and to celebrate the couple’s extraordinary commitment to serving their community. It is awarded to students from Grafton High School who have contributed to Grafton or the wider region through dedicated volunteer service.

Richard and Jeanne Ahlquist were devoted to enriching the lives of others. Richard coached Little League baseball and served on the board of the Community Nursing Association of Grafton. He furthered the work of the building committees at Grafton Center Elementary School and Nelson Public Library, as well as the committee to purchase a new truck for the Grafton Fire Department. He was a member of the Ray Stone Legion Post 238 in Shrewsbury and President of the Bohemian Club of Worcester.

Jeanne served on the boards of the Community Nursing Association of Grafton and the Worcester Visiting Nurses Association. She was the President of the Grafton Garden Club and belonged to the League of Women Voters of Grafton. She served one term on the Grafton School Committee, and, as the Governor’s Liaison, was instrumental in bringing the Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine to Grafton. Jeanne also crocheted hundreds of soft blankets for newborns in local hospitals’ neonatal units.

Richard and Jeanne were both born in Worcester (in 1922 and 1924). High school sweethearts, they graduated from Classical High School. Richard earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and interrupted his studies to serve in the Navy during World War II. Upon graduation, he worked at Leon J. Barrett Company in Millbury for 40 years, serving as Chief Engineer and Vice President. Jeanne attended Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, and she and Richard married in 1945. In addition to raising their children and volunteering, Jeanne and Richard also loved to dance, travel, and host exchange students from around the world. In 1962, they took their whole family on a trip across the country and cherished their memories of that vacation.

Richard passed away in 2010 and Jeanne followed in 2014. This scholarship was awarded from 2005 to 2015 by Grafton High School before the Ahlquist children endowed it in perpetuity with a fund at Greater Worcester Community Foundation.