

Morris & Sue James & Family Scholarship



The Fredericktown High School Alumni Association is pleased to announce the Morris & Sue James & Family Scholarship that will recognize the distinguished careers of Morris and Sue James as educators at the Fredericktown and Highland/Marengo schools. Their fully endowed scholarship will first be awarded to a 2023 FHS graduate.

Since moving to Fredericktown in 1959, Morris and Sue James have been role models with their tireless service to the Fredericktown community displaying their commitment to education, faith, family, and community, and their journey continues to this day.

Morris James and Sue Jones met as schoolmates in Chesterville with Sue being younger by two years. Both were good students who took advantage of all the opportunities their small, rural school had to offer. Sue was a band member, a majorette, a cheerleader, and the salutatorian of her class; while Morris starred in 6-man football, basketball, and baseball; and became co-valedictorian of his class because "Mom said that I had to!".

After high school, Morris headed off to Capital University "because they had a strong science program". At Cap, Morris majored in Physics and Education while earning four letters as one of the stars on some of Cap's best football teams and, not surprisingly, was later named to the Highland High School Athletic Hall of Fame recognizing his accomplishments as a Chesterville Eagle.

Sue postponed her college education until after their three daughters were all in grade school. Sue resumed her college education at The Ohio State University because Morris advised that "more education is our best life-insurance policy". After graduation, Sue taught in the Highland/Marengo elementary school system, mostly teaching the 5th grade, retiring after 25 years of service.

Morris started his teaching career at Fredericktown Schools in 1959; he had planned to stay for three years, but they all fell in love with the community and stayed on the job until he retired in 1996. Morris started his career as a Physics, Science, and Math teacher and as an assistant football coach. During his thirty-seven-year tenure, Morris held the full range of teaching and leadership assignments, serving at various times as a teacher, coach, guidance counselor, elementary school principal, junior high principal, high school principal, and Superintendent. Morris was respected by students, parents, and the community for his calm and even-handed teaching and leadership style. Many students have commented on how a "little discipline and a second or third chance from Mr. James" helped them get their lives on track. This is one example- when some HS students "TP-ed" the James home as a prank, Morris nabbed one "who was scared to death"; Morris called the offender by name and simply said, "I am appointing you as Chair of the Clean-Up committee; bring your buddies back here tomorrow

morning". The kids came back, cleaned things up and everyone involved is still laughing about it.

Sue became an expert at juggling at an early age; first, as a full-time mom until the girls were all in school, then getting her college degree, and next launching her full-teaching career while continuing all the duties associated with being a wife and mom to three active daughters. The daughters did all their schooling and graduated from Fredericktown High School; Vicky, who loved the piano and the band, in 1976; Carol, 1980, and Terri, 1982, both starred for the Freddie's in volleyball and basketball. Not surprisingly, all three children followed their parents' footsteps into careers in education.

While busy with full-time jobs and three children to raise, Morris and Sue made time to get involved with the church and community right from the start; and have stepped up those efforts during their retirement years. Morris remains active in the Fredericktown Lions Club and Salvation Army and Sue with the Red Cross; each of them has received prestigious awards from those organizations recognizing their service. Both have enjoyed a lifetime of deep involvement with the Fredericktown United Methodist Church where Sue was a leader on the "Hot Meals" team. Not surprisingly, in 1999 Morris and Sue were named the "Grand Marshalls of the Tomato Show Parade" which is widely recognized as the premier Lifetime Achievement Award for community service in Fredericktown.

Both Morris and Sue say that family remains at the center of their lives, taking great pride in being as involved as possible with their 11 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-great-grandchildren. Sue hosts the family meal every Sunday after church where 14 are typically in attendance. Sue reports that Holidays are even more fun when the dinner crowd swells to 30 with the out-of-town guests. For the past four decades, the entire Morris Family Clan (now numbering 40) heads off together for a week on a North Carolina beach.

With such a deep belief in the importance of both family and education, it was an interesting question for Morris and Sue as to why they would make a significant financial commitment to endow a college scholarship for future FHS grads when they have so many in their own family who will also need a college education.

Morris answered that "Fredericktown has always had a strong school system where students graduate prepared for what comes next, but their future depends on them continuing to learn and grow. Whether it is a four-year college; vocational school, tech school, or community college, it is important that everyone keep learning. I spent my whole teaching career at Fredericktown and we have benefitted from living in this great community. Sue and I want to help Freddie grads with their next step in furthering their educations".