John and Elizabeth Terrey Community College Scholarship

Applicants must be admitted to the Certificate in Community and Technical College Teaching program prior to receiving the award. Recipients will be selected based on need and outstanding academic promise as a community college faculty member.

Dr. John N. Terrey

This scholarship honors Dr. John N. Terrey, a Western Washington State College (now WWU) alumnus who is widely recognized as the builder of the state’s model community college system. Dr. Terrey was a Distinguished WWU Alumnus in 1986, State Humanities Award Honoree 1997, and one of the top WWU Alumni of the Century at the university’s centennial celebration in 1999-2000. Dr. Terrey recalled coming to campus recovering from malaria and wounds received as a Marine on Guadalcanal, "not academically, physically or socially prepared" for college. Despite these challenges and the fact that he had been a high school dropout, he earned a B.A. in History in 1949 and a B.A.E. in English – Secondary in 1950 at Western, followed by a M.Ed. – Curriculum Consultant Secondary in 1960. He continued his education at the University of Washington, University of Chicago, and Washington State University, where he completed his Doctorate in Education in 1964.

Dr. Terrey began his career teaching English in Montesano, South Kitsap and Bellevue high schools for 15 years. He then served as Tacoma Community College’s first dean of instruction from 1964 to 1967. From 1967 to 1969, he held posts at Central Washington University. In 1969, he became deputy director of the Washington State Board for Community College Education and as director from 1978 to 1987. Under his leadership, Washington’s community college system evolved into a national model. His ideals, actions, dedication and perseverance on behalf of students of all ages in Washington are considered to have influenced educational philosophy and legislative programs throughout his career. Prior to his retirement, he and wife Elizabeth established this scholarship.

At his resignation from the State Board, he said:

I am proud that in the 1960s, when two forces arose, one calling for the destruction of higher education and the other calling for the extension of opportunity for ethnic minorities, we joined the latter.

We opened our institutions to the victims of Vietnam. We recognized that painful changes in our society created a new group – displaced homemakers – which found in the community college the support needed.

In the dark hour of financial retrenchment, our idealism shone brightly. We declared that we were part of the solution. Dislocated workers, small business people, high technology leaders, adult illiterates and many more sought our services. We responded.