

# The Barbara J.Olender Scholarship

*a role model....an example of dedication and caring...an inspiration....*

In an effort to familiarize the parish with this scholarship, I spoke to Barbara's husband Bernie and received permission to write this article. As she was a relatively new member at St. Luke, many parishioners probably did not know her well enough to know details about her background. Barbara was a cheer leader for education. Because of that, her husband and children have set up an annual scholarship in her memory to be given to a student who is a member of St. Luke and whose field of study is education or areas related to education.

Barbara was a long-time member of St. Nicholas Church in Enfield, CT. Her parish participation included being the parish organist, a Sunday school teacher, and a member of the parish council. At the time of her death on January 31, 2014, she was a member of St. Luke. While a member of St. Luke, Barbara attended Liturgy regularly and attended and participated in many church events.

Barbara grew up in Ludlow, MA and was valedictorian of her high school class. She went on to receive her Bachelor's degree from Fitchburg State College and her Master's degree from Central Connecticut State University. Barbara felt education was the pinnacle of life. You could see this in her zest for learning as well as her enthusiasm for teaching.

Barbara was born with spina bifida and was told that by age 30, she would be restricted to a wheel chair. This was her main reason for going into the field of special education. She taught at Memorial School in West Springfield from 1964 to 1969. In 1968, Grade Teacher Magazine named her one of the top 150 Special Education teachers in the United States. This was only one of the many awards and recognitions she received during her teaching career. In 1982, Barbara began teaching in the Enfield, CT school system and continued teaching there until her retirement in 2000. In the years prior to retirement, she was a special education teacher at John F. Kennedy Middle School where she was known and

loved as a role model. Due to her own physical condition, she was able to identify and help others who were dealing with physical and cognitive conditions that might affect their ability or will to learn. And that she did well.....

If you are a student studying in the field of education and/or its related fields (see listing of all areas below) and are interested in applying for this scholarship, please call the church office for more information. You may apply for a scholarship as a high school senior, at any point during your college/graduate school career, or if you are a student in a continuing studies program.

### **Judy**

- **Elementary/Secondary Education**
- **Early Childhood Education**
- **Special Education**
- **Remedial Reading and/or Writing and Instruction**
- **Speech Pathology**
- **School Guidance**
- **Linguistics**
- **Certification in specific disciplines (i.e. Math, Social Studies, Science)**
- **Theology/Divinity**
- **Occupational Therapy**
- **Technology in Education**
- **Curriculum Development/Instruction**
- **Education Administration**
- **Child, Family, and School Social Work**
- **Librarian**
- **Learning Disorders**
- **Ongoing Professional Certification as Related to Education**