Endowed scholarship honors emeritus journalism professor

Some of the earliest childhood memories for David Conover ’75 (journalism) revolved around the newspaper business. The oldest son of the late Theodore “Ted” and Edna Conover, David recalls when the printing office of the Centerburg Gazette, one of five weekly newspapers his parents owned in Ohio, was attached to the family home.

“All the smells of the print shop could find their way into the house,” David says. “My dad had a little smelting operation in the basement of the print shop where he made lead for the linotypes. My first job was hauling blocks of lead known as ‘pigs’ from the basement and stacking them by the linotype for a penny apiece.”

Edna was a schoolteacher. When she wasn’t in the classroom, she would help her husband in the print shop. The younger children played in a nearby playpen.

“It was a full-time job,” David says. “Even when we did take a little vacation, my dad would have to go back during the week to put out the newspaper.”

David and his sisters, Linda Wampler and Nancy Conover, established the Theodore E. and Edna H. Conover Memorial Scholarship last year in honor of their parents’ devotion to journalism and education.

Ted was a journalism professor at the University from 1960 until he retired in 1982. He died in 2009 after battling Alzheimer’s. He was named chairman of the Department of Journalism in 1965 and was credited with creating sequences in the school and adding broadcast journalism to the curriculum. Under his direction, the department was first accredited in 1970.

Ted was awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds received while serving in Europe during World War II. He and Edna owned five newspapers over a span of 13 years. Ted and Edna received their degrees from Ohio University, and Ted completed his master’s at Ohio State University.

“The journalism school has grown unbelievably over the years, with all the emphasis beyond reporting: public relations, marketing and broadcasting,” David says. “We thought a scholarship would be a good way to continue to recognize both of our parents for what they did for education, journalism and the University.”

Conover Scholarship recipient David Torres, ’10 (advertising/public relations), is the first person in his family to graduate from college.

“I’m extremely proud to come from a large family and to be a role model for my brothers and sisters,” Torres says.

“Besides going to school for myself, I went to school for my family—to show them I can do it,” he says. The scholarship helped me be a role model. I don’t have to be a super genius. It’s really about the effort and the drive.”

—Roseann Keegan