Early on, Gerald and Luanna Kennedy instilled a value on education in their children. It served the children well throughout the years. The three siblings, Michael, John Patrick and Ann, all went on to achieve college degrees. “They both encouraged us and helped prepare us to go to college,” Michael said. “They gave us the opportunity.”

That opportunity will continue to be given in their parents’ names as the siblings have established the Gerald F. and Luanna R. Kennedy Scholarship Fund through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. The scholarship will be given to a graduating senior from Pana High School who will attend a post-secondary institution.

“It has to do with their passion for education,” Michael said. “They were people who grew up in the Depression. They worked hard professionally. They valued education.”

Gerald Kennedy passed away in December 2014 while Luanna preceded her husband in death. Following their father’s death, the Kennedy children quickly knew how they wanted to honor their parents.
“(A scholarship) was one of the first things we talked about,” Michael said. “You want the memories of your parents to live on. What could we do to make them smile? What could we do to make them proud of us?”

While none of the three children live in Pana, the group wanted to remember their roots and upbringing that helped spur them to success as adults.

“Rural values are important. Those values are what gave us a great foundation as we moved on in our lives,” Michael said.