Lois and Joseph Morris didn’t believe in being wasteful. “Like many of the depression era, they were very hard workers,” said Donna Morris about her late aunt and uncle. “They provided much for themselves through gardening, home canning and sewing. They also sold ceramics, which Joe fired in their kilns after Lois designed and painted the pieces. They saved. They were thrifty.”

That thrifty approach is to the benefit of a few Springfield High School students each year through the Joseph and Lois Morris Memorial Scholarship Fund. The Fund provides scholarships for graduates of Springfield High School pursuing a college degree or attending a vocational/technical school as a full-time student. It was recently established through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln.

“They had no children of their own. They wanted to recognize students who put forth academic effort and could benefit from additional financial help,” said Morris. “They didn’t have the opportunity to go on to higher education themselves, and they felt strongly that they wanted to help.”

The Springfield High connection comes from Lois, who was a graduate. The couple grew up and remained in Springfield before moving to Rochester in 1960. Joseph, a World War II veteran, worked
for the International Shoe Company before becoming a federal police officer with the U.S. government while Lois was a long-time employee of Sangamo Electric working as an inspector.

While the couple practiced fiscal responsibility, they were content in their lives. “Work ethic was important to them. She didn’t sit and watch television, she was always moving,” Morris said. “She was a perfectionist and he was too. They married well. Each expected everything to be done with care. They maintained their home with pride well into Joe’s late 80s and Lois’ 90s. Everything in it was of high quality.”

Morris served as their estate’s executor and trustee. The scholarship was originally established at Wells-Fargo, and the 78-year-old Donna Morris worked with Stan Welch, their long-time financial advisor, to determine the best course of action for the scholarship’s future security. Establishing the Scholarship Fund at the Community Foundation will enable it to live on.

“It just seemed like the right thing to do,” Morris said. “I have other obligations that take my time, and I’m trying to simplify my life as I get older. I want to be certain that there will be a good plan in place to follow my aunt and uncle’s wishes.”

The Fund has provided scholarships the past two years. The plan is to award four to six scholarships each year depending on the number of applications. Morris and Welch have handled interviewing students and enjoyed meeting them each time. They will continue to be involved in the interview process until they no longer choose to do so, but moving the Fund to the Community Foundation established a plan for future giving.

“It’s difficult not to want to help each and every student who applies,” Morris said. “It will be good to know a group of people will interview these deserving students when Mr. Welch and I are no longer available to do so.”