Mary Lou Pitman was determined to ensure that her children attended college. She accomplished that feat, sending six children to college. In honor of Pitman’s memory, her daughter, Monica Bucek, is helping other Sangamon County students achieve the same goal.

Through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, Bucek has established the Mary Lou and Dwight Pitman Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will provide $1,000 to a graduating senior from Sangamon County, outside of Springfield’s District 186. The Pitmans were raised in Auburn. Mary Lou Pitman passed away in August 2004 prior to the establishment of the fund, and Dwight in June 2015.

"Not having any children myself, this was a way to do something that would be a legacy for my mom," Bucek said. "Mom was so insistent in obtaining scholarships for her children. Going to college wasn’t an option for us, we knew we were going. She was diligent about researching every opportunity available."

Bucek, who attended Illinois College, honored her Auburn roots by specifying the scholarship for students who grew up in a similar background. Bucek’s father Dwight and two sisters still live in Sangamon County.

"It doesn’t have to be a farm kid but growing up in a farming community, I wanted to give those kids a break," Bucek said.

When Bucek broke the news of the scholarship’s creation to her father, it was met with a joyous reaction. Dwight Pitman is retired from the Illinois State Police.

“He was very excited," Bucek said. "It was very important to (my parents) that we attend college."

Following her mother’s death, Bucek and her husband Scott researched ways to establish the fund. She learned about the Foundation through its website. Bucek was familiar with community foundations and knew the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln was the best option for her.

"It’s easy because I don’t have to think about it," Bucek said. "We’re able to give them the funds and know it is well maintained and will be used in the way my husband and I intended."