When Erin Sabath was invited to attend the Community Foundation’s 15th Anniversary Celebration, she had already been thinking about ways to honor her late parents. It was at this event that she was inspired by the philanthropy of Judy and Harvey Stephens, longtime supporters of the foundation.

“When I attended the dinner, I heard the Stephenses speak; I’ve known Harvey and Judy for years, and hearing their story and seeing how dedicated they’ve been, I thought, ‘That’s something I could do,’” Sabath said.

Sabath decided to establish The Morton and Jojene Sabath Fund at the Community Foundation, a donor-advised fund designed to carry on the legacy her parents instilled in her life and all those they met.

Morton and Jojene Sabath came to Springfield as teenagers, both as first-generation Americans. After marrying, they operated nursing homes throughout the area and were also involved in motels and real estate.

“It was not easy; they worked extremely hard and were very smart,” Sabath said. “I have no doubt they would have succeeded wherever they went, but Springfield afforded a lot of opportunities for them.”

Though her father was often the face of the company while her mom preferred to stay in the background, her parents’ operations were truly a family affair, supported by both her mother and father. The fund’s name is a reflection of that.

“They always worked together,” she said. “They were a team and a true partnership - that’s why I named the fund for both of them; my mom was every bit as important as my dad.”

Through The Morton and Jojene Sabath Fund, Sabath hopes to have the chance to help other entrepreneurs, as well as care for the senior population. By supporting these groups, she hopes to continue the positive impact her parents made.
“I want to be able to help people who want to start a business; I think that’s something my parents would like to support. It encourages people like them and gives a hand to something that was not available to my mom and dad,” Sabath said. “I’m also interested in giving care to seniors because long-term care was a mainstay in our businesses for many years. Taking care of seniors where needed is another thing I can do through the foundation.”