

ALBERT L. PRANATIS

One of the largest donations to the Marshfield Scholarship Fund was made by a man who had lived in the Coos Bay area for only about 20 years. His name was Albert L. Pranatis, and he lived in a humble home near the Coos River school.

Albert was born in Duquesne, Pennsylvania, on February 3, 1921. At that time Duquesne was a steel-mill town with a population of about 12,000 people. Albert attended school in Duquesne, and graduated from Duquesne High School in about 1939-40. He served in the military service in World War II, attended Duquesne University, and became a metallurgical engineer.

Albert worked for various business entities, and some of the time for the U.S. Government. He retired in about 1986 and moved to the Coos Bay area. He had a good investment adviser and had enough money to do almost anything he wanted, but he did not travel much and tended to stay near home. He was a shy man who never married, and drove an older Volvo for most of his time in the Bay area.

Albert was befriended by some of the neighbor children. They were kind enough to him that, as they got ready to go into college, Albert provided them with scholarships out of his own resources. When he decided to create a trust as part of his estate plan, he gave most of his wealth to scholarship programs at his alma mater, Duquesne High School, and to the Scholarship fund at Marshfield High School, each receiving an equal amount.

Albert died the day before his 86th birthday (February 2, 2007). His trust was administered by his niece, and when the distributions were made, each of Duquesne's and Marshfield's scholarship programs received about \$555,000. The money was given to a foundation for investment, with the Duquesne funds going to the Pittsburgh Foundation, and Marshfield's share going to the Oregon Community Foundation.

Each of the foundations invests the money and makes annual allocations from the fund for scholarship purposes. Albert's trust allowed the members of the Marshfield scholarship fund committee to decide how to allocate the annual income from its share, and the funds were divided among some four-year scholarships and some one-year scholarships.

A few months after Albert's death, Duquesne high school closed. Times had been tough in the City of Duquesne, and its population had declined to about 5,500 people. The Duquesne scholarship money had been given to the Pittsburgh Foundation, and they decided to award their scholarships to students who had grown up in Duquesne, even though the students now went to other nearby schools.

Over the years since his death, many students have benefited from Albert's generosity. He would be glad to know that his intent to help local students get a college education is being carried out just as he wished.