



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Carolyn Wilson Public Defender Scholarship Fund Accepting Applications for \$10,000 Scholarship

Omaha, Neb., June 13, 2022 – The Carolyn Wilson Public Defender Scholarship Fund, a scholarship fund of Midlands Community Foundation, will be accepting applications June 15 through October 10, 2022. The fund, established to honor the legacy of Carolyn (Cari) Wilson by her friends, classmates, and colleagues, will award annually one \$10,000 scholarship in support of a public defender who has accumulated law school debt of more than \$10,000.

To qualify, applicants must have at least five (5) years of experience as a full-time public defense attorney in Nebraska and/or Iowa and have verifiable law school loan debt of more than \$10,000. In addition, applicants must show financial need and demonstrate a dedication to the principles of being a public defender.

Cari Wilson graduated from Creighton University School of Law in 2000. She served as both a Douglas and Sarpy County Public Defender for almost 20 years. Never wavering in her commitment to the underserved and underrepresented, Cari made her mark by assuring access to justice to over 10,000 clients. She dedicated her career to making sure every client received zealous representation. Cari made a difference doing what she loved. This dedication and passion for her job did not come without great personal cost in the form of student loan debt. Even after receiving grants and other forms of forgiveness, repayment of law school loans on a public sector salary is a daunting task. This fact often forces many public defenders to leave their post for more financially lucrative positions. The Carolyn Wilson Public Defender Scholarship aims to support those practitioners who may be in similar financial and career-path positions as Cari.

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“Cari believed we are all better than the worst decision we have ever made and that every person deserves the dignity of qualified counsel in the face of adversity. As Cari’s friends, classmates, and colleagues, we believe the best way to honor her is to reward public defenders who dedicate their lives to defend and protect the Constitutional rights of their clients just like Cari did,” said friend and colleague Ryan Forrest.

Applications for the Carolyn Wilson Public Defender Scholarship are due by October 10, 2022. For more information or to apply, visit www.midlandscommunity.org (bottom of page).

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