Samuel W. Seidel: A Tribute

Samuel W. Seidel, throughout your life you have seen the people of the world as they are and as they might be, and loved both. Born and raised in Salisbury, your family instilled values that shaped your spirit. During World War II, as a Navy lieutenant, you fought for your country in the Pacific. Serving on board the U.S.S. Leon, you returned from combat with five Battle Stars.

After the war you pursued what you called your only goal: to teach and to coach. You wanted your basketball team to be the best. That meant playing and learning from the best competitors. But as a teacher who had seen men of all religions, ethnic backgrounds and races fight and die for their country, you wanted to teach your team of white teenagers something more. You took those youths to the campus of what is now the University of Maryland Eastern Shore to scrimmage with the best athletes in the area—young men who were black.

Your actions, unprecedented on the Eastern Shore at that time, profoundly affected your players, including a future district superintendent of the Methodist Church and future U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes.

In 1952 you started your own business and your classroom became the larger community of Salisbury. You built what became the largest privately owned insurance operation in Maryland, and like most Eastern Shore businesses, you sponsored athletic teams, but with a difference—yours were integrated. While segregation remained a part of life in Salisbury, you hired black employees in professional positions.

In 1966, at the urging of the Democratic Central Committee, you ran for Salisbury City Council. You were elected, and reelected and reelected and reelected and reelected, serving for 20 years before retiring. You were Salisbury's FDR. You created scholarships and awards for area high school and college students, established a special “Reading Forever” fund to build up local school libraries and, in 1997, with your beloved wife you endowed SU’s School of Education and Professional Studies, the first named endowed school of education in Maryland, and, at that time, only the second named endowed school of education in the country.

You once said, “I believe if you have an ability to give, you should do it in your lifetime and get some fun out of it.” In 1993, you had fun establishing the 2100 and 2200 funds to assist those less fortunate in Salisbury and Wicomico County. Borrowing an idea from Benjamin Franklin, you purchased $100,000 in bonds for each account which will not be opened until the end of the 21st and 22nd centuries. At that time the funds are projected to be worth $25 million and $25 billion, respectively.

And you have shown that in family and in community and in faith, we find our humanity. In heartfelt gratitude, many have tried to say thank you with numerous awards and accolades. And yet, we still cannot thank you enough because of what you have given: By your belief in us, you have helped us to believe in ourselves and what we might be. You have given us the gift of self.
Sam and Marilyn Seidel believe that if you have an ability to give, you should do it in your lifetime and get some fun out of it.

-Samuel W. Seidel

Sam and Lynn Seidel saw the potential in what money could do over time and, therefore, created numerous endowed scholarships and programs at SU, including endowing the School of Education and Professional Studies—only the second endowed school of its kind in the country. We thank the Seidel family for their continued generosity and for seeing the future potential in Salisbury University and the young people of this region.

The Samuel and Marilyn Seidel Endowment for Education
This gift established the Samuel and Marilyn Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies.

The Marilyn Seidel Nursing Award Endowment Fund
This fund is used to recognize an academically-gifted, upper-division nursing student who has demonstrated outstanding potential for nursing leadership and services.

The Joseph and Anna Seidel Scholarship Endowment Fund
This fund provides a scholarship in support of a Jewish student who is and whose family is a member of the Beth Israel congregation in Salisbury or Bat Yam congregation in Ocean City.

The Seidel Scholarship Program in Education
From this endowment fund, scholarships are awarded to students pursuing degrees in education.

The Sam Seidel - Wicomico High School Scholarship Program
This endowment fund provides scholarship support for a graduate from Wicomico High School who prepares for the teaching profession by enrolling in the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies.