

October, 2008

Scholarship Background Information

Thank you for your interest in the Bob and LaRae Parry Environmental Scholarship, funded by St. Mark Presbyterian Church (USA).

St. Mark, located in Newport Beach, California, is a friendly, socially concerned, and environmentally aware congregation, a church with “open minds and open arms.” The people of St. Mark are committed to giving to mission activities, and their response to catastrophe, whether domestic or foreign, is immediate and generous.

Long aware of the environmental depredation that has become more and more serious over time, St. Mark formed an active committee, the Ecophilians, whose focus is on ecology, the environment, and ways to ameliorate the damage being done to the Earth, God’s gracious gift to humanity. The committee and the scholarship were the result of many hours of work and dedication by the Rev. Bob and LaRae Parry, long time members of St. Mark. They served in many aspects of the life of the church, but saw their special roles as advocates for the environment. Bob’s career was as a minister and director of chaplains at the local hospital. LaRae is an educator and ardent naturalist. They are now in active retirement in Pasadena, and are continuing their commitment to the environment. It seemed only right to name the scholarship in honor of the couple whose energy and vision brought it into being!

In October 2003, St. Mark announced the establishment of two scholarships, each for \$500, to be awarded to students of Chapman University or the University of California, Irvine, who “demonstrated a commitment to the stewardship of God’s gift of creation.” For several reasons, there were no applicants for the scholarships that year, and the scholarship committee continued to improve its plan. In the fall of 2004, the two awards were increased to \$1,000 each and the college restrictions were removed. The committee was pleased to receive several admirable applications. The scholarships were awarded in the spring of 2005, to a Kansas State University student interning in landscape architecture, and to a graduate student at Chico State University working toward an MS in biology.

By the fall of 2005, the committee was able to increase the awards to \$1,500 each. In April, 2006, one award went to a mechanical engineering student at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, who will apply his award to studying alternative energy. The second scholarship was granted to a graduate student at the University of California, Irvine, in the field of restoration ecology.

This year the scholarships are again for \$1,500 each and are offered to full time college level Junior, Senior, or Graduate students enrolled at an accredited college or university, with a minimum GPA of 2.5.

St. Mark Presbyterian Church, the Ecophilians Committee, and the Bob and LaRae Parry Environmental Scholarship Committee are pleased that you are seeking information. We look forward to your application for this scholarship, designed to help disciplined and talented, spiritually and ecologically interested students.

Welcome: and whatever the outcome of your inquiry, best wishes to you as you prepare to join in the hard but rewarding work of responsible stewardship of this beautiful earth God has entrusted to our care.