

Francine Hines was an exemplary, and longtime, Rotarian in Topeka before she passed away in 2006. Originally from Belgium, she arrived in Topeka in 1946 to marry the soldier she met in Belgium during World War II, and later become a U.S. Citizen in 1952. She was a strong believer in quality education, in the United States, and in freedom. To hear her speak of the students and their accomplishments was a delight; always succinct and eloquent in her French-laden English. Francine was the epitome of a true Rotarian!

For many years she was in charge of selecting deserving international students from Washburn University to receive scholarships funded by Downtown Topeka Rotary. Following her death Dick Knoll suggested to the club that the students she so admired be recognized as recipients of scholarships in her memory. The Board of Directors agreed and our scholarship program was renamed in her memory. It is hard to estimate how many students have been helped by Francine, and in her memory, but it is hundreds.

Francine was “one of a kind”; a tribute to what Rotary can accomplish through its members. To quote the Topeka Capital Journal Editorial Board, *“The message of her life is that with style, grace, intelligence, education and perseverance, even a woman who never lost her French accent can achieve greatness in Kansas.”* We all miss her!

Supporting education is one of Rotary’s six areas of focus. Our club has made a strong effort in this area. Our former member, Francine Hines, was instrumental in establishing the International House at Washburn University and Rotary funds helped develop the International House. Francine took charge of the international scholarship program. Francine passed away in 2006 and the scholarship program was named the Francine Hines Scholarships in memory of Francine and her efforts. Since 1999 our club has awarded 119 scholarships for a total of over \$60,000. Students have come from 34 countries on five continents. On a more global scale, the Rotary Foundation supports education through scholarships, donations, and service projects around the world. Promoting peace is another area of focus. Towards that end, each year Rotary awards up to 130 fully funded fellowships for dedicated leaders from around the world to study at one of Rotary’s peace centers.