In the early 1950s, Pat Mertens learned chemistry from Milford Cowley, physical education from Emma Lou Wilder and history from Myrtle Trowbridge. She later served students for 26 years in buildings named after these legends. Mertens is well versed in UW-L’s great history, but she is also about contributing to its future.

When she retired from UW-L in 1995 as assistant director of career services, Mertens established the Patricia A. Mertens Scholarship Fund. It provides financial assistance to students in the School of Education or in the Department of Exercise and Sports Science.

“I hope it encourages others to set up scholarships for UW-L students within other colleges and in their local communities so that students are able to reach their career goals,” she says.

Mertens was able to achieve her goals, earning a bachelor’s degree in physical education in 1956 and a master’s degree in college student personnel in 1971. She went on to teach physical education for 13 years in schools in Wisconsin and Washington state before beginning her career at UW-L, serving in Residence Life, Admissions and Career Services.

Mertens spent a good deal of time helping students reach their career goals. But she often found conversations leading to student’s family and personal life. Mertens became well aware of not only the great potential of these students, but also their financial needs.

“I enjoyed working with UW-L students and I wanted to help students as much as I could — even after I retired,” she says.