

Bessie May French Memorial Scholarship for CRNA

The McLaren Flint Foundation

In a loving tribute, the family of Bessie May French has established a permanent scholarship to support Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists. Mrs. French was a trailblazer for single mothers entering the medical profession in the early- and mid- 20th Century. Through her accomplishments and her reputation for caring for patients, Mrs. French continues to motivate aspiring nurse anesthetists to further their education.

Bessie May Tanner French (1888-1970) received a diploma from the South Chicago School of Nursing on the 25th of September 1913. She received a certificate for completion of a Post –Graduate Course in Nursing from the Neurological Institute of New York on the 8th of June 1914.

After graduation, she obtained a position as superintendent of a facility for the treatment of mental illness from which she left for a nine-year hiatus which included marriage, three children and the premature death of her husband in 1923.

Returning to work as a single mother in 1925, Mrs. French was hired as a general duty nurse at the Women's Hospital in Flint, Michigan. At that time, general duty consisted of twelve-hour shifts, six days a week. On the 15th of September 1928, she received a certificate for completion of a Post-Graduate Course of three months in General Anesthesia from The Grace Hospital, Detroit, Michigan and was certified as a Nurse-Anesthetist. She continued as such at the Women's Hospital for the next 20 years, retiring in 1948.

Since she was the only anesthetist at the hospital, she was on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with the exception of a two-week vacation each year. In addition to her duties as anesthetist, she was Assistant Superintendent of the hospital, X-Ray Technician, and administered EKG tests. In 1950, the new McLaren Hospital asked her to come out of retirement as the Inhalation Therapist at the new hospital and she remained in this position until she retired permanently in 1953.

In 1958, at the age of 70, she received a bachelor's degree, majoring in English, from the Flint College of The University of Michigan.

Mrs. French passed away in January 1970 at the age of 81. In a letter of Condolence upon Mrs. French's death, Margaret McLaren wrote, "It would be foolish for me to undertake putting into words all I feel for her life---I feel that a great gallant friend has gone from us. From the first day I knew her there is not one unpleasant memory. We saw a good many difficult things---met many obstacles together---but her courage and positive thinking spurred us on always."

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The McLaren Flint Foundation is pleased to announce the following scholarship available for the 2022-2023 academic year. One \$500 scholarship will be awarded per year.

Scholarship Guidelines

1. Scholarship awards are based on financial need.
2. Applicants must be in good academic standing.
3. All qualified applicants who submit a complete application packet (Scholarship Application, Official Transcripts and Cover Letter) will be considered.
4. Preference given to current employees of McLaren Flint.
5. Preference also given to single mothers pursuing a CRNA career.
6. Scholarship award must be used for tuition, books or media, and supplies used in pursuit of a CRNA career.
7. The McLaren Flint Foundation will provide yearly reports which include an accounting detail and biographical information about the scholarship recipient to the family of the memorial honoree.

Scholarship Application Requirements:

Please return the completed Scholarship Application Form, Cover Letter and Official Transcripts to the address listed below or you can apply online at <http://www.mclaren.org/Uploads/Public/Documents/Flint/documents/Foundation/French%20Scholarship%20Application.pdf>

The McLaren Flint Foundation
401 South Ballenger Highway
Flint, MI 48532