

# A tale of two women

## The Watkins-Berger Scholarship keeps their memory alive.

In 1952, KU sought to correct an imbalance. The Summerfield Scholarship, created in 1929 as KU's first merit scholarship, drew standout graduates of Kansas high schools to Lawrence — but only if they were male. Solon Summerfield, the donor, an 1899 alumnus, had described the scholarship as one that would help “deserving boys to go through the full four year course at the University.”

Times had changed by the fifties, and KU needed an equivalent scholarship for women. The source was the Watkins Fund, KU Endowment's largest single fund at the time, created in 1939 from the bequest of Elizabeth Miller Watkins of Lawrence. She had placed no specifications on her huge bequest — 25,000 acres of income-providing land. All was to be used as KU leaders saw fit.

Creating the Watkins Scholarship for young women seemed fitting. Watkins herself had dreamed of attending KU but had to go to work at 15 after her father died. At the J.B. Watkins Land and Mortgage Company, she rose to an executive position. At 50, she married the founder. She built Watkins (1926) and Miller (1931) scholarship halls next to her own Mount Oread house, now the KU chancellor's residence. There, she watched students walk to and from class. “My sympathy,” she said, “has always been with the girls who must travel uphill.”

One of those students was Emily Berger of Halstead, Kan., who earned a chemistry degree in 1914, then taught at KU while working toward a master's. In April 1920, about to finish, she died suddenly of an infection when her appendix ruptured.

Her younger brother, Arthur Berger, followed her to KU. In 1943, he still

remembered her with such affection that he started a new fund in her memory at KU Endowment. For the next 20 years, he and his wife, Marie Harbeck Berger, made additional gifts. The Bergers were landscape architects, and Arthur Berger developed the concept for KU's Memorial Drive.

The Watkins Scholarship eventually became today's Watkins-Berger Scholarship, which helps support about 50 students each year. Funding comes from the Watkins and Berger funds, as well as the Greater KU Fund.

— *Kirsten Bosnak*



### GREATER KU FUND

Through your gift of \$1,000 or more to the Greater KU Fund, you will be recognized as a member of the Chancellors Club. Give online at [kuendowment.org/greaterku/](http://kuendowment.org/greaterku/).

## Watkins-Berger Scholars

### Qualifications

- Graduation from a Kansas high school
- 3.5 cumulative high school GPA
- Record of community service and leadership
- ACT score of 31 or SAT score of 1360 in math and critical reading

### Support

- \$4,500 per year for four years

### Funding sources

- Elizabeth M. Watkins Fund
- Emily V. Berger Scholarship Fund
- Greater KU Fund



STEVE PUPPE

**Watkins-Berger Scholar Megan Fowler, a junior in chemistry from Fredonia, Kan., participates in the UKanTeach program, aimed at graduating more math and science teachers from KU. She plans to go to graduate school, then teach high school in a low-income neighborhood.**