

The Bognár Family Hungarian Scholarship Fund

Background

The scholarship fund, originally named the Hungarian Scholarship Fund (HSF), was established in 1999 by Dr. Béla and April Bognár.

In the spring of 2014, Dr. Béla and April Bognár requested the Hungarian American Coalition to become the administrator of their Hungarian Scholarship Fund as part of the Coalition's comprehensive training and educational portfolio. The Coalition has taken over administrative duties for this program, including fundraising, recipient selection and evaluation. With the Bognárs' agreement, HSF has been renamed *The Bognár Family Hungarian Scholarship Fund*.

Since its inception, the founders have raised more than \$500,000 from members of the Hungarian American community, churches, organizations and the Sunshine Lady Foundation (SLF), directed by Ms. Doris Buffett. As of June 2013, the HSF has awarded scholarships, many of them multi-year, to 152 students. 89 students earned BS degrees, 17 MS degrees, 6 MDs, 7 PhDs and 1 JD degree.

About the Program

The Bognár Family Hungarian Scholarship Fund provides monthly financial assistance to qualified university students of Hungarian origin studying in Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Serbia, and the United States.

The scholarship awardees receive funds regardless of the educational areas they pursue. A stipend (ranging from \$300 to \$1,000) per semester helps the students to cover the tuition fee or other expenses related to their studies. The exact amount of the stipend is determined by the Fund's Scholarship Committee.

About the Founders



Professor Dr. Béla Bognár

Professor Dr. Béla Bognár was born September 20, 1931, in Pakod, Zala County, Hungary. He is Professor Emeritus of Social Work and Gerontology at Wright State University in Ohio.

Dr. Bognár attended the Piarist High School in Veszprém for two years. After the communists abolished the Catholic high schools, he transferred to and graduated from Révai High School, Győr. His dream was to become

a Latin and Hungarian Literature teacher, but he was only accepted for Teachers's College in Pécs as a mathematics and chemistry major. After a year in Pécs (1952-53), he transferred to Eötvös Lóránd University in Budapest and joined a group of Catholic students who worked with

children (with their parents' permission) to instill religious principles. Typically, members of the group spent many hours with the children on Saturdays and Sundays. In 1954 before the fall semester began, five members of the clandestine group were kicked out of the university, one of whom was Dr. Bognár. They were also kicked out of Budapest. Dr. Bognár found a factory job in Győr where he worked until the summer of 1956 and played soccer on the factory team (EDASZ). He left Győr to rejoin some of his former classmates who also went back to Budapest and together joined the Petőfi Circle.

Dr. Bognár participated in the fight against the Russians from October 23 to November 9, 1956. He was part of a small group which fought on the streets from Üllői to Soroksári Roads. On November 10 he went home to Zala to pick up his French dictionary, his prayer book and his ski boots. On November 11 at 4:17 p.m. he crossed the border to Austria and headed for Leuven, Belgium, to start a new life.

Studies in the West

Dr. Bognár began by finishing the Ecole Social de Louvain in 1961 (BS with Magna Cum Laude). After immigrating to the US, he attended the University of Wisconsin where he obtained MS and PhD degrees in gerontology, health and mental health policies. He continued his post-doctorate studies in mental health and aging at the University of California at Berkeley and at the University of Southern California, receiving certificates in both institutions. Beginning in 1974, Dr. Bognár taught a generation of professionals who worked in the field of aging. He wrote four textbooks and countless articles on health and aging policies. For 15 years he was an advisor to the Ohio Department of Aging in the area of gerontology education. In 1988, he was given the *Gerontology Teacher Award* by the Ohio Network of Educational Consultants in the Field of Aging (ONECA).

Mrs. April Minor-Bognár

April Minor-Bognár was born in Dayton, Ohio and raised in Cleveland. She attended Ohio University and graduated from Miami of Ohio University with a BS in Home Economics.

She then taught in high school and vocational schools for ten years while working on an MS from Wright State University in mental health and eventually affiliating with Shelby County Mental Health and Upper Valley Crisis Center. After retirement, her time was devoted to the HSF as Secretary-Treasurer.

Major donors and supporters

The founders have raised more than \$500,000 from members of the Hungarian American community, churches, organizations and generous individuals. Major supporters included the Sunshine Lady Foundation (SLF), directed by Ms. Doris Buffett.



Ms. Doris Buffett

Ms. Doris Buffett is an American businesswoman and philanthropist.

Ms. Buffett is the older sister of famed businessman and philanthropist Mr. Warren Buffett, and the daughter of successful businessman Mr. Howard Buffett. In 1996, Mr. Howard Buffett's millions were divided among his children. Ms. Doris Buffett took her portion of the sizable fortune, and made it her goal to give it all away. She has a net worth of \$ 100 million dollars.

In 1996, she established the Sunshine Lady Foundation, a private family foundation. The mission of the foundation reflects the mid-western values and no-nonsense approach to decision-making that Ms. Buffett grew up with in Omaha, Nebraska.

Her organization is dedicated to providing funds to battered women, sick children, and at-risk kids. Sunshine Lady also provides funding to college programs for former inmates. The goal of the foundation is to break the cycles of violence and poverty, by providing people with support that helps them move in a more positive direction.

Ms. Buffett is known for personally making calls to the men and women who receive funding. She has donated over \$100 million of her own money in grants. Among her many other roles, Ms. Buffett has been a first grade teacher, domestic violence crusader, political activist, mother and grandmother. She is the self-appointed Buffett family genealogist and her avocation is historic preservation.