

From Scholarship to Stewardship: Helen Simmons and Shauna LaBeau's Circle of Giving

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Helen Simmons and Shauna LaBeau at USU in February 2026. Once a recipient of the Helen L. Simmons Scholarship, LaBeau now gives back to the same endowment to support the next generation of Aggies.

Since 1997, the Helen L. Simmons Endowment in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services at Utah State University has quietly changed lives. Established to reflect Helen's lifelong commitment to education, the scholarship is now carried forward in a deeply meaningful way—through the generosity of one of its own recipients, alumna Shauna LaBeau.

After receiving Helen's scholarship as a student, Shauna made a promise to one day give back. Now, through her personal contributions and her employer's matching program, she is helping ensure that Helen's legacy continues to support future Aggies.

Raised on a dairy farm in Lewiston, Utah, Helen Lower Simmons learned early the value of perseverance, education, and community. She enrolled at Utah State in 1948 and graduated in 1952 with a degree in home economics education and a minor in journalism—at a time when women were still a minority in many classrooms.

After graduation, Helen taught home economics and journalism at Logan High School, launching a career rooted in teaching and mentorship. Over the decades, she and her husband, John R. Simmons, remained deeply engaged in university life, civic service, and church leadership. Together, they strongly believed in giving back to the institution that had shaped their lives.

That belief led them to establish the [Helen L. Simmons Endowment](#) in 1997, creating lasting support for students in the College of Education and Human Services.

"When we came back from serving our mission, my husband said, 'We need to do our part now,'" Helen recalled. "It was our turn to help the next generation."

Seeing former recipients like Shauna now contribute to the same fund has been especially meaningful.

"It shows great citizenship and appreciation," Helen said. "She was touched by that scholarship years ago, and now she's in a position to help the next generation. I think it's marvelous. I'm honored that she's giving in my name. I love Utah State."

For Helen, the scholarship is about more than financial support, it is about sustaining opportunity.

"I think about all the beautiful things and opportunities we've had here," Helen said. "From academics to athletics to Aggie Ice Cream—it all connects me to this university. I want to help the next generation and encourage others to give."

When Shauna LaBeau received the Helen L. Simmons Scholarship in 2006-07, she was an undergraduate majoring in family, consumer, and human development. Like many students, she was balancing coursework, campus involvement, and part-time work.

The \$750 scholarship helped cover books and tuition—and eased the daily pressure of making ends meet.

"It helped me be less stressed and have a better college experience," Shauna said. "I could focus more on being a teaching assistant, holding office hours, and helping my professors. It enriched everything."

That support proved especially important as she prepared to serve a church mission after graduation and later return for graduate study. She went on to earn her master's degree in instructional technology and learning sciences in 2015 and built a career focused on education, financial literacy, and community service.

Early in her career, Shauna worked with Utah State Extension on grant-funded programs that taught financial literacy to refugees and immigrants in partnership with libraries and community organizations. Eventually, she joined Fidelity Investments, where she now works in wealth management.

But long before she was in a position to give back, Shauna had made a personal commitment.

"When I met Helen at the scholarship banquet, I heard her life story and saw how much she loved education and Utah State," Shauna said. "I decided then that when I was financially able, I wanted to give back to her scholarship."

Years later, she followed through and discovered she could multiply her impact through Fidelity's employee matching program.

"Taking advantage of employer matching opportunities at work allows my gift to go even further for students," Shauna said.

Rather than starting her own endowment, Shauna chose to invest directly in Helen's established fund. "My contribution has a bigger impact immediately," she explained. "If I started my own, it would take years to build. This way, I'm creating the greatest impact possible, sooner rather than later."

Each year, Shauna continues to give—often in honor of Helen's birthday—and strengthen the endowment that once supported her.

"Helen is truly one of the most remarkable people I've ever met," Shauna said. "She's such a light. Meeting her and learning from her life has inspired me to keep giving."

Today, the Helen L. Simmons Endowment represents something rare and powerful: a scholarship that has come full circle. A donor who believed in students. A recipient who was changed by that support. And an alumna who now helps lift the next generation. For Helen, that continuity is the ultimate reward.

"It shows her love for education," Helen said of Shauna. "And it shows that what we started is still helping students grow."

For Shauna, giving back is both a matter of gratitude and responsibility. "I wouldn't be where I am without the support I received," Shauna said. "This is my way of saying thank you and making sure other students have the same chance."

Together, Helen and Shauna demonstrate how generosity, when passed from one generation to the next, can transform lives — and ensure that the promise of Utah State University continues far into the future.

Note: Student access and success remain at the heart of Utah State University's mission. Your support of scholarships, programs, and student-focused initiatives provides the resources and opportunities Aggies need to thrive—on campus and far beyond it. Create your Aggie Impact by investing in the [student-focused](#) area that inspires you most and help shape the future, one Aggie at a time.