Ford Watson continues mother’s tradition of service, dedication

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Dr. JoAnn Ford Watson received the Dr. Lucille G. Ford “Freedom From Selfishness” award Thursday, proving it’s all in the family when it comes to dedication to a community.

Lucille Ford looked on proudly as her daughter received her namesake award at the annual Gathering Women Helping Women.

“All my life I just wanted my mother to be proud of me,” Watson said. “So I will try to carry on her legacy of love and giving that she always gave to me.”

Ashland County Community Foundation board member Connie Marble presented the award to Watson and described her as a woman who has “demonstrated a lifetime of achievement and philanthropy and always puts others before herself.”

Established in 2013, the award is presented by the ACCF’s Women’s Fund to an Ashland County woman who presents a dedication to philanthropy.

Among her numerous accolades, Watson was the first tenured female professor at the Ashland Theological Seminary and worked as a missionary volunteer with Mother Theresa and the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India.

“I try to do as much as I can every day to do something beautiful for God, for a person,” Watson said. “I will try with all my heart to continue to give to as many as I can, for as long as I can.”

The 2018 Women’s Fund Scholarship was awarded to Kaleigh Fowler. The scholarship is eligible to nontraditional female students who are Ashland County residents planning to attend some form of higher education.

Fowler received the scholarship in the spring and is attending Wayne County Career Center to become a licensed practical nurse.
Lori Au from the Ashland County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, a Women’s Fund grant recipient, recounted her experience working with six women who were recovering from addiction when they attended the “Breaking my Boundaries” conference in Columbus.

Au said women in recovery view supporting and interacting with other women as a “foreign concept,” so the conference was an opportunity for the six participants to get to know each other and tell their stories.

“We want to help the women discover that there is power in themselves to once and for all throw out those limiting beliefs and discover a new life of unlimited beliefs,” Au said.

The bonding that occurred between the six women was amazing, she said, and though they were different from each other they were able to bond over the common ground of the experiences they had in their lives.

Eight grants from the Women’s Fund were announced at the gathering, totaling $18,803.

The Appleseed Community Mental Health Center, Ashland County Cancer Association, Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center, Ashland Parenting Plus, Ashland Pregnancy Care Center, Associated Charities, Mission to Amish People and Olive Tree Afterschool Care were the recipients in this year’s grant program.

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