

Edmund & Thelma Evans Trust Biography Statement

This opportunity is made possible by the generosity of Thelma and Edmunds Evans, who left a legacy of their values through the endowment of the Evans Trust. Their priorities are reflected in the criteria for scholarship eligibility. **In your application for this scholarship, please address how your work/goals would further advance the vision of Mr. and Mrs. Evans.**

Thelma and Edmund had no children. He was a career service man and retired as a Colonel after 21 years of service. Thelma worked as an administrative assistant no matter where they lived, including Long Island, London and Anchorage. They invested her income and lived on his.

Thelma and Edmund were the “driving force” in the creation of the Animal Humane Association of New Mexico in the 1960’s. She actually ran the operation for over 20 years. Born on a farm in Kansas, Thelma always loved animals. When they settled in Albuquerque, Thelma felt she had to do something about all the dogs and cats running loose. She mothered tens of thousands of animals over the years, even to the point of adding a room on to their house in order to care for lost and sick animals. After founding the Animal Humane Society, her focus became the shelter’s clinic where volunteer veterinarians did spaying and neutering of animals. She had the determination of a pit bull when it came to spaying and neutering. Thelma knew all of the veterinarians in the community.

Although Ed and Thelma did not categorically reject the use of animals in biomedical and behavioral research, they believed that justification for their use was a serious undertaking requiring both a rigorous ethical and scientific analysis. They felt that if animal use was determined to be justified, their treatment must be guided by the highest level of technical competence and kindness.

Thelma and Ed provided for these scholarships in pre-veterinary and veterinary studies as a way of expressing deep gratitude to the veterinarians that served the Animal Humane Association in Albuquerque over a substantial number of years. Their intentions are to encourage and enable students to study veterinary science, with the hope that these new veterinarians would return to New Mexico to practice.

Edmund was particularly interested in the theatre, an interest, which Thelma shared. She grasped the importance and centrality of the role of the playwright in the theatrical process. Edmund fancied himself an actor and she described him as a “ham”. They attended the “PlayFests” at UNM, and at one point in the negotiations of her gift, she gave consideration to naming the PlayFests for her husband, Edmund, but she did not want any attention brought to herself by the gift.

Edmund died of a heart attack at the age of 79. Thelma died of cancer in 2003 at the age of 92. She donated her body to the UNM Health Science Center for research.

Mr. and Mrs. Evans believed in the importance of medical research as a way to improve the quality of life. However, both of them believed strongly that prolonging life through postponing natural death was not a good thing, that medical research should be directed at improving the human condition through research of human genetics, birth defects and diseases.

Mr. and Mrs. Evans were people with a strong work ethic and high values. They loved their community and gave generously to improve the lives of people living here. The legacy of Thelma and Edmund Evans will be carried on through the research awards and scholarship opportunities.