

Honoring the Life of Marianne Hardester

I am sadly sharing the news of the passing of Marianne Hardester, sister of Deanie Hardester Wilmsen. Marianne was disabled at birth in 1940. Her disabilities were attributable to encephalopathy due to a mechanical injury during her birth. Although Cerebral Palsy and lack of muscular control did limit Marianne's ability to articulate words, she learned to communicate with a limited vocabulary. As an adult, she participated in a day program for people with disabilities five days per week. Her strength, wisdom and tenacity amazed her family and all who have had the opportunity to know her.

Deanie, Ted and the Hardester Family including Jackie Marble, Wally Hardester, Marianne Hardester, Kathy McIntosh, Debbie Norton and Karen Lipscomb established the Hardester Family Disabled Student Scholarship in 2019 in honor of Marianne. Deanie and Ted strongly believe that all students regardless of whether they have a disability or not deserve the opportunity to further their education. Much progress has been made over the past 85 years with regards to the diagnosis and treatment of disabling conditions and students with disabilities are attending college in record numbers. The Wilmsen and Hardester Families want to encourage and support even more disabled students to reach their full potential by transferring from SRJC to the university level with this renewable scholarship.

The seventh recipient of the "Hardester Scholarship" was recently selected by the Rotary Club of Santa Rosa Foundation Scholarship Committee. Her name is Pheonyx Jaco who will be transferring to San Francisco State in the fall term with a major in Psychology. Phoenix graduated from Orchard View Charter High School (Sebastopol) in 2024 and has earned a 3.9 GPA while attending SRJC. In her scholarship application she discussed her disabilities including ADHD and Dissociative Identity Disorder. Her career plan is to become a psycho-therapist specializing in dissociative identity disorders.

As Marianne exemplified, strength, wisdom and tenacity are personal traits that will propel a person to achieve goals once considered unachievable. Although she is no longer with us, her legacy lives on through the scholarship that bears her name and the strength and tenacity she demonstrated throughout her life.