

25 Years: The Lasting Impact of the Andy Stolper Memorial Award

In the spring of 1995 Andy Stolper's dream was coming true: he was admitted into the School of Medicine and Public Health PA Program. After a lifetime of being cared for as a patient, he would care for others as a provider.

"I'll never forget Andy's happiness when he received that letter admitting him into the Class of 1997," says his mother, Judy Stolper. "When he began the program, Andy lived and worked hard every day to become a PA. That was his goal in life."

Endowing the Andy Stolper Memorial Award

This spring marks 25 years since Andy Stolper would have graduated from the PA Program with the Class of 1997.

In recognition of the anniversary, Judy Stolper and her husband, Gene Haug, have established an endowment fund to increase the impact of the Andy Stolper Memorial Award and create sustainable growth.

While the support of continued additional contributions have been made over the years to assist with growing student expenses, Stolper says, the endowment ensures the award in Andy's name will "be funded into perpetuity."

Contributions to the fund are welcome and appreciated, as are your stories of the lasting impacts that Andy's example has had. Visit: supportuw.org/giveto/StolperAward

Like his older brother Michael, Andy was born with severe hemophilia. They experienced many bleeding complications at an early age and chronic illnesses throughout their lives. While still young boys, they were infected with HIV and hepatitis viruses through blood products. In high school, Andy was diagnosed with Burkitt lymphoma. Complications from that treatment left his legs permanently paralyzed. Yet, even as Andy adjusted to these setbacks — and lost his brother to the disease — he remained optimistic, outgoing and eager to share his experiences with others who could benefit from it.

This may have been no more apparent than as a student in the PA Program. As a person with multiple chronic diseases, Stolper says, "Andy brought a wisdom from a patient perspective."

Above all, he stressed the need for providers to regard each patient as an individual, and as partners in their own care. Navigating his own challenges with positivity and openness, he also sought to abolish the stereotypes and barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

"When he shared his unique perspective with his classmates, Stolper says, "they would hear him. They would listen to him."

Andy was hospitalized in his first year with new complications, but continued his studies, thanks in part to his classmates who supported him. "They were a great group," Stolper remembers. But his immune system was fragile and his liver compromised. Andy died that January.

The following year, Stolper and her husband established the



Sarah Affeldt and Judy Stolper presenting the award in 2015

[Andy Stolper Memorial Award](#) to support PA students in their didactic year who share Andy's values: a love of learning, a passion for teaching or community service, and a deep-seated persistence and indefatigable optimism in the face of obstacles. Twenty-five years later, more than 30 students have received the Andy Stolper Memorial Award.

Andy's classmate and good friend **Sarah (Hinsa) Affeldt, PA-C '97** was its first recipient. Today, she practices in UW Health's HIV Care and Prevention Clinic where Andy was treated — and where he was first encouraged (by a PA, no less) to apply to the program. Affeldt often helps review application essays, and she shares her memories of Andy when Stolper presents the award at the White Coat Ceremony.

For Stolper, reading about and meeting the "remarkable men and women" who are studying to be PAs continues to be an honor and pleasure. "It's such a diverse group of students who all have a story that led them on the path to the PA Program."

Andy did not reach his goal. But because of the support given in his name, decades of PA Program graduates will carry his values and insights into their practice.