DWIGHT AND LAVINA BANCROFT SCHOLARSHIPS

The Dwight and Lavina Bancroft Scholarships were established in 1986 by Lavina Bancroft as a memorial for her recently deceased husband. Since their primary interests were music and accounting she wanted to limit the award winners to these fields of study. Lavina was born and lived her entire life in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties and wished to make certain that only dedicated students would receive this award and asked that the students be either junior or seniors and the award could be earned twice.

Dwight Bancroft was born in Minnesota and was a very young child when his family helped him obtain musical instruments. He was very talented and began playing professionally as a school boy. He played with John Philip Sousa, Eddie Peabody, Lawrence Welk, and many others.

Dwight, who had planned to open a photo shop, got interested in accounting and began to help Lavina. She taught him and he passed the state test to become a public accountant.

Lavina was born in Smith River and moved to Eureka as a school girl. When she was in high school she became the sole support of her family. She spoke to Mr. Craddock who ran a business school and convinced him to allow her to become a student and learn bookkeeping but that he would have to defer the tuition until after she got a job. He agreed and within two years she was teaching some of the classes. She worked for a number of local firms as a bookkeeper and finally took a job with an accountant. In 1934 she left to open her own business. Within six weeks she had opened an office, hired three employees and had more work than she could handle. She took the state accountancy exam, passed it and became one of the few women in California to become a public accountant.

Lavina and Dwight ran the business until he dies in the late 70’s but she carried on until 1990, some 56 years in the business. There were no children. She began the scholarship program with a direct grant through the Humboldt Area Foundation. It worked so well she began making donations to build the principal and allow the scholarships to be funded with the earned interest. Over a period of years, a perpetual scholarship was established with the Humboldt Area Foundation investing the funds and Humboldt State University selecting the scholars. The fund was increased by $200,000 when she died in 1995. In addition she established that more than $1,000,000 will be added to the fund.