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## **Graduate student nursing award created to honour legacy of former U of L professor's grandmother**

An unexpected financial windfall and the desire to honour a family legacy have led to the creation of a new graduate student nursing scholarship at the University of Lethbridge.

Dr. Sonya Grypma, a former assistant professor of nursing at the U of L and the current dean of the School of Nursing at Trinity Western University, was gifted a significant sum of money from her uncle. Rather than viewing the gift as a personal dividend, Grypma and her husband looked for a way in which the money could have community impact. Her passion for nursing education made the decision on what to do with the funds fairly easy.

"Creating a scholarship felt like the right thing to do," says Grypma of the Jacoba Vanden Brink Award. "I received a number of scholarships as a graduate nursing student and they were tremendously impactful on my education and career. The idea of helping other graduate nursing students that way was inspiring, and I knew that in doing so I'd be helping a lot of others in turn."

The scholarship is named in honour of Grypma's maternal grandmother, a Dutch immigrant with 13 children who came to Canada with her husband after the Second World War in pursuit of a better life. Grypma never had the chance to meet her grandmother, who was tragically killed in a car accident that happened just south of the Alberta border before Grypma was born.

"The name ties so many things together for me," says Grypma. "It pays homage to my grandmother's strength and determination to transition her family into a new life. It honours my mother, who shares my grandmother's first name. It upholds the value of a university education. To know that this money will work in service to others is really pleasing."

The Jacoba Vanden Brink Award is a \$1,000 scholarship given each year to two graduate students in the U of L Faculty of Health Sciences – a first-year student and a second-year

student. The first ever beneficiaries of the award, Mercy Enwere and Kim Veldman, received the scholarship last fall.

“Nursing is a public service,” says Grypma. “A good nursing education doesn’t stop with one person – it rolls out to countless others. I received the help and affirmation I needed to succeed as a student, a nurse and an academic. This scholarship is a way for me to pay it forward while honouring people I know who dedicated themselves to helping others.”

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