

I told the following true story to those who helped me endow the graduate research fellowship in UCD's psychology department. I wanted to provide them with an understanding of the endowment's personal significance:

Many years ago, a Tanzanian high school student started an email exchange with me about my research. He asked some excellent questions which indicated that he was extremely bright. I mentioned him to Karen, who became very curious, and had me inquire more. We learned that he was orphaned - a frequent circumstance in a country where malaria is endemic - and was thus living with his grandmother. He was attending a missionary school that operated under the British educational model, and Karen soon wanted to see his transcripts, which she, as a Brit, could interpret. Karen told me that he was indeed intellectually brilliant but that it was very unlikely that he would be able to continue to progress beyond a high school diploma (an academic achievement which is relatively uncommon there anyway). Those who sought a higher education either had to come from a sufficiently affluent family or else obtain a patron who would cover college expenses. Scholarships like she and I relied upon were rarely available. Karen then got a crazy idea: He should become our protégé! He happily consented, and we made arrangements to cover his tuition and other required fees for four years at the University of Dodoma, where he earned his bachelor's degree in economics. Sometime later we planned a trip to Tanzania for a safari from the Serengeti to Zanzibar. He met up with us at the beginning of our travels, giving us a tour of Dar es Salam and its environs (including his old high school) and then rejoined us for the trip's conclusion at Mafia Island (which he had recommended as off the beaten track). He was doing quite well at a consulting firm but said that he was looking into fellowships to earn an advanced degree abroad, which would enhance his prospects all the more. Karen and I gradually lost regular contact with him for some years, and particularly during the difficult period when we were coping with her brain cancer. He eventually sent a very informative email updating us on the intervening events. He did in fact obtain a fellowship to attend a foreign graduate school and then returned to Tanzania, where he became a government economist, a far more secure and lucrative position. He had bought a house for his grandmother, got married, and just saw his first child born. Attached to his email was a film clip, which showed him walking across the stage to receive his master's degree - from King's College London! He expressed gratitude for our faith in him so many years earlier. Unfortunately, I had to give him the bad news that Karen only recently passed away. I said that she would have loved to learn about what he had accomplished, especially given that it was actually her idea, not mine, to initiate our financial support. He was devastated.

One of the most memorable episodes in our tour of Dar es Salam was when he took us to visit his boss. During the conversation, our former protégé said something in Swahili that provoked his boss to abruptly stand erect and perform a traditional East African gesture of respect that just gave us goosebumps. That image continues to move me today. All because of Karen's profound commitment to providing educational opportunities to those who might otherwise not have them.

Strikingly, our former protégé eventually acquired sufficient resources to pay it forward. Besides taking on two protégés of his own, one in economics and another in medicine, he chose to make a substantial donation to the endowment for Karen's CSUS memorial scholarship! Her generosity still lives in others.