

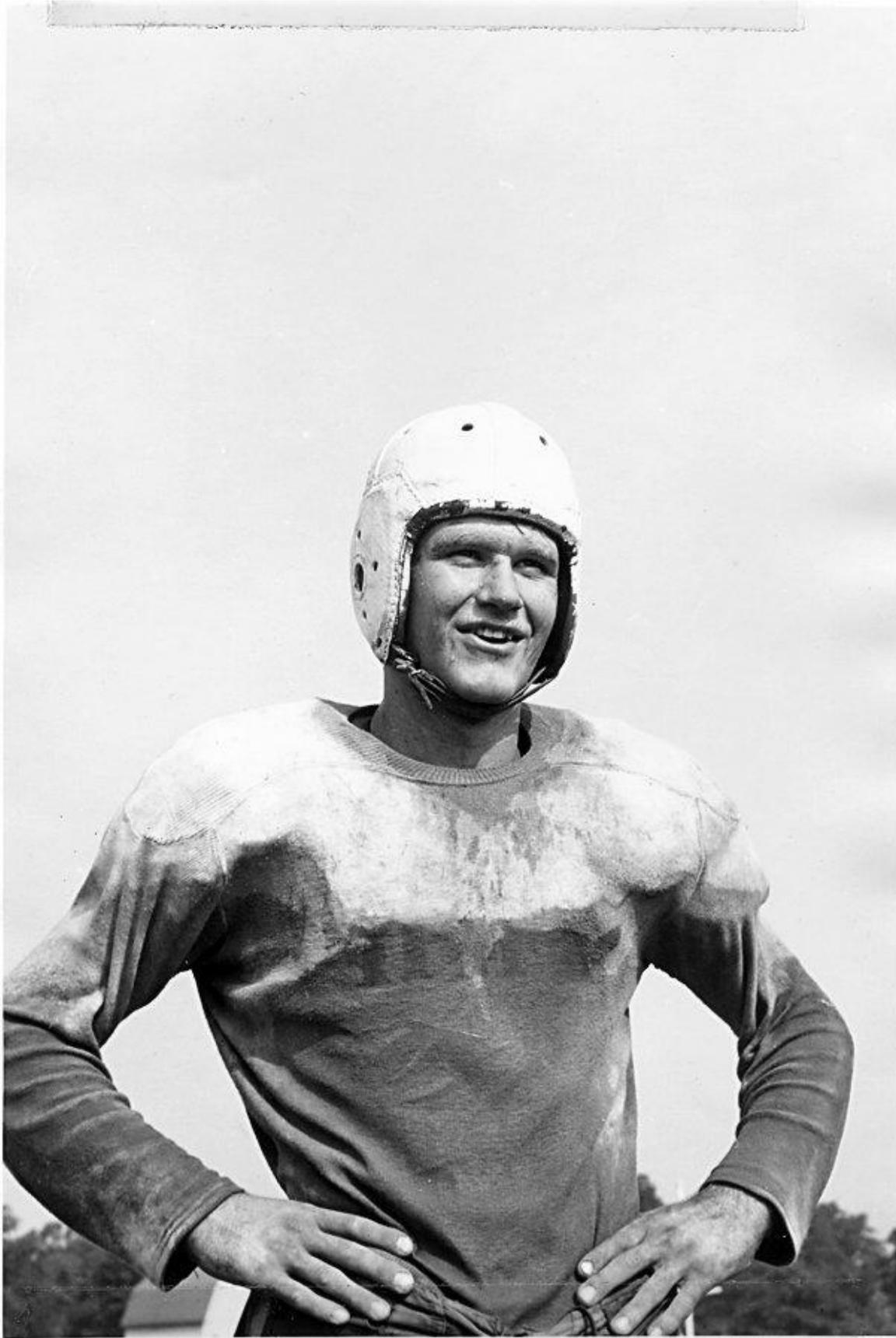
Colonel gives more than \$1 million to Harvey High, Lake Erie College (photos)



Retired Army Colonel Arville Hickerson has given more than \$1 million for scholarships to Harvey High School's alumni fund, Lake Erie College and elsewhere. Photo courtesy of Col. Arville Hickerson.



Col. Arville Hickerson with his late wife, Betty. Photo courtesy of Col. Arville Hickerson.



Hickerson was a guard on an undefeated football team at Harvey High School. Photo courtesy of Col. Arville Hickerson.



ARVILLE L. HICKERSON
COL, U.S. ARMY, RVN 1967-1969
LOM (2), BSM "V" (4), PH, AM "V" (5)
USMACV; 1ST AIR CAV DIV (AMBL)
"GARRY OWEN!"

This plaque honors Col. Arville Hickerson in a veterans' memorial park in Belleair Fla., where he spends most of his time.



Arville Hickerson, center, at his wedding. Photo courtesy of Col. Arville Hickerson.



By Grant Segall, The Plain Dealer

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comments

PAINESVILLE, Ohio — A former star of [Harvey High School's](#) gridiron and classrooms has given its alumni association scholarship funds worth about \$530,000.

Retired Col. Arville Hickerson figures he's also given nearly \$700,000 to other non-profit causes locally and nationally, including [Lake Erie College in Painesville](#). Some of the money pays for escalating scholarships for Harvey grads who complete four years at Lake Erie.

But don't mistake Hickerson for a tycoon. The 81-year-old retired from the Army on disability 33 years ago. He hasn't held a civilian job since his student days. He's widowed and childless, and says he's saved and invested.

Hickerson hopes his gifts will inspire wealthier people to give proportionally, especially for scholarships. "An education is now in many good schools over \$50,000 annually, and even the upper middle-class, if there is one anymore, needs scholarship money," he says. "I needed it when I went to school."

He splits his time between McLean, Virginia, and Belleair, Florida. He hasn't been back to Painesville since 2006, when "Painesville as I knew it was gone. All the schools I attended had been torn down." Yet he's helping students who graduate from a newer high school building.

Ron Balogh, head of Harvey's alumni association, says Hickerson is a generous and meticulous man. "The colonel and I worked together to set up the criteria and paperwork for the scholarships he is funding. He wanted to make sure that the recipients met the qualifications for the scholarship, had the abilities to succeed at the college level, and had the financial need for additional funds."

Holly Menzie, a Lake Erie consultant, says, "I would describe him as a hero. He wants to help as many people obtain higher education as possible because he knows how valuable that is in today's world."

Hickerson was born on New Year's Eve in 1934 in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and moved as an infant to Painesville. At Lake Erie, his father became an English professor and his mother worked in the library.

Retired Colonel Arville Hickerson: "Even the upper middle-class, if there is one any more, needs scholarship money."

The son played right guard on an undefeated junior varsity team that outscored its foes by 95-6 over the course of a season. In 1951, he played center and middle linebacker for the only undefeated varsity team in school history. The Painesville Telegraph named him the best center in the All-Northeastern Conference.

Off the field, Hickerson was president of several clubs, vice president of the student body and one of three co-valedictorians of his class. He was later inducted into the Harvey Alumni Association Hall of Fame, and the whole varsity was inducted as a team.

With the help of scholarships, he earned a bachelor's degree in engineering and a master's in mechanical engineering at Dartmouth College.

He served with the Army in some tough spots. He was in Berlin during the crisis over its wall and commanded the guard at Spandau Prison there, monitoring Nazi war criminals Rudolph Hess, Albert Speer and Baldur von Schirach. He fought in the Tet Offensives in Vietnam and tore a leg diving into a bunker.

He finished his career as a division chief in the Army Inspector General Office. His many medals included a Purple Heart and four Bronze Stars. He retired after two heart attacks and a triple bypass.

In 1996, Hickerson and his wife, Elizabeth, began donating to Lake Erie College. They helped raise the Holden Center, renovate the Morley Memorial Music Building and more.

In 2002, the Hickersons began creating three scholarships at Lake Erie for Harvey grads. In some cases, the scholarships give \$1,000 for a student's first year of college, \$2,000 for the second year, \$3,000 for the third and \$4,000 for the fourth, encouraging the student to stay the course. A college spokeswoman estimates that the Hickersons have given the school \$100,000 altogether and helped 10 students so far.

In 2013, five years after his wife's death, Hickerson began giving directly to the Harvey Alumni Association for scholarships. His money is helping two new graduates this fall.

Hickerson says he's helping Harvey and Lake Erie more than his old college because they don't have anything near Dartmouth's endowment. "I'm going to give my money to the institutions that need it more, like I needed money when I went to school."