

Dear Whitney Benefits,

I want to convey to the Foundation my gratitude and the importance of the educational funding assistance I received from the Whitney Foundation as I earned my bachelor of arts degree at Carroll College from 2000 to 2004. Carroll is a private, Catholic institution that regularly earns world-wide recognition for the quality of the education that is provided to its students. That education comes with a high price tag compared to state schools such as the University of Wyoming and the others that are part of inter-state tuition savings programs. When I requested assistance from Whitney Benefits, my costs as a freshman for room, board and tuition was just short of \$23,000. I was fortunate to have assistance from other resources, but without the interest-free resources provided to the students in our community from Whitney Benefits, I would likely not have been able to attend this prestigious college, and furthermore achieve the many successes that have resulted from my attendance at Carroll.

My parents earned modest incomes in the Sheridan area during high school, and I was fortunate to earn tuition assistance based on test scores and from athletics. However, prior to my freshman year, I still had to seek additional outside assistance for financial aid as my summer labor job, the Whitney funds and scholarships still left me a bit short of the costs of attendance. I was fortunate to no longer need any interest-bearing funds provided to me beyond that first year which left a small balance accruing interest that would be required to be paid back upon graduation. Upon graduating from Carroll with a degree in Computer Science, I had just \$8,000 in total interest-bearing educational debt and it could have been a lot more!!

I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to use the Whitney Benefits funding provided to me to achieve my college education. The support they provide our county residents through financial funding is so powerful considering their ability to do so without causing added interest to the total balance upon graduation. The costs for post-secondary education continue to rise at staggering levels, and our local kids have a great advantage to combat those increases without being succumbed to overwhelming interest rates and heavy monthly payments upon graduation.

I believe it is fair to say that my personal and professional achievements in large part came from my college experience. I am certain that without the support I receive from the Whitney Benefits Foundation, my story would be certainly different. I am so grateful to have been able to return home to work and raise my family.

Sincere regards,

DJ Dearcorn  
SVP, Commercial Lending  
First Federal Bank & Trust