



April 16, 2014

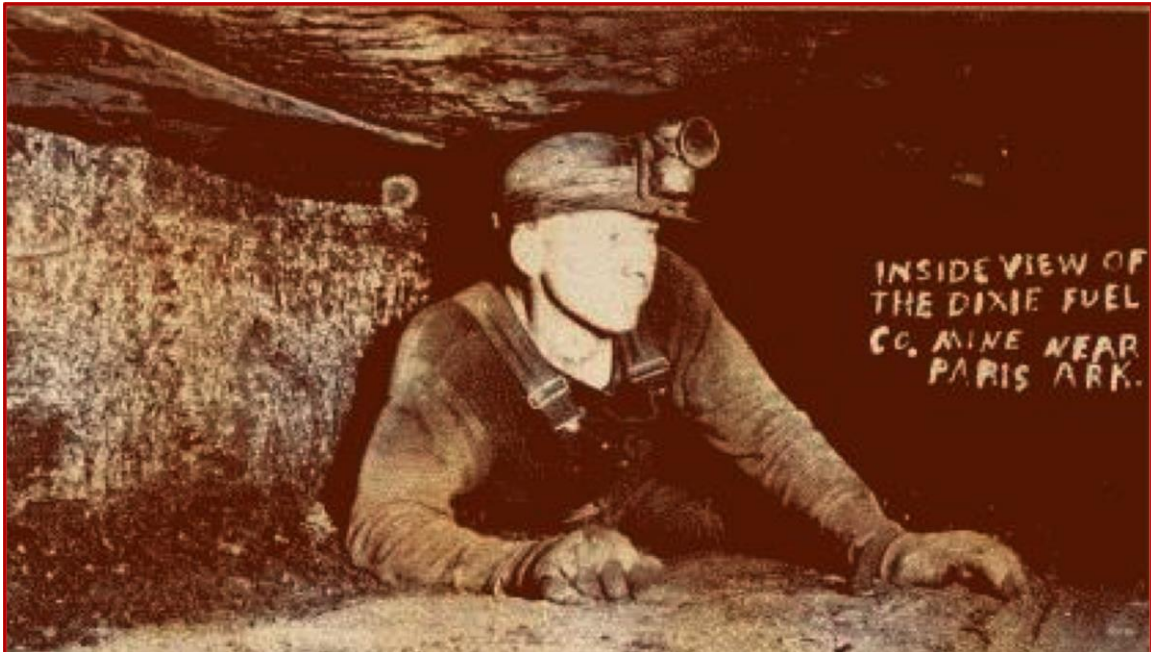
Fenter Family Endows MSCC Scholarship in Memory of Roy L. Gray

Mid-South Community College President Dr. Glen Fenter and his family recently converted an annual scholarship into an endowed one that assures it will continue indefinitely.

Established in 2005 in honor of Dr. Fenter's maternal grandfather, the Roy L. Gray Endowed Scholarship provides financial assistance to working parents who have earned a GED®.

"I learned a lot from my grandfather, and I think the lessons that I learned watching him have clearly served me well in my present career and hopefully for the rest of my life," Dr. Fenter said. "They have certainly been lessons that I have tried to impart to my children."

Roy Gray never had the opportunity for higher education or even a high school education.



“My grandfather was the older of several siblings and before completing elementary school he was forced to quit school so that he could gather coal and chop wood to help provide food for the family,” Dr. Fenter said. “He was forced to grow up at a very early age.”

Gray later married and started his own family while working as a foreman of a coal mine in Paris, Ark., during the Great Depression. Most of his work was done 200 feet or more below the ground.

“Any time I think I have it bad, I look at the picture of him on his hands and knees 200 feet under the ground and trying to raise six kids,” Dr. Fenter said.

To compound matters, Gray walked home from work one day to find his wife gone.

“His six children were in the small hovel that they called home, and he discovered that his wife had decided she wanted to be in California and not be responsible for the family any longer.

“There are a lot of people that just would have given up and walked out. He didn’t do that, and I have never forgotten the



strength of that resolve in terms of being responsible for your children and their welfare.”

Gray managed to provide for and keep his family together, and when he had the opportunity to counsel his grandchildren, he impressed upon them the importance of education.

“He always felt himself inadequate because he did not have the opportunity for a formal education,” Dr. Fenter recalled. “He began working with me and his other

grandchildren to make certain that whatever happened we were going to have a chance to get an education.

“I never thought about it until recently, but I was the first grandchild to have the opportunity to complete a formal education. Unfortunately, my grandfather died my sophomore year of college, but he left me access to resources that made certain I could finish.”

When Dr. Fenter completed his four-year degree from Hendrix College in Conway, Ark., he placed a copy of his diploma on his grandfather’s grave, because “quite frankly, I probably would have never stayed in school without hearing him so many times in my head.”

“By example, my grandfather taught me never to judge a person’s value or potential by appearance, finances, or educational background. Unfortunately, even today our world is filled with people with great intellect and inordinately advanced levels of common sense and talent who may never have the ability to achieve their God-given potential simply because higher education is not within their reach.

“Consequently, our work at MSCC has been dedicated to the proposition that people’s past should never limit their opportunity to work hard and change the quality of their future.”

To contribute to the Roy L. Gray Endowed Scholarship or to create a new one, please contact Patti Coleman, MSCC Director of Advancement, at (870) 733-6764 or pdcoleman@midsouthcc.edu.

The Mid-South Community College Foundation, which administers 78 scholarships, also offers direct on-line giving through the College’s website, www.midsouthcc.edu (click on the Foundation graphic on the home page or go to MSCC Portal, MSCC Foundation, and Give Now).

The MSCC Foundation, Inc. is an independent charitable organization created to raise and oversee funds donated to MSCC in support of the college’s efforts to meet the needs of Crittenden County. It operates under a tax exempt 501(c)(3) status.