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Scholarship can help a dancer's dreams come true

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FIRESTONE — While growing up in the Carbon Valley during the 1930s, Betty Jean Bruno loved dancing and dreamed of someday becoming a professional dancer.

Her dream faded when the realities of life got in the way.

“She had to get out and make a living, get a job and start her life,” said Cheryl Schuster, her daughter. “She had to focus on other things like raising a family.”

Before she died in 2006 from lung cancer, Bruno raised four children. To honor their mother's memory and passion for dance, her children have established a dance scholarship for a student from the Carbon Valley or Longmont areas.

The one-time \$1,000 Betty Jean Bruno Dance Scholarship will be awarded to an incoming student at the University of Colorado who is a declared dance major, according to Kirsten Steinke, marketing communications doordinator for the University of Colorado Foundation.

“The scholarship will go toward someone who is making a career out of dancing and is either going to teach it or go maybe on to Broadway — someone who has the talent and determination to continue on with their dance,” Schuster said.

The scholarship recipient must live in the local area.

“I know it would make her smile to see a student pursuing the path she never took — that of a professional dancer,” Schuster said.

Bruno, one of six children, grew up in Firestone during the Great Depression. Her parents, Sam and Minnie Lopezi, enrolled her in tap dance lessons when she was 8 years old.

“Her dancing was a source of entertainment for everyone at the time,” Schuster said. “They liked to have a little bit of fun and enjoyment during such rough times. It was very hard during the Depression.”

Bruno's father worked in the mines in the Carbon Valley area.

For more information about the scholarship, call 303-492-4533.

We Salute You is a regular feature of the Carbon Valley edition of the Times-Call that appears each Saturday. The column is a way to recognize those in the community who take that little bit of extra time to make life more special for

the people around them. Send your nomination, your name, contact information and a brief paragraph explaining why the person should be saluted by e-mail to mhagan@times-call.com, or call editor Mike Hagan at 303-684-5228.
