What is the Memorial Fund?

A tragedy shook the figure skating world on Feb. 15, 1961, when Sabena Flight 548, carrying the U.S. Team to the World Figure Skating Championships in Prague, Czechoslovakia, crashed near Brussels, Belgium. All aboard were lost. From this loss arose the U.S. Figure Skating Memorial Fund. The mission of the Memorial Fund is to provide qualified U.S. Figure Skating members in need of financial aid with monetary assistance to pursue their goals both inside and outside the competitive arena. The fund is committed to awarding skating and academic scholarships to those athletes who have demonstrated excellent competitive results and/or academic achievements, and who have potential in national and international competitions.

To learn more about the programs at U.S. Figure Skating, contact Giving Programs at 719.635.5200 or info@usfigureskating.org.

U.S. Figure Skating is the national governing body for the sport of figure skating in the United States as recognized by the United States Olympic Committee and the International Skating Union. The U.S. Figure Skating Memorial Fund is tax exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code, and all contributions are deductible for federal income tax purposes to the extent the law allows.

“I feel honored to be among the skaters who receive funding to pursue their dreams. The Memorial Fund is special because it continues the legacy of the 1961 World Team. It has helped make my dreams a reality by providing the funds I need to pursue extra training with figure skating greats like Frank Carroll and Kathy Casey. I am forever grateful and honored by your donations.”

— Ashley Cain

“I count myself lucky to be among the likes of Peggy Fleming, Kristi Yamaguchi and Scott Hamilton — figure skaters who, like many others, were and are afforded the opportunity to achieve their dreams through the Memorial Fund. For many figure skaters this is a long and difficult dream at the end of a long and difficult road, but the Memorial Fund helps make those dreams possible. I am personally and entirely grateful for the opportunities and purpose the Memorial Fund afforded me, through the generosity of its donors my dreams are now a reality.”

— Richard Dornbush

“It is safe to say that without the Memorial Fund, I would not be the skater I am today. It has made it possible for me to take full advantage of every training opportunity that has come my way and has given me the chance to become the best skater I can possibly be. Your generosity has given me those opportunities, and I could not be more thankful. For me, there is no better gift than the opportunity to live my dreams, and that is what the Memorial Fund has helped me do.”

— Colin McManus
Our skaters stand on broad shoulders: In a sport steeped in history, today’s athletes benefit from figure skating’s darkest hour. Just days after the tragic plane crash near Brussels claimed the lives of the entire 1961 U.S. World Team, the U.S. Figure Skating Memorial Fund was created to help keep dreams alive.

One of those first dreams realized came as a teenager named Peggy Fleming stood atop the 1968 Olympic podium in Grenoble, France. Peggy, whose coach William Kipp was lost in the crash, was among the Fund’s first recipients.

Today, thousands of skaters like Peggy have been able to pursue their dreams because of people like you. Fans, athletes, clubs and corporations continue to honor the Memorial Fund endowment, which benefits not only our athletes, clubs and corporations, but future Olympians as well. For more than 50 years, the Fund has awarded millions of dollars in financial support to help offset skating-related expenses including:

- Off-ice training, such as ballet classes
- Physical therapy and medical expenses
- Coaching fees
- Ice time
- Skating equipment
- Costumes
- Choreography expenses

CSAP awards are available to qualified ladies, men’s, pairs and ice dance competitors at the juvenile – senior levels who demonstrate financial need and meet the well-defined competitive requirements.

Applications are accepted beginning June 1 of each year. Awards are disbursed to skaters during the fall.

The Competitive Skaters Assistance Program (CSAP) is designed to help skaters offset skating-related expenses including:

- Coaching fees
- Ice time
- Skating equipment
- Costumes
- Choreography expenses

The Academic Scholarship Program (ASP) assists current and former skaters who are enrolled in an accredited college or university as an undergraduate or graduate student and who are actively involved in the sport of figure skating. The ASP provides financial assistance to help with such costs as tuition, fees, books and supplies. Skaters receive funds based on financial need, cumulative grade point average and level of competitive achievement. Other criteria considered include volunteering at local clubs, judging or officiating, or competing as a member of a synchronized skating team.

Skaters can apply for one or both scholarship programs annually.

For more information about these programs, please visit our website at 1961memorialfund.com.