



## **AOTF Announces Two Endowed Scholarships Created by Fred Sammons**

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF), Bethesda, Maryland, announces the creation of the Fred Sammons and Barbara Rider Endowed Scholarship of the Michigan Occupational Therapy Association and the Fred Sammons Endowed Scholarship of the Virginia Occupational Therapy Association.

Fred Sammons is an entrepreneur and founder of Sammons BeOK, Inc., a leading and early distributor of equipment and supplies for occupational therapy and rehabilitation. The company he founded grew into a multimillion dollar business and eventually became Patterson Medical Inc. Sammons earned his occupational therapy degree at Virginia Commonwealth University on the GI Bill and holds an honorary doctoral degree in public service from Western Michigan University.

His first job was at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, where he became director in 1957. It was after joining the staff of the amputee clinic at Northwestern University in 1960 that he began to design and build devices to assist individual with disabilities in their everyday activities. For 15 years, Sammons has volunteered with AMBUCS Inc., a non-profit service organization dedicated to creating mobility and independence for people with disabilities. Last year, AMBUCS distributed more than 3000 tricycles designed to accommodate riders of all ages, sizes and varying degrees of physical limitations around the world. Establishing an endowed chair in occupational therapy and also supporting innovative projects in the Department of Occupational Therapy at Western Michigan University are among his many good works.

Sammons is a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association and a recipient of AOTA's highest honor, the Award of Merit. He has generously supported AOTF for many years and is one of only six honorary life members of the board of AOTF.

Barbara Rider is an occupational therapist who has provided leadership as Chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy at Western Michigan University. A leading and respected educator who served the interests of occupational therapy in Michigan and nationally in many leadership roles, Rider is currently working in collaboration with architects and medical teams to help remodel homes to accommodate children with special needs. She has also established an endowed lectureship at Western Michigan University.

"I just love occupational therapy and the leadership of the Foundation is so good," said Sammons of his longtime commitment to AOTF and his inspiration to endow two scholarships. "We need to be sensitive to the changes in job opportunities for occupational therapists. We must strengthen and create visibility for our state associations and be progressive. I've been fortunate in my career and I hope others might also be inspired to offer their support and create more scholarships. Supporting students now and in the future will help get us there," he said.

“With the dramatic increases in tuition over the past decade, scholarship support is more important than ever. We are deeply grateful to Fred Sammons for creating enduring legacies through the establishment of these endowments and for the many contributions he and Barbara Rider have made to occupational therapy,” said AOTF Executive Director, Charles Christiansen.

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation is a 501c3 charitable, scientific and educational organization established in 1965. To learn more about AOTF visit [www.aotf.org](http://www.aotf.org)

###