

[Print](#) | [Close Window](#)

THE ENQUIRER

Last Updated: 5:48 pm | Sunday, April 29, 2007

## Seniors get free college tuition

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

### HIGHLAND HEIGHTS -

When 76-year-old Dick Velten of Cold Spring was 65, he went back to college. He learned accounting, German, computer programming and to fly. He did it all for free, courtesy of the Donovan Scholars Program.

"The Donovan Scholars Program is a Kentucky statutory tuition waiver," said Leah Stewart, director of student financial assistance at Northern Kentucky University. "Eligibility for the waiver is a Kentucky resident age 65 or older. Students who meet the criteria do not pay tuition."

Stewart said for the past three years only about 24 people each year have taken advantage of the program.

Velten took the courses out of general interest. He graduated with a degree in chemistry and physics from Thomas More College in 1950, but felt the need to return to school.

"I did it just to learn something ... something I've never had before," said Velten. "That's the only reason I go."

Velten said he hasn't experienced much mental diminishment as he's grown older. He won't attribute this to the classes he took, but Lisa Titus, education coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Cincinnati, said they couldn't have hurt.

"It's always good for folks to expand their knowledge basis and to use their brain cells in new ways," said Titus. "It doesn't keep you from getting Alzheimer's disease but it does give you perhaps more reserve in functional brain cells."

Titus said another benefit is socialization.

"Sometimes people who might be inclined to be isolated become depressed," she said. "Taking classes is a great way to combat that. I've never known anyone to be in trouble for making new friends."

Velten said he enjoyed the social aspect - especially mixing with younger people.

"It was really an experience because once you get to know them they like to ask you questions about your life and what you did," said Velten. "It gives them a perspective of the past. Also, I could tell them what we went through versus what they will have to go through."

The program allows Donovan Scholars to audit courses or take them for credit.

"I took everything for credit," said Velten. "I wasn't taking the easy way out. I had one A and rest were all B's."

The only cost to Velten were books and incidentals.

"The program is funded by NKU through the general scholarship budget," said Stewart. "By statute we are required to fund the students."

To find out how to apply for a Donovan Scholarship at NKU, call 859-572-5220.

[Print](#) | [Close Window](#) | Copyright 2007, *Enquirer.com*