

Union County Military Family Support Group

The Major General and Mrs. Oscar C. Decker, Jr. Community Service Scholarship

Cover Letter For The 2024 Decker Scholarship Application

Background Information

The Union County Military Family Support Group (UCMFSG) is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501 (c) (3) public charity and community service organization that aids and supports local, actively-serving military members and local military units of the United States Armed Forces (regardless of Branch or Component); supports local veterans who have served since September 11, 2001; and supports their respective families.

The UCMFSG was founded in 2003 by Major General Oscar C. Decker, Jr., United States Army (Retired) and his wife, Ella Mae “Babe” Decker. With the Nation at war, there was a major activation of National Guard and Reserve personnel of all branches of the Armed Forces. Many within Union County were called-up either individually, or with their reserve/national guard unit. These sudden activations and deployments resulted in numerous military families throughout Union County not knowing who to turn to for help. Likewise, many local young men and women enlisted to serve in the military. Thus, General and Mrs. Decker saw a need for a local charitable organization to support not only the deployed service members, but also the families left behind.

Unfortunately, this wonderful, caring couple are no longer with us. General Decker died on September 20, 2019 at the age of 94, and Mrs. Decker passed away a year later on September 12, 2020 also at the age of 94. Oscar and Babe Decker were married on November 8, 1944 and were a dynamic team for 74 years. During his 40 years of continuous service in the United States Army, Oscar Decker’s career spanned three wars, during which he saw combat in WWII and in Vietnam. Oscar Decker rose in rank from Private to Major General having served as a Tank Commander and as the Commanding General of the Army’s Tank and Automotive Command. His beloved “Babe” was the consummate “Army Wife” supporting her husband and caring for military service members and their families around the World, including Union County, Ohio.

Upon General Decker’s retirement from the Army in 1983, he and Babe moved to Marysville, Ohio. They quickly became known for their tireless, humble, selfless service for the benefit of their church, their community, and for those in need within Union County. They readily lent their talents to help local schools, civic projects, and the Ohio National Guard. They were also fervent about caring for soldiers, veterans, and their respective families. As for General Decker, in 2008 he was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. On September 11, 2012, a new fire station on County Home Road was given his name in honor of his many deeds for Marysville. Mrs. Decker was also known for her many charitable works including making sure that every Troop Care Box had homemade cookies. Their contributions to Marysville and Union County are so numerous that the debt owed them can never be repaid. Without a doubt, **the Decker’s decades-long legacy of caring, giving, and community service is truly unparalleled and is the definition of “selfless service.”**

To honor the Deckers, and to reward acts of selfless service by local youth, the UCMFSG began offering a single scholarship in 2021. However in 2022, the UCMFSG began to select three high school seniors (one in each of Fairbanks, Marysville, and North Union School Districts), who have an outstanding record of selfless service, to be awarded the Major General and Mrs. Oscar C. Decker, Jr. Community Service Scholarship in the amount of: **\$2,000** (determined annually).

Scholarship Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for Major General and Mrs. Oscar C. Decker, Jr. Community Service Scholarship, the applicant **must**:

- a. Be a resident of Union County,

- b. Attend a high school within the Fairbanks, Marysville, or North Union School Districts, or is a home-schooled student within one of these Union County school districts,

- c. Be a graduating senior with an acceptance to a college or university, and must have a stated goal of achieving a Baccalaureate Degree (BA or BS),
(NOTE: An applicant may attend a 2 Year college prior to attending a 4 Year college/university to obtain a BA/BS Degree. Proof of acceptance should be submitted with the application. However, if proof of college/university acceptance is pending at the time the application is submitted, such proof **must** be provided prior to receiving the scholarship check.)

- d. Have a grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.0,

- e. Submit a personal letter, with the application, explaining why he/she should be considered for this scholarship,

- f. Have a record of significant selfless service/community service which has in some way directly benefited their community (example: county, city/village, neighborhood, church, school, hospital, etc),
(NOTE: The record of selfless service/community service could be for a very significant event/activity, or for a significant period of time. Just belonging to a group/club is **not** enough to qualify for this scholarship. Applicants must have demonstrated a high-level of personal involvement and/or personal accomplishment.)

- g. Provide the name, phone number, and email address of at least one adult who can verify the act (s) of selfless/community service,
(NOTE: The name must be submitted with the application; this person (s) cannot be a relative.)

- h. Provide three (3) letters of recommendation from adults stating why the applicant should be considered for this scholarship.
(NOTE: These letters should not come from relatives; however, they may be from persons verifying the selfless service/community service, and/or from school officials.)

Scholarship Application Cycles, Process, and Notifications

The UCMFSG Secretary will have the updated Scholarship Application Forms available beginning in **October** each year for the next annual scholarship cycle beginning in January of the following year. The UCMFSG Secretary will accept completed applications beginning **January 1st** of each calendar year. The deadline for submission of completed applications and supporting documentation is **March 31st**. Applications received after this deadline **will not** be considered; therefore, early preparation and submission is highly recommended.

Each year in **March**, the UCMFSG Chairman will designate the members of the Decker Scholarship Selection Board. Normally the Scholarship Selection Board will consist of the three (3) UCMFSG Trustees. The Scholarship Selection Board will convene in **April** to consider all completed applications received by submission deadline. The Selection Board may conduct personal interviews as a part of the selection process.

Recommendations from the Scholarship Selection Board will be submitted to the UCMFSG Executive Committee no later than **April 30th**. Final Approval of scholarships awards will be made by the Executive Committee. Once notifications are made to all applicants, the Scholarship Checks will be disbursed by the UCMFSG Treasurer. Efforts will be made to incorporate the awarding of the Decker Scholarships and checks into local school scholarship assemblies/awards programs (if appropriate). However, Scholarship Checks should be issued no later than **May 31st**. The UCMFSG will inform the public through local news media and the UCMFSG website and Facebook concerning the Decker Scholarship program, scholarship recipients, and scholarship amounts.

NOTES:

1. Scholarship Applicants **do not** have to be related to a military service member or a veteran.
2. Individuals may also apply for an UCMFSG Educational Assistance Grant (if qualified); however, they cannot be awarded both a Grant and this Scholarship within the same selection year. (Grant information and applications may be downloaded from the UCMFSG website at ucmfsg.com)
3. This Scholarship Cover Letter and the Decker Scholarship Application Form may also be downloaded from the UCMFSG website. For further information about the Decker Scholarship program, or for other forms of assistance available through the UCMFSG, please see your school counselor, or contact the UCMFSG Secretary at **TEL: (937) 644-2674**, or at bonnells.suffolks@gmail.com.
4. Send completed Scholarship Applications to: **Union County Military Family Support Group, ATTN: Decker Scholarship Selection Board, PO Box 1001, Marysville, Ohio 43040.**

****Scholarship Application Form attached****