

Department of History

Elli H. Cooper & LauraLee Ledbetter Scholarship for Public History

Elli was born March 4th, 1928 and grew up in war tom Germany, the youngest of ten children. In her early 20s, she fell in love with Herschel, an American soldier and moved to the United States. In Georgia they had a son, Tommy. Unfortunately, Elli's beloved husband passed away just a few years later and she was left to raise a toddler in a strange country, on her own. Elli moved her son to California, where a sister lived, brought her Mother to the U.S. and opened a beer bar with Herschel's death benefits.

Elli knew nothing about owning or operating a bar but through sheer guts and hard work she hired, fired, cleaned, supplied and bartended from dawn until after midnight. She also did the accounting and payroll. For a single woman in the 1950's this was not a simple task. Without a husband, banks would not give a woman a business, home or car loan. Many male bartenders were too embarrassed to work for a woman and a bartender could not be female unless she owned the bar!

Elli weathered every storm for her son Tommy. She bought and sold several bars and even opened a very successful night club. At the age of 50, she retired a multimillionaire. She accomplished all of this with only a 6th grade education. Elli and LauraLee were friends and neighbors in her later years. LauraLee wanted to honor Elli and her story with this gift to LauraLee's alma mater.

Selected by history department scholarship committee

To be eligible for the Elli H. Cooper & LauraLee Ledbetter Scholarship for Public History, student(s) must meet the following criteria:

1. Student(s) must be in the graduate program in the department of History;
2. Student(s) who are residents of Nevada;
3. Student(s) who are pursuing studies in women's history; and
4. Student(s) with demonstrated financial need per the FAFSA

*Unless otherwise noted, all students who fill out a FAFSA or alternate need form and meet the criteria for the scholarship will be considered. No other application is needed.

*Selected award winner's name is due to the College of Liberal Arts Dean's office by December 1st.