

**P**rofessor of History Christine Petto has established the Thérèse C. Petto Endowment Fund, a scholarship to benefit students pursuing the study of world languages. The fund will benefit full- or part-time undergraduates with at least a 3.0 grade point average who demonstrate financial need.

“She was really the scholar of the family,”

Christine Petto, one of eight children, says of her older sister. “She loved to read, she loved English literature, and she loved foreign languages.”

Petto says her mother could never forget the day a doctor diagnosed her infant daughter with a severe heart malformation. “He handed her back to my mother and said, ‘Enjoy her because she won’t live to be a year old,’” Petto recalls.

But with sheer determination, a sense of adventure that couldn’t be harnessed, and the unshakable support of her parents, Terry didn’t just survive, says Petto. She thrived — even after a subsequent diagnosis of severe scoliosis that required multiple surgeries.

Terry graduated from Boston College’s Evening College (completing her studies in eight years), traveled, and spent time living in Europe. She also earned her master’s degree from Middlebury College’s School in France and had a successful career as a translator and college professor.

“Somehow she summoned the energy and perhaps all the spirit in the universe to be able to do these things, because it was tremendous [given her limitations],” says Petto. “I just think she was a lot braver than I — and a lot more adventurous.”

## An Adventurous Life

Terry had just returned from a summer study program in Strasbourg, France, when she developed pneumonia, which led to her death. She had been preparing to go back to Europe later that year to take a new job in Paris.

Petto gives much of the credit for

her sister’s success to her parents, recalling the lengths to which they would go so that Terry could have a typical childhood.

“When she first had her back surgery [for scoliosis], she had to be in a body cast in a horizontal position. We would go

for walks with my sister, and they would wheel the stretcher all around town and think nothing of it,” she recalls.

They bought a station wagon to make it easier to travel with Terry on the stretcher, even to the drive-in movies.

“They instilled in her this sense of determination and told her to follow her dreams,” Petto says. “In a different family, I don’t think she would have survived.” ■



*[LEFT] Professor of Exercise Science Sharon Misasi, '83, (center) established a scholarship in honor of her parents, Rita and Salvatore Misasi.*

*[RIGHT] Furthering her work in the classroom, Professor of History Christine Petto honored the memory of her sister by funding the Thérèse C. Petto Endowment Fund, which benefits students pursuing the study of world languages.*