Glenna Roberts came to Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center 26 years ago, amidst a West Texas thunderstorm, planning to establish a scholarship for nurses. She remembers the day clearly. “I hadn’t watched the news, and a very nice man helped me get into the building. His suit was soaked; I still owe him a new suit,” Roberts recalls with a rueful smile.

Roberts has for years applied that same giving spirit to the nursing profession. A Lubbock native and graduate of Texas Tech University, she was eager to support TTUHSC in establishing the School of Nursing in 1981. Since then, she has contributed to a variety of projects at TTUHSC including nursing scholarships.

Through the years, Roberts developed a deep admiration and respect for those in nursing as she cared for her aging parents, Corbett and Cecilia Roberts. The experience of caring for her parents in a nursing home environment also gave Roberts firsthand knowledge of the important role certified nurse aides have in the nursing home. Training and support for these health care providers however, have not kept pace with nursing home industry demands, and geriatric specific content is minimal to none in their education and training, according to industry reports. Turnover rates for CNAs in nursing homes exceed 100 percent in many Texas facilities.

Shifting her philanthropic focus following the death of her parents, Roberts is now a dedicated advocate for TTUHSC’S Certified Nurse Aide Career Ladder Project, a program for CNAs who work in long-term care facilities. The CNA program provides opportunities for personal career advancement while enhancing job satisfaction and performance.

Though her gifts have been widespread, Roberts’ goal remains the same -- to improve the education and knowledge of those in the nursing profession. One of Roberts’ former caregivers was praising the quality of a training program she had recently completed when the two discovered the program was the one Roberts herself champions.