When Mark McCall’s wife Elizabeth Ann McCall, 41, was tragically killed in a collision with a bus on 27 April last year, Mark wanted to find a way to ensure her passion for social justice continued to find expression.

Establishing the Elizabeth Ann McCall Scholarship for first-year education students at ACU National’s Brisbane Campus, to encourage and reward involvement in social justice issues, has allowed Mark and his sons Sam, 13, and Tom, 11, a moment of joy.

Both Mark and Elizabeth were education graduates of McAuley College, a predecessor college of ACU National’s Brisbane Campus. Elizabeth graduated in 1984, and Mark in 1986.

They shared a belief in the power of education to change the world for the better. Aware of their own good fortune in “an unfair and unequal world”, both wanted to raise awareness of injustices, and enlighten and empower their students.

“Elizabeth was outwardly very gentle and quiet, but she had fire and passion, and she always wanted to know the truth,” said Mark, a teacher at St Martin’s Primary School in Carina, Brisbane. “She was very well read, and always active in campaigning for justice, fairness and equity.”

Elizabeth taught at St Peter’s Primary School in Rochedale, Brisbane, where she was active in bringing social justice issues to the attention of her colleagues and made sure the children’s uniforms were manufactured under award wage conditions. She was also a busy member of her St Peter’s Rochedale Parish social justice group, and actively represented her colleagues within the Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU).

The Union has established an award in her honour, and donations in Elizabeth’s name were given to Caritas at her funeral, but Mark wanted to do more.

Seeking his own way “to do something positive for her memory”, Mark worked with ACU National Manager of Fundraising and Development Bea Brickhill to create the Elizabeth Ann McCall Scholarship “not just to remember Elizabeth, but to carry on her good work”.

He recognised that a scholarship had the power to influence young people who were going into the field of education.

“I wanted to touch the future, to create a better world. Educating for social justice is the responsibility of teachers. It’s not something we should shy away from.” The scholarship is open to students who have already demonstrated an interest in social justice. “The scholarship will be an encouragement for them to keep that going.”

“Elizabeth had a great concern for the world. We saw our jobs as teachers as an ideal opportunity to tell the truth about things we should all know and to use our influence in a truthful and appropriate way.

“Being a teacher was a really strong vocation for both of us, and we had ACU National in common in our own education.”

Mark described finalising the $2,500 scholarship as the first thing he has enjoyed doing since Elizabeth died.

“Setting this up really made me feel that I was doing something positive in Elizabeth’s memory. She would have wanted to be remembered for social justice, for being truthful and fair, and for doing what’s right.”