Karen M. Seeley, BA’00, has always had big dreams. As a young girl growing up in Northwestern Ontario, she had already set her sights on becoming a lawyer.

“I have been interested in law for as long as I can remember,” says Seeley, who, after getting a BA in History and Political Science at McGill, went on to earn her Law degree, and now works at a law firm in her hometown of Dryden.

For Seeley, the road to success has been paved with hard work and sacrifice. Although she received student loans and got some help from her parents, attending McGill was financially challenging, and she struggled to make ends meet. Fortunately, she was able to participate in McGill’s work-study program, which offers students with financial needs access to various clerical, research and technical jobs across campus. Over the course of her time at McGill, Seeley worked in the administrative offices of what are now Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the McGill School of Environment.

“Being a work-study student made a huge difference, both financially and academically,” she says. “It helped me to develop self-discipline, and gave me the structure I needed to balance my scholarly and work commitments.”

After graduating from McGill, Seeley spent several years overseas, where she taught English – first in Korea and later in Japan. “I was incredibly lucky to have those experiences. They gave me an opportunity to grow and to find myself as a person before I got immersed in my legal studies,” she says.

Since being called to the Bar in 2007, Seeley has become very involved in her local community and committed to supporting causes that are meaningful to her. And that includes her alma mater. She recently notified McGill of her intention to leave a bequest to support a bursary for students in the Faculty of Arts.

“I am a big fan of bursaries, because I know firsthand how financially crippling tuition debt can be,” says Seeley, who has chosen to name the bursary in memory of her maternal grandmother, Gertrude Brunet.

“Although my grandmother did not have access to the educational opportunities so many of us now take for granted, she was passionate about learning, and always encouraged me to pursue my academic dreams,” she says.

After the support she received as a work-study student, Seeley is very happy to be able to pay it forward. “As a McGill alumna, I feel that it is important to provide students of today and tomorrow with the same opportunities I had.”