

Pay it forward

INTEGRITY. GRATITUDE. HARD WORK. FAITH.

These are attributes that **Mary Staudenmaier, L'71**, learned from her father, Louis W. Staudenmaier, a 1933 graduate of Marquette University Law School. She so greatly admired these guiding principles demonstrated by him that she established a scholarship in his name at the Law School, with hopes that others would turn out to be the kind of person that he was—albeit perhaps with fewer financial struggles than he had.

Louis entered Marquette University Law School in 1930, after completing three years of undergraduate studies at Marquette.

Mary, his daughter, relates that he worked his way through law school, at one point selling his own blood to make ends meet. “Every six weeks or so, he could earn \$25 for a pint of blood,” she explained, “which was a lot of money back then. Well, he found a clerk willing to move his schedule up to every three weeks, so he was sometimes giving blood two times a month.” It didn’t take long before he got very ill and—in his own words shared in his memoirs—“almost cashed in all [his] chips.”

Funds continued to be lean during Louis’s law

school years. “His parents were farmers and had plenty of food but not so much money,” explained Mary.

A very disappointing turn of events—one that really impressed upon Mary the need for financial aid for law students—happened to her dad upon law school graduation. Louis was a very accomplished debate student with outstanding public speaking skills. He was chosen to give his commencement address for the Law School. But because

he was unable to come up with the final \$250 payment due on his tuition account in time for a pre-commencement deadline imposed by the president, a different speaker was selected. “It turned out that a pal of his cut a check for him, and he was able to graduate,” said Mary.

This prompted Mary to do something constructive to honor her father, instead of holding a grudge or exacting revenge on the president’s office of long ago. “I wanted to acknowledge students who are struggling and help them out so they didn’t meet with the same struggles as my dad did.” This is how the Louis W. Staudenmaier Scholarship Fund was born.

Both Mary and her mom, Hilde (who recently passed away at 102 years old), have been generous

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Mary, above, with her parents, Hilde and Louis

contributors to the fund, which was established in 1998, many years after Louis's passing. "I am proud of what my dad accomplished in his career and am very cognizant of the fact that he needed help to get through school, just like many other students do today."

Upon graduating from Marquette Law School in 1933, Louis landed a job—with the help of a Democratic congressman—examining abstracts for the Federal Home Loan Bank in Marinette, Wisconsin. "He was subsequently appointed Receiver for national banks, which introduced him to the banking industry in which he would spend his remaining professional career," Mary explained. "As Receiver, he would go to the failing banks and evaluate whether or not the institution could be reopened," she said.

"As these national banks folded during the '30s, my father would often forward large wooden boxes of documents from these institutions to himself at home so he could sift through information there, thereby limiting the time required away from his family. He actually learned the banking business by examining the papers in this manner," said Mary. In the early 1950s, a local bank invited him to serve on its board of directors. Two years later, when the bank's executive officer died, Louis was asked to step in

as executive vice president, while also maintaining his (mostly probate work) law practice.

Louis also dabbled in politics early in his career. He was elected and served a two-year term as assemblyman in 1934, defeating a longtime Republican assemblyman in a county that had always voted Republican. He also ran once for district attorney (losing by a mere 250 votes) and considered a run for state senate, but decided that the expectations others would have of him—and the sometimes mudslinging nature of politics—wouldn't allow him to live the life he intended.

Along the way, Louis married Hilde, in 1935, and together they had four children, three of whom were educated at Marquette for college or law school (all except for Mary's brother John, who is a Jesuit priest). "We think Marquette did a great job in educating all of us!" said Mary.

Like father, like daughter

Mary's career path followed those of both of her parents: "My mom was a math teacher and my dad a banker, and I have done both," she noted with a smile.

While her dad was getting more involved in the banking industry, Mary was attending college at Mount Mary in Milwaukee, all the time keeping the thought of law school in the back of her head. Her brother, Bill, graduated from the Law School in 1961. After teaching high school math in Milwaukee for six years, Mary changed careers and accepted a position with First Wisconsin Trust Company. She soon realized that she would need a law degree to progress to a meaningful level in that arena.

"So I went to law school, part time the first year, and I was one of only three women in my class at that time." In 1970, while still in law school, Mary began work with American City Bank. She was now working full time and attending law school full time. Mary went to school from

8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then worked from 3:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. "I went home to study, sleep, and then get up and do it all over again."

Her diligence was worth it. Mary graduated in December 1971 and after working several years left American City Bank in 1975 as head of the Trust Department when it was taken over by Marine Bank. She then accepted a position with Heritage Trust Company and was named its vice president. In the early 1970s, her dad decided that the bank he was running in Marinette, the Stephenson National Bank, should have a trust department—and that he knew just the person to run it.

Mary served as trust officer for several years, commuting to Marinette for a monthly meeting until 1977, at which point the directors of the bank decided that she would

succeed her father as president. In 1979, she was named president, and Louis moved to Chairman of the Board. Louis passed away in 1980 at the age of 74, and Mary stayed on at the bank, serving as its president until 2000, when she became Chairman of the Board.

While under Mary's leadership, the bank grew from \$27 million in assets to \$150 million, and now \$200 million. She is enjoying semiretirement but remains very devoted to and involved in her community and serving its needs. Mary's philanthropy continues to extend to the Marquette community—perpetuating the legacy of her father, Louis. The Law School is grateful for Mary's support of its educational undertakings. •

Louis W. Staudenmaier Scholarship Fund

As an endowed scholarship, the Louis W. Staudenmaier Scholarship Fund is intended to generate for the Law School in perpetuity scholarship awards of 5 percent of its annual value. The University's Office of Treasury Services oversees the management of such endowed funds.

The purpose of the Staudenmaier Scholarship Fund is to provide financial assistance to students at Marquette University. First preference is given to students enrolled in the Law School who demonstrate academic excellence. In addition, special consideration will be given to those students who demonstrate commitment to public service and pro bono opportunities. In the unlikely event these qualifications cannot be met, the second preference is to benefit exceptional undergraduate students in the J. William and Mary Diederich College of Communication (specifically in Journalism or the Performing Arts). Since its inception in 1994, thirteen Marquette University Law School students (several are now alumni) have received a total of more than \$26,000 thanks to the Louis W. Staudenmaier Scholarship Fund.

John Novotny, Director of Advancement for the Law School, noted that Mary Staudenmaier and her late mother (by way of her will) each made additional contributions to the fund in the fiscal year just concluded. "As a result," he said, "there will be more resources made available to students in academic year 2007 and beyond.

"We want to underscore our gratitude to Mary and her late mother on behalf of our students. This scholarship is a wonderful tribute to her father—one that has a positive impact on the recipients. Without question, this scholarship is an important lasting resource. It assists us in our mission to better prepare future Marquette lawyers and thus contributes to building the profession," he added.

For more information about how to establish an endowed scholarship in honor or memory of someone, please contact John Novotny at (414) 288-5285 or john.novotny@marquette.edu.