

giving with class

“We were an extraordinary class,” explained John Murray of his fellow Marquette Law School Class of 1968 graduates. “Despite the intense competition among us, the compassion, loyalty, and caring we shared during law school continue to this day.” Part of this loyalty, for him, is to the Law School and is reflected in his recent pledge of \$50,000. He explains why. “I owe the Law School for providing me a foundation to practice law. Without that foundation, I would not be in the position I am today.”

For the past 20 years, Murray has practiced personal injury litigation with Habush Habush & Rottier S.C., in the firm’s Appleton office. The generosity of his gift is reflective of an implicit “debt” he says he has to the school, along with an expectation. “With my gratitude comes a hope that the Law School will maintain its quality legal education for future generations—in part to protect the quality of the degree I received, as well as to produce competent attorneys,” said Murray.

The gain from the pain

He acknowledges that his years in law school weren’t easy and sometimes were, in fact, painful. “But for that challenging journey, we would not be who we are,” he explained. The pain, he explained, resulted in gain. “Obstacles that we faced prepared us professionally,” said Murray. “The fire of the law school curriculum tempered individuals to be prepared to deal with any challenge.” And while it is easy for some alumni to criticize because of what they perceived as a “bad” experience, Murray encourages these same people to consider that without this kind of journey, these same lawyers would not have the ability, confidence, or drive that was a direct result of their Marquette Law experience.

Murray said that, despite his donation, he will never feel that he could repay Marquette Law School for the intangible value of



John Murray, L’68
Habush Habush & Rottier S.C.

Pictured in Eisenberg Memorial Hall on the third floor of Marquette Law School. Eisenberg Hall was recently rededicated after its renovation, made possible by a generous donation from Robert L. Habush.

his degree. “It has permitted me to earn a living, and to practice in a profession that I respect. It is a debt I can never fully repay.”

Murray has maintained his ties to the Law School and is committed to helping the school and its students. For example, Murray has served as an adjunct professor for the past 13 years, serving as one of the faculty teaching an especially popular Advanced Trial Advocacy course. As for his gift of \$50,000, he has left it to the dean’s discretion on how best to use the donation. He hopes that others will join him in supporting the school.

And a number have. It should be no surprise, in the spirit of continued friendly competition, that both before and after Murray’s pledge, several members of this class have made significant contributions to the Law School.

In addition to classmate Joseph Niebler (profiled in a previous magazine) and classmate Frank Daily and his wife, Julianna Ebert (see story on back cover), classmate Russ Stepke, CEO of Resource Financial Corporation in Chicago, an internationally recognized merchant and investment banking firm, has also made a significant gift to the Law School.

Stepke serves on the Law School's Advisory Board and its Executive Committee. "I completely enjoy the challenges before the board, working with a first-class team headed by Dean Joseph Kearney," said Stepke. "We expect great things from Dean Kearney in continuing to lead the school on the path toward excellence begun by Dean Eisenberg."

"I am deeply grateful to Marquette Law School for the opportunities my education afforded me," Stepke explained. "It is a privilege to be an attorney, and I value my law experience very much."

Stepke's generous contribution to the school is intended to keep it moving in the direction and with the momentum it is experiencing. "By giving, I hope to be able to put some substance behind my own efforts to get my classmates to consider giving. In addition, I look forward to contributing more—particularly my time and energy—as well as my money, over the upcoming years."

Stepke, too, acknowledges that law school had its stressful moments, but it also had its good times. "Our class of about 90 remains close and is particularly outstanding in terms of quality of people. It was our great sense of humor that helped us all through the times we struggled. We had about 30 people for our 35th reunion last year, and earlier this August, in what is now called the 'MU Law Class of '68 Annual Golf Outing,' we had



Russell Stepke, L'68
Resource Financial
Corp.

almost the same number for two days of golf and an evening spent recollecting, reminiscing, and just having a great time with old friends. This year we were at Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Next year we expect more for the Third Annual to be held at the American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin," he said.

Stepke figures he has spent between 7 percent and 10 percent of his life on or near Wisconsin Avenue between 11th and 16th Streets, having gone to Marquette for undergrad as well as law school. "Life has been good to me, and I owe some of that success to Marquette. I wish I could do more," he added, "and believe, ultimately, I will."

A generation before

Long before the class of 1968 was even born, a young man and a young lady met at Marquette. She was a journalism student, and he was studying business, with hopes of attending law school.

Bernice Young Tierney (Jour '37) fondly remembers meeting Joseph Tierney, Jr. (L'41) in the basement of Johnston Hall while they were both undergraduates at Marquette. Joseph did end up going to law school at Marquette, during which time they courted. They married right after he graduated in 1941. "Joe joined the FBI after law school and then went back to school to earn his CPA," explained Mrs. Tierney. "He practiced tax law for a while, and after leaving the accounting firm, he joined Cook & Franke and was there until he retired from the partnership in the 1990s. He remained as counsel until he passed away."

Mr. Tierney died in 1999 at the age of 82. Mrs. Tierney has honored his memory through a generous gift of \$50,000 to the National Sports Law Institute (NSLI) at Marquette Law School. "Joe made his wishes known to me that he wanted to give a gift to his alma mater. Through a family decision, the funds were directed toward sports law, an area that we believe is a growing industry with a lot of legal ramifications," said Mrs. Tierney. "We thought the NSLI would wisely use this donation to enhance its already successful program."

It is with deep gratitude that the Law School recognizes these donors and all who support Marquette Law School with contributions of time, talent, and treasure. •



**Bernice Tierney and
the late Joseph Tierney, Jr., L'41**

