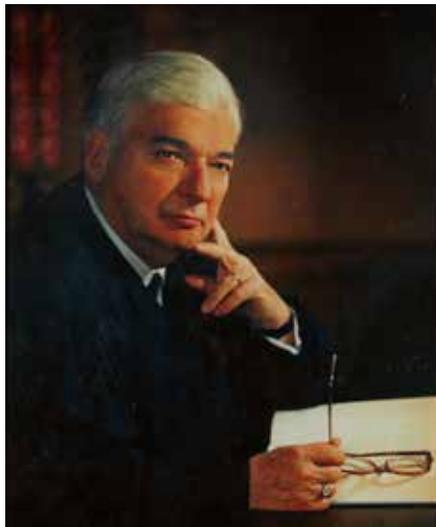


material that he had received as a federal judge. Nor did he expect each of his ideas to be immediately or even ever accepted or acted upon. No matter: he likely was on to his next idea for Marquette Law School.

One conversation made a particular impression on me. Early in my deanship, in 2003 or so, when the solution to our facilities problem looked more likely to be a third addition to our 1924 building than an altogether new facility, I allowed to Judge Coffey over the phone that I was disinclined to be the dean who led us out of Sensenbrenner Hall. To this the judge said, “I don’t know why not. If you have a chance to get the hell out of there, you should do it.” In fact, his particular reaction reassured me that



Portrait of Judge John (“Jack”) L. Coffey in Eckstein Hall’s Appellate Courtroom

our alumni more generally knew that Marquette Law School is about the university’s *mission*—Excellence, Faith, Leadership, and Service—in the context of the law and is not bound up in a building. Judge Coffey was a conservative, but in this regard, at least, about the substance not the form. And his interest was in the future.

In concluding remarks at the groundbreaking in May 2008, Your Honor, as chief judge of this court, said, simply but elegantly of this law school, “I anticipate great things to come.” For more than six decades, Judge Coffey concurred in this. We are fortunate to have counted him among our alumni and to remember him, in any number of respects, today and hereafter. Thank you. ■

Alumni Awards | Donald W. Layden

Marquette University Alumnus of the Year Remarks

Marquette University recently presented its highest alumni honor—the university’s Alumnus of the Year Award—to Donald W. Layden, Jr., Arts ’79, L’82. Mr. Layden’s many contributions to the university include his current service as chair of the dean’s advisory board at the Law School. Here are his remarks in accepting the award at a dinner on April 27, 2013, held in the Alumni Memorial Union and concluding the Alumni Awards Weekend.

Thank you. I am overwhelmed and humbled by the extraordinary grace you have given to me in recognizing me as the Alumnus of the Year. As I listen to the stories and contributions of my fellow awardees, and as I consider the countless contributions made by over 100,000 alumni every day, I am struck by a sense of overwhelming humility and gratitude that you would choose to recognize me and my accomplishments. Thank you very much.

Many people have encouraged me on this journey, and I am so very pleased that many of you chose

to be here tonight to celebrate with our family and me. When I told the people closest to me about this recognition, their responses provided an interesting insight into our relationship. Mary Jo dismissed my surprise, suggesting that my contributions to the communities in which we live and my professional accomplishments make me a natural choice. Her confidence in my ability to make change happen and to take risks has made those choices easy. She has been a remarkable partner, friend, and the love of my life. My parents were of course very proud, and I ►►

believe that there has probably not been a bridge partner of my mother or a golf partner of my father who is unaware of Marquette's decision. Our children, at least the boys, unanimously agreed that this was an event worthy of a party. Thank you, Marquette, for accommodating their request with such a magnificent event. And our daughter made it very clear that Marquette would have to be told to delay my award one year, as she is in London studying abroad and would not be able to be here in person. After all, she reasoned, she is the only one of our children intelligent enough to follow her parents to Marquette. Thank God for FaceTime so she can be with us virtually.

You know, Marquette was not my first choice of colleges. I had been accepted at Georgetown and Brown and was preparing to matriculate at one of the two, probably Georgetown. After all, I grew up in New York, and my parents had just transported us across the country as a result of an important promotion for my father. I viewed Milwaukee as a flyover city, and I did not plan to stay very long. As providence has it, I started dating Mary Jo, and I was not sure I really wanted to be a thousand miles away. Almost as importantly, my father met Al Maguire, and they both insisted I consider Marquette.

And so I did, and that decision has made all the difference. Milwaukee is our home, and I enthusiastically share with colleagues around the world all of the many advantages Milwaukee has over almost any other place in the world you might want to live, work, and raise a family.

At Marquette, Mary Jo and I found that the values instilled in us by our parents were reinforced. Most



Don and Mary Jo Layden on April 27, 2013.

importantly, our experience reinforced the message that our faith calls us to be active in the world as an agent for good and for change. In Ignatian spirituality, we found a framework for living, for reflecting and taking stock, and for making decisions that allowed us to let go of those things that were not essential. By working hard to identify and avoid unimportant attachments, we have had a great ride.

In my professional career, I have been blessed to work with folks who have encouraged me and enabled me to undertake a diverse set of roles. Some have looked at the diversity of my career—going from practicing law with some of the best lawyers in the country; to running businesses in fields as varied as

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banking, financial technology, and marketing services; to investing and advising early-stage companies and their owners to find their potential—and concluded that I am simply not capable of keeping a job.

For me, it is about being open to exploring every door that opens, asking whether this is where I am called to use my skills at any particular time, and having a partner who has encouraged me to explore opportunities.

Let me end with a quick story. In preparing for tonight, Marquette asked me to reflect on the accomplishment I am most proud of.

Mary Jo and I recently returned from visiting the Philippines. While there, we experienced the hardships faced by many Filipinos to survive each day and the horrible stories of children who have been abused and neglected as their families are trapped by poverty and escapism. During a visit to one of the shelters, a young girl asked if I had any children, and her face lit up when I told her that I had three sons and a daughter. She was 14 and had been abused by family members and sold into prostitution until Sister Nida saved her and brought her to Serra Center. Serra Center is a home for sexually exploited and abused street children run by the Oblate Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer. Sister Nida has been a friend for over a dozen years. She is a four-foot bundle of energy with an infectious smile and a dogged determination to fight for children. She has a master's in social work and uses all of the modern intervention and treatment methodologies

but builds upon a foundation of love, so it was not surprising to me when the young girl asked if I loved my daughter. Upon hearing my affirmation, she asked a follow-up question: “Does she know?”

This young girl knew how important it is to have parents who love their children—to have adults in our lives who care about us as individuals with the potential to do great things.

And that is what I am most proud of. I believe that finding love, being in love, staying in love is the most important thing we can do in our lives. I am most proud and grateful for the relationship I have with each of our children. They know they are loved.

Thank you again for this fantastic recognition, and I hope you will indulge me by joining me in this toast to Marquette and its alumni:

For its rigorous commitment to the education of the whole person, including a core curriculum that allows students to gain a global perspective, an appreciation for the aesthetic—in art, in nature, and, most importantly, in each other—and a grounding in the existential, we look forward to continuing the journey you sent us on at commencement: to live lives based on Excellence, Faith, Leadership, and Service. To Marquette and its alumni!

We Are Marquette. ■