

Named Endowed Funds

The Joseph and Mary McKenna Family Fund



The Joseph and Mary McKenna Family Fund was established by their only daughter, Mary Jane, and her husband, Dr. John Beaumier.

“Although I never had the opportunity to meet my father-in-law before he died, I do know that the contributions he made to the Cloquet community are legendary and should be remembered,” said Dr. Beaumier. “I also wanted my wife’s family’s name to be

remembered in a way that would benefit others.”

Joseph Evelin McKenna was born in Cloquet on March 22, 1893. “Ev” graduated from Cloquet High School in 1912, where he was vice president of the literary society and captain of the football, basketball, and baseball teams.

After high school McKenna graduated from St. John’s University in Collegeville and the University of Minnesota Law School. After earning his law degree he returned to Cloquet and opened his practice. In 1936 he married Mary Emerald Ryan.

Mary was born in Proctor, and taught for several years in one room schoolhouses throughout northern Minnesota and also worked as a court reporter in the Duluth judicial system. The McKenna’s had one daughter, Mary Jane, who was born in 1937 in Cloquet.

Over the next ten years, Mr. McKenna became a highly respected citizen. He held the office of city attorney and represented many victims of the 1918 fire for their reimbursement from the federal government including the Lady of Sacred Heart Church (where he also served as church secretary) who thanked McKenna in their records for “obtaining our fire money without charging the fee allowed.”

Mr. McKenna was recognized as one of Cloquet’s foremost civic leaders locally, regionally and statewide. He had held various state offices in the Knights of Columbus; the success of the Carlton County war bond drives was credited largely to his leadership in conducting campaigns; and he was one of the of the founding members of the Cloquet Commercial Club, serving as the organization’s vice president and as chairman of the club’s road committee where his work was instrumental in the club’s ability to obtain the rights for the extension of Hwy 33 to the south.

Joseph Evelin McKenna died 1948 at the age of 55; he was buried the McKenna family plot in Cloquet. His daughter, Mary Jane, remembers Chief Naganub and several other tribal leaders walking from Fond du Lac Reservation to the McKenna home on Chestnut Street in respect for the loss of their friend. Her father was also very active in the Democratic Party and she still has the letter Hubert Humphrey (who was the mayor of Minneapolis at the time) sent to the family after Joseph's death. In part it read: "Ev was a dear friend of mine. I know how devoted he was to my candidacy for the Senate and for that which was good for the Democratic Party. He was one of those priceless persons whose loyalty knows no limits and whose friendship was at all times a source of strength."

Mary retired in 1969, and moved to Grand Forks, North Dakota to be close to her daughter, son-in-law and her nine grandchildren. John remembers his mother-in-law as a "model grandmother and an essential 'cog' in the raising of nine grandchildren." Mary died in October 1994; she was 89 years old.

Mary Jane McKenna Beaumier graduated from Cloquet High School in 1955, where she was a class officer and belonged to several clubs and organizations: student council, White Pine, Pine Needle, class Play, thespians, GAA, and tri-language, speech, drama, pep and science. She was a homecoming queen candidate.

Mary Jane married John Beaumier on July 2, 1958. They moved to Grand Forks, N.D. in 1968 to join two other orthopedists' in an orthopedic practice. In 1993 they moved to Rochester Minnesota when the Mayo Clinic invited Dr. Beaumier to be on staff as an orthopedic surgeon. Mary Jane and John moved to John's home area of Upper Peninsula of Michigan in 1998 after he retired.

Because of the generosity of people like the Beaumiers and the others who have established endowed funds, the Cloquet Educational Foundation will be able to continue to fulfill our mission of providing academic, artistic, athletic, cultural and social programs.