



MARQUETTE
UNIVERSITY

College of Education
Office of the Dean

Hi Education Majors –

Whether you're a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior, it might be hard right now to *think of yourself as being a Marquette alumnus one day*. However, assuming that you work hard, perform well, and stay interested in the teaching profession, then you'll enjoy that distinction in the not too distant future.

So, now try to imagine that you're 87 years old and have been an alumnus of our university for over 65 years. I had the honor last week of meeting a wonderful woman who fits that exact description at a local Catholic retirement home. She earned her undergraduate degree in English with a major in teaching in 1944, and she received a Master's degree in 1967, four years before we even became the *School* (let alone *College*) of Education. Most of her career was spent teaching English with great skill and passion in the Milwaukee Public Schools.

But before going any further, I need to tell you that one of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of my job is getting to know Marquette's remarkable alumni. I've been at other institutions, and the alumni there are loyal, but *nothing even remotely close to what I've experienced here!*

MU alumni tend to be bright and articulate and accomplished in their disciplines. They speak with an incredible fondness about their time on campus and the way that the institution transformed them. They credit their alma mater with making a profound difference in their professional, personal, and spiritual lives. *In short, they literally love the place.* And as a result, I never have to "sell" them on the value of the University or our College.

Beyond their intense affection for MU, what also sets them apart -- almost without exception -- is their desire to *give something back*. They want to show their gratitude either by volunteering time, energy, and expertise, by giving generously in support of our mission, and frequently, by doing both.

In fact, the extraordinary kindness of MU alumni -- in the form of scholarships -- often provides the funding necessary for deserving students like you to begin, continue, and complete their degrees. Even when the education of students isn't outright at risk, the support of alumni makes the journey more affordable.

This generosity shouldn't come as a surprise. When our alumni were enrolled at Marquette, they were, just as you are, encouraged to "Be The Difference." Now they are delivering on that promise – perhaps on your behalf, but if not, definitely for your fellow students.

What fascinates me about these scholarship gifts is that the donors usually expect only one favor in return. They consistently share the hope that the current students they help will one day do the same for future Marquette students. You may recognize this concept as the popularized sentiment known as "paying it forward."

Surely it would represent even more of a stretch for you to envision a time when *you might be in the position to give back to Marquette*. But almost certainly that day will come – probably well after my term as dean. When it does, I hope you will remember the charitable contributions of our alumni, both living and deceased. They've literally made educational dreams possible, and you'll have the same opportunity.

Now let's return to the retirement home, where I sat at the bedside of our special alumna and spoke with her. I told her about all of the great things that are happening at the University and in the College of Education, and she seemed very pleased and proud.

But what pleased her most was when I explained how the \$500,000 scholarship gift she bequeathed to the College would support students who felt called to teach. You see, she has willed nearly every hard earned dollar from her humble days in the classroom to our Education programs; the preparation of future teachers is *that* important to her. In other words, *you are that important to her*.

And although she could only summon up a limited amount of energy to express herself, she still managed to utter -- as she tapped her heart, "Oh, I dearly love Marquette; it holds a special place right here. And I always loved teaching."

Let's just say that when this sweet soul passes to the next life, my emotions will never have been more deeply mixed.

Sincerely,



Dr. Bill Henk, Dean
College of Education