Outgoing Parents Association board chairs leave outstanding legacy

By Kristen Pawlowski

When John and Joanne Stolowski attended their first Marquette University Parents Association Board meeting in August 1999, their oldest daughter, Jessica, was a freshman at Marquette. Joining the board seemed like a good way to learn about their daughter’s new home away from home.

In 2001, the Stolowskis were invited to become national co-chairs of the Parents Association. This year, as they watch their youngest daughter, Kate graduate from Marquette, they will also retire from the board.

When the Stolowskis became Parents Association national co-chairs, the Parents Association was entering a major growth phase. A new generation of Marquette parents wanted more information from the university. Board members wanted to take on a more visible role. The Parents Fund was shifting focus from supporting one-time projects to supporting the Marquette Today, which raises current-use funds for student programming, faculty enhancement and campus technology.

Over the six years of their tenure, John and Joanne oversaw the most growth the Parents Association has experienced. They insist they didn’t do it alone, saying it’s all about people. “Wonderful people, everywhere,” says Joanne. “Parents, educators, staff, deans, all respecting board member input.”

Here’s what the Parents Association accomplished under the Stolowskis’ leadership:

- Created a strategic plan that outlines the association’s purpose and goals to strengthen relationships between the university and parents
- Volunteer program: Parent volunteers help at on-campus events, staff regional college fairs and make admissions welcome calls
- Established committee structure, giving board committee chairs access to university administrators and university advisory committees
- Published board handbook
- Created Web site, www.marquette.edu/parents
- Publication of four-color newsletter, mailed to all parents each spring and fall
- Revamped Family Weekend, formerly Parents Weekend, to make the event more welcoming to all loved ones. Added a parent retreat. For the past two years, Family Weekend has been fully staffed by parent volunteers.
- Created Parents Fund national co-chair position; under the leadership of John and Katie Mehan, the Parents Fund continues to grow annually.

In addition to leading the Parents Association through tremendous growth, John and Joanne personally represented the Parents Association at PREVIEW, Orientation, Family Weekend, scholarship testing and Parents Association basketball events.

During their tenure, no job was too big or small for the Stolowskis. They were willing to roll up their sleeves and get involved with any project, initiative or volunteer opportunity. Both were heavily involved as committee chairs.

When asked what they enjoyed most about their responsibilities, Joanne and John agree that addressing parents at orientation has been the most rewarding – despite stage fright. “My favorite part was making parents feel more at home away from home.”

There will be big shoes to fill once the Stolowskis’ daughter Kate graduates this May. Fortunately, new leaders are in the wings: Rob and Maureen Hart of Chicago, Ill.

The Harts’ two sons, Robert, Comm ’02, and Matthew, Arts ’05, are Marquette alumni. Their daughter, Kathleen, is a Marquette sophomore. Rob and Maureen are eager to continue the Stolowskis’ legacy.

So what’s next for the Stolowskis? “We’ve made so many friends in the Parents Association,” says Joanne. “We definitely plan to stay in touch.”

Adds John, “We’ll also stay connected to Marquette by going to the men’s basketball games. Although we will no longer be active on the board, we’ll continue to see many of the Marquette people that we have been involved with.”

“Volunteering with the Parents Association has been the most gratifying experience for us,” says Joanne. “For those who have thought about getting involved but have not made a commitment — do it! We had fun, we learned a lot, we met kind, caring people who had the same love of Marquette and what it offered our children. We are truly sad to be leaving, but it is time for us to move on. Marquette has selected a great couple to carry on the mission of the Parents Association.”

Hats off to you, John and Joanne Stolowski, for a job well done.
Helping students cope

Q: What is the number-one mental health issue for students?
A: A couple of years ago, it was depression. In the past year, though, more students are coming in with anxiety — that perfectionism, that driven-ness to do better and get better grades. I think this comes from the fact that kids today start very young, doing more homework and after-school activities. There’s just more “everything” expected of them.

Q: What are the symptoms of anxiety?
A: Insomnia, difficulty letting go thinking about homework and what needs to be done, physical symptoms like headaches and stomachaches. Students do a lot of thinking and dwelling on what needs to be done — which really helps them be students, because they need a certain level of anxiety to push them to do double check papers and deadlines. But it’s when they’re lying in bed for two hours thinking about everything they have to do the next day that it becomes a problem. Most college students don’t get enough sleep to begin with.

Q: Do parents usually know what their students are going through?
A: When their kids come to college, parents are thinking that their kids are doing OK, when actually they may be struggling quite a bit. Parents need to be aware that their students are at risk for some kind of emotional problem. This is fairly normal for most college students. Sometimes, parents call for us advice when they notice their students are struggling. We’ll ask some questions then say, why don’t you sit down with your student, tell them you’re concerned, explain the symptoms you’ve seen, then refer them to the Counseling Center. We like to partner with parents as much as possible so they know their son or daughter is being taken care of.

Q: Anything else parents can do to help?
A: The other half of it is letting your son or daughter find their own way. They are going to have to learn to be responsible for their mental health and find ways to take care of themselves. “Helicopter parenting” — parents hovering over their students — is a big issue right now. I wonder if that kind of involvement makes it harder for students to deal with frustra-tion and stress because they’re used to having other people help them.

Q: What happens when students contact the Counseling Center?
A: Students usually get in within a week after setting up an appointment. Our goal is to do short-term therapy. We try to give as much direction as possible in case the student comes to see us only once. We follow up with students we think are in danger — those with eating disorders or suicidal thoughts, for example. Sometimes we refer students to outside professionals.

After hours, we always have an on-call therapist who carries a pager. We can always be contacted if there’s a crisis that involves thoughts of hurting one’s self or others. Part of counseling is getting the family involved. By law, we can only do this with the student’s permission, but we encourage stu-dents to talk to their parents so they know what’s going on and can be more supportive.

For more about the Marquette University Counseling Center, go to www.marquette.edu/counseling/
Linking human rights to service

Last year it was India and “Constructing Peace.” This year it was Africa and “Human Dignity, Human Rights.”

Each February marks the celebration of Mission Week on the Marquette campus — an invitation to faculty, staff and students to reflect and reconnect to Marquette’s mission of educating students not just academically but also intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

In the past, Mission Week has brought such notable keynote speakers as Martin Luther King III, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Lech Walesa and Arun Ghandi. This year’s keynote speaker was Paul Rusesabagina, subject of the film Hotel Rwanda, who saved over 1,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus — including his wife and children — from being murdered by Hutu extremists during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Rusesabagina passionately detailed his experience to an overflow crowd of students, faculty, staff and community members. He talked about the imperative need to prevent genocide from happening.

“In Rwanda, one million people were killed in 100 days — 15 percent of Rwanda’s population,” said Rusesabagina. “The international community looks at the killing fields in Africa and does nothing. They pretend they are willing to see, but take no action.”

Despite what others — and the film Hotel Rwanda — described as tremendous courage, Rusesabagina sees himself as just a man with a duty and an obligation to do what he did.

“I did not have any special courage,” he said. “I would have felt courage if I had taken a gun and shot the rebels. But I am an ordinary man. I don’t feel like I did anything special.”

The purpose of Mission Week is twofold: to link faith and service, and to give everyone on at Marquette a time for reflection — key elements of Jesuit education, according to Stephanie Russell, executive director, University Mission and Identity.

“Mission Week leads people to ask deeper questions not only about the university’s mission, but about their own sense of faith and service — to ask what is it about a Marquette education that calls all of us forward to serve the world more authentically,” says Russell. “This actually happens throughout the academic year in classrooms, retreats, and co-curricular and ministry activities. But Mission Week gives us time for reflection on what we’re doing and why we’re doing it.”

Throughout Mission Week, events took place all over campus. In addition to daily reflections, there were retreats, dramatic readings, guest speakers, exhibits and movie showings, including Hotel Rwanda, starring Don Cheadle.

One event, Loyola Lunches, gave members of the Marquette community a chance to brown bag it with some Jesuits and talk on a range of topics. During another, Destination Dinners, students heard from peers who have traveled to Africa and Latin America. The guest speaker at an event called Soup with Substance was an African Marquette student who shared his experiences in pre- and post-apartheid South Africa.

In support of the right to education, school supplies for Milwaukee’s homeless children were collected. Faculty and graduate students participated in the Mission Week Faculty Commons, during which faculty spoke on topics including mentoring, global awareness and spirituality in the workplace.

Another highlight was an outdoor stations of the cross, in which participants made a metaphoric and spiritual pilgrimage through the scenes of Christ’s suffering and death, related to specific places and human rights violations throughout the world.

Matt Manning, a senior majoring in international affairs, attended Rusesabagina’s address. “Putting a face to what I saw portrayed onscreen was especially inspiring,” said Manning. “I wondered, could that type of courage be revealed in me?”

For Lizzie Norris, a senior exercise science major in Marquette’s physical therapy program, this was her third Mission Week. She attended Mission Week’s opening Mass and a Destination Dinner, in addition to Rusesabagina’s address.

“Mission Week gives me a time to evaluate where I want to go and what my motivation is, to go where I’m called,” she said. “It’s what sets Marquette apart.”

In keeping with the Mission Week theme, Rusesabagina implored his audience to take action against human rights violations around the world as well as Africa. “Four million have been killed in Congo; no one noticed. Six million killed in Burundi, nobody talks about it. The same thing is happening now in Darfur [western region of Sudan],” he said.

“To you future leaders I say, there are so many voices calling out for help. Hotel Rwanda has a good message. We need you to keep raising awareness, to raise up as one. Then we’ll always win.”

The Parents Fund is growing but we still need your support!

Thanks to nearly 2,000 Marquette parents — past and present — by December 31, 2005 the Parents Fund exceeded $250,000. This fund supports the university’s family of current-use funds called Marquette Today, which has three areas of focus:

- Marquette Fund: Supports student programs, faculty enhancement and technology advancement
- Scholars Fund: Helps each dean create the best atmosphere for learning and discovery within his/her college
- Blue and Gold Fund: Directed to scholarships for Marquette student-athletes

Every student benefits from the generosity of donors — tuition covers only 60 percent of what it costs to educate Marquette students. The remaining 40 percent comes from generous alumni, corporations, foundations and parents who believe in the work, mission and students of Marquette University.

Supporting the Parents Fund is the easiest way you can make an impact while your student is here.

Support Marquette Today

Important Dates

Apr 1: Residence hall selection for returning students begins
Apr 13-17: Easter break
Apr 13: Check with your students to find out if they have received their financial aid award for 2006-2007, or if they have outstanding documents on their To Do list required to complete their financial aid application.
Apr 18-20: Lil’ Sibs Weekend
Apr 22: National Hunger Clean-Up
May 8-13: Finals week
May 13: Residence halls close at noon
May 15-19: Senior Week
May 20-21: Commencement weekend
Jun 1: If your student has accepted a student loan, remind him/her to complete Master Promissory Note(s) and Entrance Counseling (the latter required for first time borrowers only).
Jun 1: If you are a PLUS loan borrower, remind your student to complete his/her Master Promissory Note.
Aug 1: Student employment jobs available on JobConnection Web site
Aug 18-24: Undergraduate Orientation
Aug 28-29: Fall semester begins
Sept 4: Labor Day — no classes
Sept 29-Oct 1: Family Weekend
Oct 19-20: Mid-semester break

Check out the Marquette Parents Web site

Learn everything you need to know about Marquette:

- Important news and events
- Where to call in case of family emergency
- Paying tuition online
- Replenishing your student’s MarquetteCard
- Where to park when you visit
- And much, much more

To learn more, visit: www.marquette.edu/parents
Senior Week 2006 – A last hurrah

In the next few weeks, graduating seniors sure will be busy. In addition to taking final exams, senior students are in the thick of job searching, interviewing for one of the biggest transitions they will ever experience: entering the real world.

But before they go, Marquette University Student Government has planned a way to help seniors let loose during their last week as college students: Senior Week, a long-standing tradition that runs the week before Commencement.

MUSG sponsors the event along with Student Development, University Ministry and, new this year, the Career Services Center.

This year’s Senior Week includes a kick-off at the Annex, a Brewer’s game, a Senior Ball and a Friday night fish fry and a Lake Michigan boat cruise. A reception for graduating students and their families hosted by Marquette University President Robert A. Wild, S.J., and the entire Jesuit community follows Saturday’s Baccalaureate Mass.

The Senior Week planning committee will also provide families with hotel, restaurant and museum information, as well as discount coupons for Milwaukee attractions and hot spots.

Whether you’re the parent of a senior this year or just beginning your journey as a Marquette mom or dad, you can look forward to this year’s Senior Week as a time to relax, celebrate and make memories that will last a lifetime with your soon-to-be college graduate.

Parents of senior students will receive more information regarding Senior Week — including how to purchase tickets — in the mail soon. In the meantime, contact MUSG at (414) 288-7416 or check out www.mu.edu/musg for details.

One new event this year is the Job Search Boot Camp, hosted by Career Services, a day-long workshop intended to help seniors who have not yet secured jobs perfect their resumes, practice interview techniques and narrow down career paths. By the end of Boot Camp, participants will be well equipped to land the perfect job.

Families of Marquette seniors are also invited to join in on the fun. Family activities include a Friday night fish fry and a Lake Michigan boat cruise. A reception for graduating students and their families hosted by Marquette University Parents Association Board Members

Linda and Michael Anton • Waukesha, Wis.
Carolee Arndt • Brookfield, Wis.
Rick and Grace Battilino • La Grange, Ill.
Mike Bedwell • Brookfield, Wis.
John and Mark Bishop • Brookfield, Wis.
Larry Boisvert • Hinsdale, Ill.
Cathy Bordenan • Hinsdale, Ill.
Jan Bronczyk • Joliet, Ill.
Peg and Joe Madden • Hinsdale, Ill.
Molly Feste • Joliet, Ill.
Dan and Robin Burns • Shorewood, Wis.
Brett Fouts • MSU Representative
Amy Forcht • Elm Grove, Wis.
Tony and Camille Garcia • Menomonee Falls, Wis.
Robert and Katherine Grusenski • Kenosha, N.J.
Bob and Maureen Hart • Chicago, Ill.
Greg and Peggy Heilz • Waukesha, Wis.
Darlene Hug • Lindenhurst, Ill.
Maureen Janeczko • Delton, Ill.
Jenny Kelley • West Allis, Wis.
Mike and Cynthia Ketter • Green Bay, Wis.
Peg and Joe Madden • Burr Ridge, Ill.
Cathy McCarville • Grand Rapids, Mich.
Patricia McSpillane • Orlando, Fla.
John and Katie Mehans • Whitefish Bay, Wis.
Sally and John Muirhill • Elm Grove, Wis.
Karl and Neil Peterson • Apple Valley, Minn.
Gahm Phane • Shorewood, Wis.
Charla and Maureen Poirier • Cicero, Ill.
Mary and Robert Satterstrom • Mendota Heights, Minn.
John and Yvonne Stiborak • Franklin, Wis.
Barbara Vela • Northbrook, Ill.
Joy and Jim Wallace • La Grange, Ill.
Donna Whisnant • Vienna, Va.
Sally and George Williamson • Bedford Hills, N.Y.
Gail and Richard Willich • Hinsdale, Ill.

Parents Association Board Members

Save the dates Reserve a room

Join us in celebrating Marquette’s 125th Commencement! Baccalaureate Mass is Saturday, May 20, with graduation ceremonies on Sunday, May 21.

Due to convention activity during this time, hotel rooms in Milwaukee are at a premium. In response, Marquette has reserved blocks of rooms at several area hotels and motels. For information and reservation links, go to www.marquette.edu/graduation

Senior Week Schedule 2006

SUNDAY, MAY 14
Senior Mass, Gesu Church, 4:30 p.m.

MONDAY, MAY 15
Senior Service Project, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.
Senior Spiritual Path, St. Joan of Arc Chapel, 4–5 p.m.

TUESDAY, MAY 16
Job Search Boot Camp, Raynor Conference Center, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
Senior Spiritual Path, St. Joan of Arc Chapel, 4–5 p.m.
Brewers Game, Miller Park, time TBA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17
Senior Spiritual Path, St. Joan of Arc Chapel, 4–5 p.m.
Senior Ball, Milwaukee Art Museum, 9 p.m.–1 a.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 18
Senior Spiritual Path, St. Joan of Arc Chapel, 4–5 p.m.
Lucille’s Piano Bar 7:30–10:30 p.m. and Comedy Sportz, 11 p.m.–12 a.m.
Edelweiss Boat Cruise, Third Street Pier, 10:30 p.m.–12 a.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 19
Fish Fry, Buck Bradley’s, seatings at 5 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Edelweiss Boat Cruise 10–11:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 20
Baccalaureate Mass, Bradley Center, 7–8:30 p.m.
President and Jesuit Reception, Senior Send-off, AMU Ballrooms, 8–10 p.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 21
Commencement, Bradley Center, 9 a.m.

Shuttle service provided for all off-campus events 30 minutes prior to each event

EXCELLENCE FAITH LEADERSHIP SERVICE

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