Devoted to Mary

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Longtime University donor and community advocate Joseph B. Quatman died Jan. 14 at the Lima Convalescent Home in Lima, Ohio. He was 94.

Among his legacies is the statue he funded on the lawn of Marianist Hall honoring Mary at the Feast of Cana. As a member of the Class of 1938, Quatman also contributed to the renovation of Immaculate Conception Chapel in the mid-1980s.

Quatman was president of the American Society of Ephesus, a foundation created by his father, George B. Quatman, in 1955 to support the restoration and preservation of Christian sites in the Turkish city where many believe the Blessed Virgin Mary spent her final days.

The Society helped fund the restoration of St. John's Basilica in Ephesus, erected in the sixth century over the tomb of St. John the Apostle, and the Churches of St. Mary and St. John, known as the twin churches, which date back to approximately the year 330. The Society also gives to the Marian Library on the University of Dayton campus.

The Mary statue was suggested by Quatman, who wanted a visible, Catholic symbol on campus.

"You can walk past the chapel on campus and not go in. But you can't walk past the statue and not see it," Quatman said during the blessing and dedication of the statue in 2007.

"He was a remarkable man," Buby said. "He was a very focused and determined person who was very generous with his financial resources and was especially devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary."

In addition to his work funding Marianist projects at the University, Quatman provided continued support for the George B. Quatman Scholarship in the department of electrical and computer engineering. The elder Quatman, a pioneer in the telephone industry in Ohio, received an honorary doctorate in engineering from the University.

During his life, Joseph Quatman gave nearly $200,000 and directed another $400,000 to the University.

Born in Buffalo, N.Y., Aug. 12, 1916, Quatman grew up in Sidney, Ohio, and attended grammar and high school at Holy Angels Parish. He graduated from the University in 1938, majoring in history and philosophy, and earned his Juris Doctorate from Case Western Reserve Law School in 1941.

From 1943-45, Quatman served as a special agent in the Army Counter Intelligence Corps during World War II, working as a codebreaker. He landed at Omaha Beach and fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

After his return from Europe, Quatman taught law at Ohio Northern University from 1946-48 and later went into private legal practice, representing Lima Telephone and Telegraph Co. His lengthy legal career included a judicial position on the Allen County Probate and Juvenile Court and a seat on the 3rd District Court of Appeals in the 1950s.

Quatman was active in the Lima community, helping to establish the first school for mentally handicapped children in Allen County and the county's first parochial high school. He also served on the Allen County Board of Mental Retardation.

Buby said Quatman's commitment to helping children with mental handicaps resulted from his experience caring for two of his own children.

Quatman lived in Florida during his later years with his second wife, Sally, before her death on Oct. 18, 2010. He was previously married for 51 years to his childhood sweetheart, Margaret Hemm, who died in 1993.
Survivors include seven children, Judy Klepper, Jacqueline (James) Wade, George B. Quatman III, Timothy Quatman, Joseph (Lisa) Quatman, Jon (Barb) Quatman, ’78, Steven Quatman; and 19 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Lynn St. Clair Barrie; and four brothers, Frank ’36, Philip “Gus,” ’39, George ’41, and John “Jack” Quatman ’44.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Charles Catholic Church, Lima Central Catholic High School or the Allen County Board of Developmental Disabilities, 2500 Ada Road, Lima, OH 45801.

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