

FEATURE

Alumna invests in future of college, reading pupils

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

BRIGHTON — Marie M. Callahan looked out the living room window of her apartment in The Gables, a senior citizen residence on South Clinton Avenue.

"I like the water out there," she said, viewing a pond behind the residence. "It's much more interesting than looking at older people."

Callahan apparently pulls no punches in her opinions on everything from aging to academics. A 1930 graduate of Nazareth College — then located in Rochester, but now in Pittsford — Callahan rejects any attempts by others to help her simply because she's getting on in years.

For example, she knows that she could regularly call on the facility's staff to help with many tasks. But she generally avoids requesting such help because she said she wants "to carry my own packages."

"I prefer doing things for myself," she added.

Despite her streak of independence, Callahan is no island unto herself. Indeed, over the years, she has given generously of both her time and money to her alma mater where she was a member of the third graduating class.

"My major was in science and chemistry," she recalled. "There weren't many women at the time doing that."

Following her graduation, Callahan worked as a research technician for almost 40 years at the University of Rochester's Medical School. Working alongside such people as the late Dr. George Hoyt Whipple, a Nobel Prize winner and the medical school's dean, Callahan helped to develop pharmaceutical products to combat such debilitating conditions as anemia, she said.

Since her graduation from Nazareth, she said she has served on the school's alumni board — helping to rewrite its constitution in the 1960s — and given money to establish a reading clinic at the college that has served hundreds of area elementary and high school students since 1969.

Having never married and borne children of her own, Callahan has nonetheless spiritually adopted children with reading problems, she noted.

"I still say if the children could do more reading, they could get ahead much faster," she said.

She also set up the Magdalena Callahan Scholarship, named for her mother, to fund the studies of graduate students in Nazareth's reading program.

But Callahan hasn't stopped there. She



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Marie M. Callahan, in her apartment at The Gables, Brighton, has supported Nazareth College since her graduation from the college in 1930.

has also pledged \$800,000 to the college's current \$10 million capital campaign, money that will come from two deferred trusts set up by her brother Arthur J. Callahan, who died 10 years ago.

To honor their contribution, which will become available upon Callahan's death, the college plans to rename its 1,100-seat auditorium "The Arthur J. and Marie M. Callahan Theater," according to Charla

Kucko, college spokeswoman. Kucko added the college will hold a special ceremony at 2 p.m. Dec. 16, at the auditorium located in the college arts center.

Callahan pointed out that her support of the college was rooted in her own experience there.

"I still say the college has the same atmosphere it had in the beginning," she commented. "They were always doing what they could to make it easier for the students and help them along. I still think it's grand that they haven't lost that sense of compassion for everyone who's around."

Callahan added that she derived her wealth from investing in various stocks over the years.

"When I graduated from Nazareth, I didn't have anything like a million dollars, you can be sure of that," she said.

She added that she is also leaving money to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester and to the Genesee Hospital in Rochester, where she has received care over the years.

"I was just telling one of the doctors at the Genesee Hospital the other week ... You're doing such a good job keeping me going that you'll never get your money," she said with a laugh.

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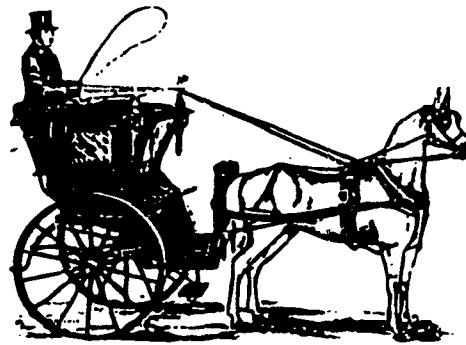
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