

The Catherine and Frank Alan Fund

Franklin Alan remembers his parents, Catherine and Frank Alan, as the epitome of hard work. Throughout his childhood, they unceasingly showed diligence, effort, and determination. His parents' qualities helped to shape Franklin's childhood and open up opportunities for him. Franklin attributes many of his accomplishments to the way in which he was raised by his hard-working parents.

Catherine and Frank Alan first met when Catherine went to work in one of the stores owned by Frank's father. Frank was working there too as a watch maker, a trade passed down to him by his father who came to the United States from Norway and was employed by a watch factory. He returned to Norway when his Visa expired but then returned to the U.S. when Frank was an infant. Frank's family then settled in Jersey City and owned several stores in New York City.

Frank was born in 1898 and Catherine in 1911. They were married in 1933 and soon moved from New York to Chicago, where they had two children, Evelyn and Franklin. Evelyn was a name that was heavily associated with the Irish community at the time. The family lived in an Irish neighborhood, and Catherine had previously been from an Irish community in Manhattan.

Though Frank had never seen a farm, he had always dreamed of living on one. The family soon moved to a farm in Oak Grove, which was approximately 8 miles east of Knox. Their home was near the Marshall County line. Each week on Monday, Frank took the train to Chicago to work and then returned home each Friday. He made the same commute from 1944 until he passed away in 1980.

As Frank worked in Chicago, Catherine took care of their three hundred chickens, five cows, four horses, and many pigs. When Franklin reminisces about their farm house, he remembers, as a child, viewing it as particularly huge, especially the kitchen. He visited once as an adult and realized it was likely, at most, 400 square feet!

Frank is nostalgic about his childhood on the farm. He said, "I remember it as just idyllic. I picture myself sort of bouncing through the fields, and it was just a great place to be."

The family left the farm and moved into the city of Knox due to a chronic heart issue that Catherine faced. They resided on Pearl Street, and Franklin remembers that they paid only \$25 a month for rent. Franklin's fondest memory of this home is when he found some photos in his mother's purse of tanks and artillery. He was so fascinated by them that he pasted them on his bedroom wall. The images turned out to be ration stamps, which the family needed in order to obtain meat and other goods. His mother was furious and cut them off of his wall. From then on, he had small squares on his bedroom walls, marking the event.

The family moved once more to Lake Street, but they remained in Knox. Catherine and Frank owned a jewelry store in town. She worked there while Frank continued to work in Chicago.

Evelyn went to a grammar school in Chicago, and Franklin was fortunate enough to attend college at Purdue University. Not many people attended college at that time. He later went to Law School in the evenings and worked for Eli Lilly and Company, a pharmaceutical company, during the day. He was married to Eliene, who passed away in 2004. The two had three children, Stacy, who is an Episcopal priest in Chicago, Franklin II, who goes by Kip, and Ryan. Ryan has three children, and Evelyn and Kip each have two.

Franklin married Donna Eide in 2006. She worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Indianapolis and is currently retired and teaches law at Indiana University. Unknowingly, she and Franklin concurrently attended the same law school.

Franklin was in the Army for just over three years. He also bought and later sold a newspaper. He was on the Board of Directors for the Starke County Economic Development Foundation when he first heard of community foundations. He

played a vital role in the establishment of the Starke County Community Foundation.

“Very high on the list of things I’m proud of is the Community Foundation,” he said.

Catherine passed away in 1973 and Frank in 1980. Franklin described both of his parents as very hardworking. His father worked five days a week in Chicago and then worked on the farm or in the jewelry store. His mother worked in the store as well, while also raising her children. When Franklin was young, he became very ill and missed large portions of the first and second grades. His mother took care of him at this time, and he contributes much of his success in life to the way she raised him.

He said, “I have had an exceptionally fortunate life. I have gotten to do a lot of things I like to do.”

In order to honor both of his parents, Franklin established an endowment fund through the Starke County Community Foundation in 1997. The fund was established to provide support to Ancilla College for Starke County students, especially students participating in the SCILL program. He also intended for the fund to support Ancilla programs. In 2013, the fund was amended to provide support to Phi Kappa Psi Foundation for the Indiana Delta Fund. Through this fund, Catherine and Frank’s legacy of hard work and dedication will live forever.