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From Time to Time

STANLEY KRESGE: A BRIEF REFLECTION

Stanley Sebastian Kresge was a good man. His Dad was Sebastian Spering Kresge who founded the Dime Store chain. Stanley started K-Mart Corporation. He used his money and talents well. I met him in Detroit in 1972 when I was a regional director of development at Notre Dame. He was gracious despite our age difference and the fact I was asking for money. We hit it off quickly. A short time later, I received a call from a South Bend attorney named Jim Hall. He invited me to his office. I introduced myself and he waved some papers at me and asked, “why the hell would S. S. Kresge write a three page letter recommending you for membership in the Rotary Club of South Bend”? I did not have a good answer.

I was inducted into Rotary in 1972. Stan and I became good friends over the years. In 1980, I was elected Rotary Club President and Stan flew in for the occasion at the Indiana Club. My kids called him “Grandpa Stanley”. He always gave them a dollar bill. His Christmas card contained only a numbered chapter and verses from the Bible. You had to look up your personalized greeting. Yearly, mine was about the dignity of raising money. When he deplaned a North Central flight in South Bend, he would carry a paper bag containing his dress shoes. He was a humble man.

On his first visit to Notre Dame, we went to the roof of the Hesburgh Library on a misty morning. I apologized for the weather obstructing the view of the Steeple and Dome. He said, “this is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad”. Whenever he wrote a check, including the one for the Notre Dame Law Library, the memo line contained the words, “In and for the sake of Jesus Christ”. He and his wife, Dorothy, were married for 62 years. Nearly every day they arose at 4:00 am. She would knit and he would read the writings of some religious faith for two hours. I gave him a book by Father Jim Burtchaell, CSC, which he read aloud from cover to cover.

Susan Hamilton, a frequent contributor to the *Law Library New* is the special projects assistant in the Technical Services Department of the Law Library. Recently, at a dinner gala in honor of the new Holy Cross College president, Susan spoke with Brian Regan who graciously provided the content for this column of “From Time to Time.”



Stanley S. Kresge (left) with Law School Dean, Thomas L. Shaffer, and University President, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C. [Kresge Law Library Dedication 1973, GPHR 22.2375, University of Notre Dame Archives.] The inscribed wall used to fill the doorway arch that now leads to the north end of the Main Reading Room.

On the day of the Law Library dedication, he toured the facility. Faculty members awaited his arrival to give a brief explanation on the usage of the room. Word was out that Mr. Kresge didn't hear very well so each professor shouted in his ear. He turned to me at an early stop where Tex Dutile and Frank Beytagh were waiting and said, “why is everyone yelling at me? My hearing is fine. I don't see too well”. The word spread down the hallways and adjustments were made immediately.

Stanley Kresge died in 1985 at age 85. He led a productive and happy life. He appreciated Notre Dame Law School graduates who contribute so much to their communities. His death left a void for his family and friends. He had done the work of his Lord. The world he departed was better because he had been here. So was the Notre Dame Law School because of the [Kresge Foundation](#). So was I because Stan was my friend.

-Brian Regan,
September 29, 2011

Regan graduated from Notre Dame in 1961. He served as director of development 1973—75 after joining the staff in 1968 as regional director of development. Additionally, Regan taught in the ND Graduate School of Business MSA program for over 26 years.