

Quarterly Donor Spotlight

Summer 2019

Siblings Ronald, Joe and Kay Self grew up in Cabell County, West Virginia. Their parents, Agnes and Wyatt Self, did not have the opportunity to finish high school, and for that reason, the importance of education was heavily emphasized in their household and school was only missed for extreme illness.

Upon his high school graduation, Joe enrolled at Marshall University. He attended for one year before enlisting in the United States Air Force, where he served for three-and-a-half years. After his service, he returned to Marshall and obtained his Bachelor of Science in engineering degree.

“Although I had been in the Air Force, I had not really been out in the world. Service time is pretty controlled, so I returned to Huntington and enrolled at Marshall,” said Joe.

His late brother, Ronald, was attending Marshall at the time and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry in 1960. During his college career, Ronald married Cecilia Jordan and the couple had four daughters. After graduation, the family moved to Baltimore, Maryland, where Ronald was employed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. They then moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he became a laboratory director; a position he held when he passed away in 1973.

Upon Joe’s graduation in 1961, he accepted a position as an engineer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, just east of Dayton, Ohio. While working full-time, he went back to school and obtained a Master of Business Administration from Wright State University. Joe and his late wife, Jo Ann, had two children, Joe-Michael and Michelle. Now retired, Joe devotes his time to the International Lions Club Activities of Service. He is now married to Jacquie, and they reside in the Columbus, Ohio, area.

Kay Self enrolled in night classes at Marshall University, taking one class each semester, and eventually completed a Bachelor of Science degree at Phillips University in Oklahoma. She married Gary Midkiff, an alumnus of Marshall, and the couple moved to Pennsylvania and Massachusetts while he pursued graduate school, before returning to Oklahoma. Once their children, Kay- Karla and Mark, were in school, she worked at Phillips University as an assistant in the English language program and then the Office of Financial Aid.

In 2015, Joe and Kay honored their family’s lifelong dedication to education by endowing both the Agnes and Wyatt Self Memorial Scholarship for Engineering and the Agnes and Wyatt Self Memorial Scholarship for Fine Arts, in honor of their parents. Both scholarships support a student in good academic standing and are renewable for the students for four years as long as they maintain a good grade point average.

“I hope two things can take place with higher education,” said Joe. “One being a measure to control the increase in cost, and second, achieve a better balance between academics and athletics.”

He reminds students that while there is always time to play, it is important to take the time to study, work and grow, especially those who are fortunate enough to have scholarships.

“My hope for Marshall University is that it continues to expand, buildings continue to modernize and classrooms become more inductive conducive to learning.”



Pictured: Kay Self Midkiff; Sydney Yeager, current scholarship recipient and Joe Self