

Kraus-Weigle Fund Stems from an Entire Family's Commitment to Public Service

For more than 30 years, Douglas Kraus, '73, and his wife, Alice Weigle Kraus, have generously supported a fund that provides financial support to students and graduates who take public interest jobs. Last year the Kraus-Weigle Fund for Public Service enabled two students to accept



Douglas Kraus, '73, and Alice Weigle Kraus

summer positions, one at the child protection division of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and the other with the New Hampshire Public Defender's office.

"Our family started this fund in 1989 as a way of honoring my father, a graduate of the College and the Law School who passed away that year, and also as a way to recognize and further

my mother's strong commitment to public service," Alice said. Her mother, Helen, also a graduate of the College, had been president of the Illinois League of Women Voters, served on a presidential advisory council addressing the welfare of children and families, and cofounded the advocacy organization Voices for Illinois Children. Alice's family also established the Maurice Weigle Exceptional Young Lawyer Award at the Chicago Bar Association to honor her father and grandfather (both of whom were named Maurice), which is given each year to an outstanding young lawyer with a demonstrated commitment to the profession, the organized bar, and the community. (Last year's winner of the Maurice Weigle Award, David Pi, '13, is profiled in this issue.)

Alice noted that her family has strong ties to UChicago—in all, 18 members of the extended Weigle family have earned degrees from the University.

Doug developed a strong interest in public service work during the course of his nearly 40-year career at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, where he chaired the pro bono committee for many years and led the firm's trial

team in a headline-making housing discrimination case against a New York City cooperative that refused to admit an interracial couple. He also served on the boards of the New York Legal Aid Society and New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. For the past 26 years, he has served as town justice in his hometown of Chappaqua, New York, in the hills of northern Westchester County. He was recently elected to a seventh four-year term as town judge, a position he describes as "the best job I've ever had." He also serves on the boards of Northern Westchester Hospital and the Westchester Land Trust.

Doug has served on the Law School Council and cochaired many reunion committees. "My three years at the Law School were among the best three years of my life, although I probably didn't fully appreciate that at the time," he said, adding that "the faculty and my classmates were simply dazzling." He and Alice were married several months before first-year classes began, and he credits her with helping him survive the rigors of his Law School years by insisting that he explain, at dinner each evening, what had happened in class that day, in plain English and without using any legal jargon.

Alice earned a master's degree in social work while they were in Chicago. After a hiatus when the couple were raising their two children, she returned to school to earn a second master's degree, in museum education. In connection with her work for a museum near the couple's home, she developed and continues to facilitate a visual-image-based program for people with dementia that uses artwork to stimulate thought and encourage conversation while validating the participants.

"Doug and I, and my sister, Babs Maltenfort, who also helped start this fund, are delighted to be able to help the exceptionally capable students of the Law School experience the satisfactions of public interest law," Alice said. "We're especially pleased that so many of them have found positions working to protect the rights and welfare of children, which was a such strong interest of my mother. Given Doug's love for the Law School, and our desire to give something in return, establishing our public service fund was a great fit, and has provided a tremendous amount of satisfaction for us both."