From the Desk of the Chancellor

Gene Glick Remembered

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by Charles R. Bantz

Because my parents were of the same generation, I thought of them when I first met Eugene and Marilyn Glick at a dinner. Gene Glick was a story teller, and a thinker, a sparkplug of ideas. At dinner, his wife, Marilyn, was thoughtful, on the quiet side, but when she spoke, she was direct and incisive.

Like many who survive a near-death experience (his, an artillery barrage in World War II) or who are witness to tragic events (being among the liberators of the Dachau concentration camp), Gene had a zest for life, a resiliency that fueled his tenacity, all coupled with great empathy for others. Like many fathers who spent their formative years in the Great Depression, he felt a special responsibility to see to it that his children have opportunities for a better life and, by extension, any of his neighbors and friends who are less fortunate. Marilyn’s father, who owned and managed rental properties, lost his savings in the 1929 stock market crash and died suddenly in 1933. She learned responsibility at a young age as she helped her mother. It was many years later that she would learn she had been adopted.

When these two kindred souls met over a bridge game, it was love at first sight. Marilyn shared Gene’s values and became his business and philanthropic partner. Their humanitarian ethos took shape early and emerged in conjunction with building their business and fortune—not after the achievement of financial success, but while facing all the uncertainties others did. After his service in World War II, for example, he returned to Indianapolis and established the GI loan program at Peoples Bank. Noticing the lack of affordable housing for returning veterans wanting to start their own families, the Glicks pooled their savings and began buying property as a part-time venture before launching the housing development business that continues to this day.

Even as they built a very successful business, and Gene and Marilyn funded civic projects and charitable organizations throughout central Indiana, Gene hosted meetings at the Keystone MCL cafeteria. Brian Payne, president of the Central Indiana Community Foundation, said it best: “In my experience, it’s rare to find a family with such a unified and generous approach to making our community a better place.”

Their contributions will live on in our city for generations to come. Two projects at IUPUI are especially deserving of our lasting gratitude: the gift to establish the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Eye Institute and the Indianapolis Cultural Trail: A Legacy of Gene and Marilyn Glick, part of which runs through campus. Thank you, Gene and Marilyn, and our condolences to your wonderful family.

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