

John & Mary Ryan Scholarship

Immaculate Conception Parish and School

366 E. North Broadway
Columbus, OH 43214
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BACKGROUND

John and Mary Ryan were long time members of IC who were committed to Catholic education. Their children and grandchildren attended Catholic schools and their legacy has continued for a number of years through the annual contribution made by their family, Ron and Patricia Bitler, to the John and Mary Ryan Memorial Scholarship.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Monday, March 6, 2023

Submit requirements to IC Principal, Immaculate Conception School Office

AWARD

One or more \$500 scholarships will be awarded each year. The scholarship shall be awarded to a student or students who are an incoming freshman attending Catholic high school in the Diocese of Columbus and who have not been awarded any additional scholarship(s).

QUALIFICATIONS

This scholarship is awarded to an IC graduate (or graduates) who will be attending a Diocesan high school in the Fall and have demonstrated good character, citizenship, and academic achievement.

Citizenship is about being an informed, responsible, and caring participant in your community. It means doing your share to make your school and community better. Good citizens cooperate and get involved in community affairs. Citizenship is obeying laws and rules. Responsible citizens do things like volunteering and protecting the environment. Good citizens make good neighbors.

Demonstrating good citizenship is being a person who is involved in trying to make the community, nation, or world a better place. Good citizens are people who are engaged in, whether in big or small ways, considering the needs of others in their community. Good citizenship in practice is understanding, appreciating, and doing things that make life better for you and for others.

REQUIREMENTS

Type a 250 word essay explaining how you demonstrate these qualities in your own life. Include a cover letter with name, grade level, and title John and Mary Ryan Scholarship.

EVALUATION

Representatives of IC School Junior High Teachers. Ultimate review and approval of anonymous recipients will come from the IC Pastor and IC School Principal.

Note: The Catholic Foundation accepts on line scholarship applications.

Background on John and Mary Theresa Ryan,
for use with the John and Mary Theresa Ryan Scholarship



John and Mary Theresa (Carroll) Ryan were a loving couple devoted to their family, their Catholic faith and to each other. Their dedication to their marriage transcended tight financial times, long illnesses and the tragic loss of an adult child. Such steadfastness in times of trouble stood as a model for their children and extended family.

John was born on July 22, 1918, in Urbana, Ohio, to Edward and Kathryn Ryan. Edward worked for the railroad, and Kathryn was a homemaker. When Edward died unexpectedly of a heart attack, John, then only a teenager, became the man of the house to his four younger brothers and baby sister. John's mother took in washing to make ends meet, and John helped out by delivering telegrams on his bicycle. Despite the hard times, John and his brothers and sister were able to attend the local Catholic elementary school and high school at St. Mary Parish in Urbana, and all graduated. Catholic education was a family priority.

John went on to serve in the Army during World War II, work at a bank in Springfield, Ohio, and then for the federal government, including many years for the Internal Revenue Service.

Mary Theresa was born June 10, 1916, in Springfield to John and Theresa (McNulty) Carroll. Her mother died only days after Mary Theresa's birth, and she was raised mostly by her Grandmother Carroll. Again, though money was tight, Mary Theresa attended Catholic grade school and high school, graduating from Catholic Central High School in Springfield.

She worked at a furniture store in Springfield and met John on a blind date to Russell's Point at Indian Lake in western Ohio. They were married in St. Raphael's Church in Springfield on May 17, 1944, in a low-key, wartime wedding and took up residence on Lincoln Place in Urbana, just a few doors from John's childhood home.

As the years rolled by, John and Mary Theresa welcomed four children: Thomas, Margaret, Kathryn and Patricia. All attended St. Mary's Elementary School. But the parish high school had long since closed, so some parishioners, including John and Mary Theresa, spearheaded an effort to run a small bus from Urbana to Springfield and back every school day so parish teens could attend Catholic Central. Three of their children rode that bus every day.

The family eventually moved to Columbus, Ohio, for better job prospects for John with the IRS and for better college prospects for the children. Tom and Margie were attending college, but Kathy entered Bishop Watterson to finish her final two years of high school, and Patty attended Immaculate Conception Elementary School for a year and then went to Watterson for four years. In the end, all four children attended Catholic school for at least 12 years. That was a priority for John and Mary Theresa.

The move to Columbus was hardest on Mary Theresa, as she left many friends and some extended family behind. This triggered depression, which she battled until her death. Her rheumatoid arthritis, with which she had suffered since young adulthood, seemed to worsen, and many joint-replacement surgeries ensued. Despite the operations, her ability to get around grew more limited as she aged.

As their children married and moved out of the house in Columbus, John took over more of the care of Theresa, despite his own heart problems. With John's retirement, their world seemed to shrink, but they always kept up with sports and news through TV and the newspaper, and they stayed in touch with their children and grandchildren, who visited often. In 1977, they suffered the worst tragedy parents could experience when their daughter Kathy, then a first lieutenant in the Air Force and stationed with her husband, Jim, in San

Antonio, Texas, was killed by an intruder. The murderer was never found. Her life insurance money was donated to Immaculate Conception parish by her husband.

Throughout the good and bad times, John remained devoted to his Catholic faith, always attending Sunday Mass at Immaculate Conception Church. Mary Theresa was too crippled by arthritis to go with him, but Eucharistic ministers from the church visited her weekly with Holy Communion.

Like his father, John died of a heart attack, on June 25, 1995, after attending Sunday Mass that morning. Less than one year later, on March 31, 1996, Mary Theresa died. The devoted couple were not separated for long, and were reunited in heaven for eternity.

Their unwavering faith in God and each other inspired me, Patty (Ryan) Bitler, and my husband, Ron, to sponsor a scholarship in their name for children from Immaculate Conception School who plan to attend a Catholic high school in Columbus. It is our way of saying “thank you” to my parents for my education, and to honor two lives well lived.

— By Patty Bitler, July 7, 2016