



# Patrick Kavanaugh

## Memorial Scholarship

— 1921-1993 —

**P**atrick Kavanaugh was a proud Irishman who loved the Lake Region, its land, and its people. Patrick's parents, both first-generation Irish-Americans, raised seven children on a farm located south of Crary, North Dakota, in Odessa Township. The farm was homesteaded by Patrick's grandparents in 1882 and remains in the family.

Patrick loved to tell stories about his school days which were spent in a tiny country schoolhouse and later at Crary High School which was only slightly bigger. Some of his fondest childhood memories centered around community dances which were often held in the Kavanaugh barn. Patrick and his siblings enjoyed the music, the excitement, and the opportunity to *strike it rich* selling refreshments to the revelers.

Patrick learned to farm with horse-drawn equipment and was well respected for his skill with horses, but Patrick was also interested in learning new farming techniques. He attended Agricultural College—now North Dakota State University. When World War II broke out, he joined the U.S. Navy and served on a minesweeper in the Mediterranean. The Navy valued Patrick's mechanical abilities and assigned him to look after the ship's engines.

At the close of the war, Patrick returned to Devils Lake to work as manager of the Robertson Lumber Company. He quickly learned the construction trade during the building boom that erupted at the close of the war, but farming was Patrick's first love. While working at the lumberyard, Patrick began a small ranching/farming operation which he tended during evenings and weekends. He also helped his parents, Matthew and M. Grace Kavanaugh, with their farming operation. After his father's death, Patrick gradually increased the amount

of time he devoted to farming. By the late 1950s, Patrick was farming full-time.

In 1943, shortly before leaving for his Naval assignment, Patrick married his college sweetheart, Fay Foster, and they established a home in Devils Lake. In 1947, Faye died in childbirth, leaving Patrick a beautiful daughter, Suzanne Faye. Patrick saw Suzanne through her childhood at a time when single parents, especially fathers, were uncommon. The community admired his commitment and the special father-daughter bond.

In 1973, Patrick married Joyce Nicholson from Alexandria, Minnesota. With both their families grown, they shared twenty years of warm companionship.

Throughout his years of farming, Patrick believed that being a steward of the land involved more than good farming practices. He felt an obligation to invest his personal time and energy in endeavors that would strengthen the agricultural community for the future. He provided leadership as the presiding officer of the Ramsey County Crop Improvement Association, the U.S. Durum Growers Association, the Crary Farmers Union Elevator, the Ramsey County 4-H Council, and the Odessa Township Board. He was an active member of several additional farm and community groups and particularly enjoyed the fellowship he found at Devils Lake Elks Lodge #1216.

Patrick loved the soil and the beauty and solitude of his fields. He also cared deeply about the Lake Region and encouraged others to share his concern. This scholarship was established by Patrick's daughter Suzanne and wife Joyce as an investment in the future. It is their hope that scholarship recipients will share Patrick's love of learning and his commitment to the agricultural community of the greater Lake Region. ♦