



Klemetsrud Family Endowment

Jay and Jeanne Klemetsrud are both strongly rooted in the Lake Region. Jeanne's parents, John and June (*Webster*) Litzinger, were raised in farming families near Churchs Ferry. John explored the world while in the Navy and then settled into a long career as a field officer with the Internal Revenue Service, based primarily in Devils Lake. His life companion, June, also loved the Lake Region and welcomed the opportunity to raise their children, Jeanne and James, in this supportive rural setting. June was well known for the artistic talents she expressed through gardening, painting, and weaving.

Jay's parents, Neil and Shirley Jean (*Sibley*) Klemetsrud, also shared a Lake Region heritage. Neil's first major excursion beyond the community was to serve in World War II. Upon his return, he joined his father in the plumbing business and eventually took the reins. Shirley Jean has lived her entire life in the lovely Lakewood area on the shores of Devils Lake. Her father was supervisor of parks for the city. When he started, its only park was at Lakewood, home of the renowned Chautauqua celebration of learning and culture. The rich childhood experiences of Shirley Jean and her four siblings were carefully monitored by her attentive mother whose outlets included Homemakers and church societies.

Jay and Jeanne were married during their college years at UND. Shortly after graduating, they loaded a van and spent three months touring the United States and Canada.

"This trip helped us realize what a wonderful place Devils Lake is," Jeanne explains.

It sealed their decision to settle into the community where they had been raised. In the pioneering spirit, Jay and Jeanne hand-crafted their first home on the shores of Devils Lake. There they raised their four children—Scott, Jeffrey, Eric, and Jennifer. Through their children and following their own interests, Jay and Jeanne have been very involved in the community. Jeanne was well loved throughout her career as an English teacher in the Devils Lake school system. After a long and successful term of leadership at the mechanical contraction business founded by Jay's great grandfather, Jay transitioned the business to the next generation of Klemetsruds.

This endowment honors Jay and Jeanne's parents, Neil and Shirley Jean Klemetsrud and John and June Litzinger, and their life-long commitment to the Lake Region. The scholarship, given annually, is also in recognition of Klemetsrud's Plumbing, Heating, and Air Conditioning. ♦