

“Teaching Is a Calling”

Kathleen Lynch Napoli '67



Paul Napoli and Kathleen Lynch Napoli

When you first meet Kathleen “Kathy” Lynch Napoli, you learn quickly who and what she most holds dear: Paul Napoli, to whom she has been married for 52 years; their five children and six grandchildren, and her faith. Listen further, and you’ll hear about her passionate, unwavering belief in the power of education to transform lives.

Her parents impressed the importance of education upon Kathy and her siblings. It was her childhood dream to become a teacher. “Teaching is a calling,” she says.

That belief is the impetus behind a generous \$100,000 gift Kathy and Paul have made to fund the Kathleen Lynch Napoli '67 Endowed Scholarship in Memory of Margaret and George Lynch, Kathy’s parents. Both died tragically young, before Kathy graduated from Caldwell

College for Women and went on to a teaching career.

In addition to honoring the memory of her beloved parents, the gift is a gesture of gratitude to Caldwell. Her mother passed away while Kathy was in high school; then, when she was in college, the unimaginable happened when her father died.

Kathy attributes her ability to remain strong in the face of overwhelming grief to the support she received on campus—from the Sisters, staff and classmates who rallied around her to show their love, support and compassion. She says she has never forgotten the embrace of the Caldwell community at a time when she most

needed stability, empathy and hope. Her older sister Pat, also a Caldwell graduate, benefited from the same support during that difficult time.

To lift her spirits, one night a group of her Caldwell friends insisted that Kathy accompany them to a social event for young Catholics. It was then that she met Paul Napoli, a student at Boston College who was to become the love of her life.

Eighteen months later, during a week in June, Kathy graduated from Caldwell College for Women on a Tuesday, Paul graduated from Boston College that Thursday, and on Saturday, the couple were married. Kathy began teaching elementary school students at School 9 in Paterson while Paul attended graduate school. They became parents, and life became busy and full; Kathy stopped teaching to devote herself to raising her family. Paul was finding great success in his career with US Trust, where he rose through the ranks to become vice chair, the position from which he retired. Twenty-five years ago, Kathy and Paul left the community of Glen Ridge, where they raised their family, and moved to Little Silver, where they live in an elegant home splendidly situated on the banks of the Shrewsbury River.

Kathy’s face lights up when she talks about the role teachers play in the lives of their students. “It’s the idea that learning

is fun—it opens a whole world. It’s magnificent,” she says, adding, “A good teacher can light a fire.” Kathy’s scholarship is designated for a student focused on a teaching career.

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As a longtime supporter of Caldwell, Kathy says, “The purpose of Caldwell is one I admire. I love the way it has grown. I have only wonderful things to say about Caldwell.” ■

—Christina Hall

