



Planned Giving

Keeping the Heart of Washburn Law Beating

Stan Sager '57 has a ready explanation why he and his wife Shirley have named Washburn Law as a substantial beneficiary of their estate, "The school did so much for me. And it's a way to set up a memorial for our son Kurt, a 1976 Washburn Law graduate, who unfortunately passed away at the young age of 44 after he had just successfully defended his thesis for a PhD at Rice University," said Sager.

"My undergraduate degree was from another university in Kansas. I left with a Navy commission and sailed off to Korea. Later, when I wrote its law school dean to ask about applying for admission, explaining that after two years of service I'd been placed on the Navy retired list because of physical disability caused by polio and was in a wheelchair, the dean told me not to apply—they had no facilities for wheelchair students," said Sager.

Washburn University School of Law Dean Jackson, didn't hesitate when Sager wrote him. "Jackson said, come on, we have another student in a wheelchair," recalls Sager. "He didn't tell me that the steps to his law school's front door were twice as high and steep as those at the other law school. But students and faculty carried me in and out, then up to the second floor until I could use crutches a year later. Washburn Law had a heart, and it still does, and we want to help it keep beating. I hope others feel the same way."

Sager practiced tax law in Topeka for two years after law school, then moved to Albuquerque. Two years later he co-founded his own firm, which became Sager, Curran, Sturges and Tepper, where he was managing director and chief trial attorney. It grew to 21 lawyers before Sager retired in 1993.

Sager served as a State Bar commissioner. He is still an active participant in pro bono efforts for the poor in New Mexico. Sager received the highest honor the State Bar of New Mexico awards, the Professionalism Award, as well as the LaFollette Pro Bono Award and others. Sager chaired the Lawyer Referral for the Elderly Project, taking it from a small regional service

to a state-wide operation. Currently, he serves on the newly organized New Mexico Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission.

"We wanted a way to memorialize our son and this estate plan does just that," explained Sager. Kurt earned a bachelor's at UNM then left to travel and work in Europe. He returned to earn his J.D. at Washburn Law, then a master's in Germanic literature at Rice. Kurt used his language and law skills to work at a large international law firm in Houston, where he was involved with contracts and documents written in any of the seven languages Kurt wrote and spoke fluently; the Scandinavian languages, German, French and Dutch. He left Houston to study international law at Uppsala University, Sweden, and took an HuK degree (Finnish equivalent to a master's) at the University of Helsinki while working as a translator. His PhD from Rice was awarded posthumously.

"We're happy that our will can set up a professorship or a scholarship in our son's memory," Sager said. "It's time to pay back and help keep that Washburn heart beating."

You, too, can help keep that Washburn Law heart beating through your planned gifts. Call or write:

Martin Ahrens
Advancement and Planned Giving Officer
School of Law
785-670-2781

