**PHILANTHROPY**

**REMEMBERING J. FRANK RALEY**

By Eileen Burns '53, "English major"

Throughout life, one hears of "Living Legends," people who achieve in the arts, sports, or government and become somewhat larger than life. But there are also people who accomplish great things and remain largely unknown. John Francis "J. Frank" Raley, Jr., dedicated his life to bringing about positive change in Southern Maryland, yet remained a very down to earth man.

Born in Park Hall, Maryland in 1926, J. Frank lived in the south end of St. Mary's County for most of his life. His parents, Ruth Zimmerly and J. Frank Sr., owned a bar and restaurant in Ridge, "Jay's Place," and the family lived above the establishment. As a child, baseball, hunting, and roaming the woods and fields filled his free time. He attended school locally until he left to attend Georgetown University. During World War II, J. Frank remained in the U.S. Army, positioning him to a larger world. This experience expanded J. Frank’s worldview and subsequent interest in his vision for St. Mary’s County.

J. Frank hailed from a family of politicians and followed in their footsteps as a member of the Maryland House of Delegates (1955 – 1959) and then as a member of the Maryland Senate (1963 – 1966). Though he was in office for relatively short terms, he quickly became known for establishing the infrastructure required to develop St. Mary’s County. As the Patuxent River Naval Air Station grew, J. Frank foresaw the change in Southern Maryland, yet remained a very down to earth man.

For his dedication to St. Mary’s College, he was awarded the College’s highest honor, the Order of the Ark and Dove. His home library ran the gamut from history, specifically English history, early Maryland history, and early American history. He was a skilled hunter and fisherman; he loved the camaraderie of his fellow hunters, and found relaxation in fishing from his shore for perch. Later in life, J. Frank took on the challenge of learning to cook. His menus were not so ordinary and often included lamp chops, squaws, and parsnips. Unimitated in the kitchen, he often invited guests over to enjoy his meals.

For his dedication to St. Mary’s College, he was the College’s first chairman of the Board of Trustees and a premier supporter. His participation in Board of Trustees activities is long as he pursued his dream for St. Mary’s County. His home library ran the gamut from history and politics to gardening and poetry; he had a deep interest in history, specifically English history, early Maryland history, and early American history. He was a skilled hunter and fisherman; he loved the camaraderie of his fellow hunters, and found relaxation in fishing from his shore for perch. Later in life, J. Frank took on the challenge of learning to cook. His menus were not so ordinary and often included lamp chops, squaws, and parsnips. Unimitated in the kitchen, he often invited guests over to enjoy his meals.

His dedication to the College is also reflected in his service as a Board of Trustee for 38 years. He was an active philanthropist and supported the College with the establishment of the J. Frank Raley Endowment. He was instrumental in preserving the Board of Trustee's independent governance structure. J. Frank Raley was a visionary leader. He not only laid the foundation for St. Mary’s College of Maryland as a premiere state liberal arts college, he was a chief supporter of the College’s mission and goals throughout his lifetime,” said College President Joseph Urgo. “He made significant contributions to almost every area on campus, from the construction of dormitories and campus facilities to the establishment of the Center for the Study of Democracy and the preservation of oral histories with the Shack/Water Project.”

A friend of the College and Historic St. Mary’s City alumnus, J. Frank served on the Board of Trustees, the College Foundation, the Finance Committee, the Development Committee, and the Alumni Affairs Committee. He also served in 2003, the Center for the Study of Democracy, a joint initiative between St. Mary’s College and Historic St. Mary’s City. J. Frank also took an active leadership position in his community. In 1994 he co-founded the Tri-County Council to move regional Southern Maryland’s agenda forward in Annapolis. He served on the St. Mary’s County Technology Council and helped develop the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center. He also served as first president of the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance.

J. Frank created two endowed scholarships, the J. Frank Raley Endowment, which supports the College’s financial aid program, and the J. Frank Raley Internship Endowment, which provides internships for students. He was a very close friend of the College, and his generosity will continue to benefit St. Mary’s County for many years to come.

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— President Jim Ugo

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**TRIBUTES**

"J. Frank Raley loved St. Mary’s College of Maryland and its strong liberal arts tradition. His philanthropy will ensure that the Center for the Study of Democracy will become an integral part of that tradition. Without J. Frank’s vision, St. Mary’s would not be one of the finest public liberal arts colleges in the country. The Board of Trustees and administration must continue to build upon the foundation that J. Frank created.”

— Trustee Tim Dandridge Sr.

“Senator J. Frank Raley, Jr. shaped St. Mary’s County in many ways, including bringing a four-year institution into its midst, St. Mary’s College of Maryland. Without his foresight, leadership, and support, we would not know this place, its people, or the community we have come to love. Reflect on how one man affected so many lives, and consider how many lives will continue to be affected by his work even after his departure from this world. I challenge you to live as a true St. Marysian Raley did, and to affect positive change in your life and community.”

— From Student Trustee Alex Wells ’13

"Mr. Raley was one of those unique individuals who, in anthropology, we might call a ‘go-between,’ that is, he who had his feet in different, seemingly mutually exclusive worlds but who, by virtue of his ability to envision a new and better future while respecting tradition, provided key leadership at a transformational time in the region’s history. It’s important that we don’t underestimate just what this place meant through between 1950 and 1990, and the resulting positive changes that we now take for granted. Mr. Raley called New County and Old County reflected his respect for both ways of life, and his desire to meld the best of both worlds. Whether we realize it or not, the landscape we work, live, and play in today that vision made real. We are the beneficiaries of Mr. Raley’s vision for the future, and we are the better for it.”

— John Kinkel, associate professor of anthropology and chair of museum studies

"Senator Raley believed in the fundamental importance of St. Mary’s City to the American story. He often argued that the stirrings of liberty during the 27th century should be discussed, celebrated and remembered. We have been doing that for ten years with his help and assistance. The Center for the Study of Democracy is a living legacy to the ideals Senator Raley cherished. He will be deeply missed.”

— From Michael Cain, professor of political science and director of the Center for the Study of Democracy

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**The Mulberry Tree gratefully acknowledges Eve Himmelheber Lane ’88, who developed a new fundraising structure at J. Frank while working at J. Frank Raley Insurance, Inc. from 1997-99, and John P. Gah, Jr., J. Frank’s stepson, who helped contribute to this work."