



Clemson Legacy Connection
PLANNED GIVING NEWSLETTER

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Love in Action, Every Day: Mary Radcliffe Welch, February 2025

Love lingers beyond Valentine’s Day, not just in chocolates and roses; it is the lasting impact of kindness, generosity and connection. As February unfolds, we are reminded that true devotion is not marked by a single day but rather by the commitments we make to one another, to our passions and to the causes that shape the future. Whether through acts of service, philanthropy or simply showing up for those who need us, love is a force that continues to inspire and uplift. This month, let us celebrate the enduring power of love — not just in words, but in action.

The love of family is what impelled Mary Welch to become a part of the Clemson Family. From an early age, Mary’s father, Joel Holman Radcliffe ’39, introduced her to his love for the Clemson Tigers and his fellow members of the Class of 1939. “For as far back as I can recall, our family car had an IPTAY sticker on it,” Mary remembers. “My whole family cheered for Clemson all through the years.”



Mary was born in Chester, South Carolina. However, shortly thereafter, her family began to move from one Army base to another while her father was serving as an Army officer during World War II. During his service, he fought in Europe before serving in the occupation Army in Japan.

After the war, Mary's father returned to an engineering career in Virginia and was subsequently transferred to Greensboro, North Carolina, where Mary went to school from second grade through high school. After graduating from Furman University in 1965, she took a job with the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta, where she met her husband, Jim Welch, employed by the federal government. When Jim was transferred to Washington, D.C., Mary moved to work for the Division of Reserve Bank Operations and Payment Systems (RBOPS) for the Federal Reserve Board. When she retired as a senior analyst in 2011, she had worked for the Federal Reserve System for 30 years.

Throughout Mary's life, her parents faithfully attended the Class of 1939 reunions. When her father decided not to drive long distances by himself anymore, and her mother



was no longer physically able to accompany him to the reunions, Mary made an effort to drive her father to the class reunions, knowing how important those gatherings were to him. During their visits to campus, Mary learned more about her father's classmates, and her admiration and respect for them grew deeper.

“They were a remarkable group of men,” she shared.

“Almost all of them had served in WWII, and they shared a great camaraderie and devotion to each other and to Clemson.”

A Legacy of Dedication

When Joel Radcliffe walked the halls of his beloved alma mater in 1936, he was unaware that he and his classmates would soon be called to serve in ways that would define a generation. As a member of the Greatest Generation, Joel embodied the values of courage, integrity and unwavering dedication — both to his country and to Clemson University. His legacy lives on through his achievements and through the love and respect of those who have followed in his footsteps.

“While I had known about the Clemson Family throughout my life, I began to experience it for myself as I developed

deep friendships and relationships with my father's classmates," Mary said. She began to look forward to the reunions with her dad, his classmates and their children who started to attend — all drawn to be a part of this very special group of Tigers. "Dad always insisted that we make time to enjoy some of Clemson's delicious ice cream at '55 Exchange before we journeyed home," Mary remembered fondly.

During those reunions, Mary got to know Frank Cox, the son of Dean Walter Cox '39, who invited her to serve on the Class of '39 Leadership Committee, a group that was exploring ways to memorialize the class and support future generations of students.

During their 50th Golden Anniversary Reunion in 1989, the Class of 1939 made a series of ambitious financial commitments to Clemson University. The class contributed to student scholarships, created a prestigious Class of 1939 Faculty Award for Excellence and supported projects in the Heritage Gardens, located in the South Carolina Botanical Garden. These projects have included: 1939 Caboose Garden, Cadet Life Garden and the President's Gardens, with plans to expand the Heritage Gardens even further in the future.

Mary's involvement with the planning committee germinated her thoughts about how she could honor her father and perpetuate his memory. She knew that growing

up during the Great Depression had influenced her parents, and her father had been grateful for his family's sacrifices to help pay for his tuition at Clemson. "I know that Dad would be pleased for me to help others who are struggling to attend Clemson, too," Mary said.

With the help of his older brother and stepfather, who owned a grocery store, he was able to earn his engineering degree, a treasured gift that laid the foundation for his remarkable achievements as an Army officer, a devoted family man and a proud member of the Greatest Generation. Now, his daughter is carrying forward that same spirit of generosity by establishing a scholarship in his name, ensuring that future Clemson students with financial need can pursue their dreams — just as he once did. His legacy of service, sacrifice and unwavering Clemson pride will continue to inspire future generations.

Mary has established the Joel H. Radcliffe 1939 Endowed Scholarship to honor her father's lifelong loyalty to Clemson and to his fellow classmates. The scholarship will support engineering students who have demonstrated financial need, and Mary's hope is that their degrees will enable them to make a positive impact on the world. "My dad always tried to help his fellow Clemson alums by hiring as many as he could, and I believe this endowment would please him very much," Mary said.

The Clemson Class of 1939 produced more than graduates — it forged leaders, patriots and members of the Greatest Generation who answered the call of duty with unwavering resolve. Among them was Joel Radcliffe, whose love for Clemson ran deep, shaping his character and guiding his path throughout his life. As a devoted son, soldier and leader, he exemplified the values of service, integrity and perseverance. Today, his daughter honors his memory, ensuring that his Clemson spirit and the legacy of his generation continue to inspire those who walk the same hallowed grounds he once traveled.

A Legacy of Love and Impact

We are all molded by the people who guide, support and inspire us — those whose wisdom, sacrifices and love leave an indelible mark on our lives. Their impact does not have to fade with time. By creating a lasting endowment in their honor, you can ensure that their legacy continues to shape future generations. A scholarship, a fund or a named capital area is more than a tribute — it is a powerful way to transform lives, just as they once transformed ours. Consider the people who have made you who you are. How will you ensure their story lives on?

Honor Today, Inspire Tomorrow

The greatest tributes are those that continue to make a difference long into the future. By creating a memorial or

honorary endowment in honor of someone who shaped or influenced your life, you can ensure their impact will be felt for future generations. You can give now and witness the joy your investment yields — watching students thrive, opportunities grow, and legacies leave their ineffaceable imprint on the hearts and minds of the recipients and everyone who hears more about a life well lived and a life well loved.

You also have the option of making a provision through your estate plan to secure their place in history, ensuring that future generations will know just how much they have meant to you. Whether through immediate generosity or thoughtful planning, your investment can turn love and gratitude into a lasting force for good.

A Legacy That Never Ends

We all have someone who has shaped our lives — someone we love, admire and respect. What better way to tell the world their story than by ensuring it continues for generations? Through an endowment, their legacy is honored and extended, touching lives in ways they may have never imagined. We are all writing our stories while carrying forward the legacies of those who came before us. The beauty of philanthropy is that it allows us to continue sharing those stories — forever. An endowment

is more than a tribute; it is a promise that their impact will never fade, their influence will never be forgotten, and their story will never end.

Please reach out to us at giving@clermson.edu or visit our [website](#) for information about estate and gift planning options. I encourage you to review and download our free [Estate Planning Guide](#) to help you navigate important decisions before meeting with an attorney and financial advisers. Please feel free to contact me directly, as I always enjoy hearing from you at jovanna@clermson.edu or 864-656-0663.

Love, Legacy and Lasting Impact

The most profound tributes are not just spoken — they are lived, felt and carried forward. Love is not confined to a single day, nor should our gratitude for those who have inspired us fade with time. Through our actions, our generosity and our commitment to honoring those we cherish, we ensure their influence endures. By giving now, we witness the joy of our philanthropy in real-time. By planning for the future, we create a legacy that will speak for generations to come. The beauty of an endowment is that the story never ends — it continues to inspire, uplift and transform lives. How will you write the next chapter?

Ever Loyal and Forever Grateful,

JoVanna King

PS: We are extremely proud of our Men's Basketball team and Coaches! We are "ALL IN" for our students, both on the court and in the classroom. We are extremely grateful for your dedication and commitment to excellence! *GO TIGERS!*

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