Louder Than Words

Norm ’57 and Gloria Marois have quietly contributed a lifetime of expertise and support to the College’s growth and prosperity.

In the late 1940s Ralph Marois made a decision that would help Assumption College for years to come. He took his son, Norm, to watch the basketball games at Assumption Prep School. That familiarity with Assumption Prep led Norm to attend and graduate from Assumption Prep in 1953, and later, from Assumption College in 1957.
Two days before graduating from the College, Norm was working for his father’s company, Marois Brothers, Inc., construction, preparing the area in front of La Maison Francaise for the new sidewalk. He was approached by one of the Assumptionists, one of Norm’s professors, who was disappointed that Norm wasn’t pursuing a more attractive career. “He was surprised that I was OK with ‘pushing dirt,’” Norm recalled. If only that Assumptionist could see the College now. Due to the relationship with Norm and his wife, Gloria, and with Marois Brothers, Assumption’s Salisbury Street campus has grown from five buildings to 43 in 50 years and is Worcester largest college campus.

Norm has been well recognized for his many contributions to the College, which extend far beyond construction.

Norm’s grandfather, Deus, opened a sand and gravel company in 1919. Norm’s father, Ralph, and uncles Isidore and George worked for the company, which was incorporated as Marois Bros., Inc. in 1924 and grew rapidly under the guidance of Ralph Marois, specializing in industrial and commercial site development. Marois Brothers has been working on campus since 1957. Its most notable projects were the site prep and utility work for the construction of the campus loop road (1997), as well as the Testa Science Center and Multi-Sport Stadium. All three were much-needed additions to the campus, which have greatly improved both campus and student life. Norm was also instrumental in the construction of both the College’s original football field and the field hockey/softball field, and supported the building of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit and Plourde Recreation Center.

NORM AND GLORIA HAVE BECOME FIXTURES AT ASSUMPTION EVENTS. “We enjoy the College and its people,” he said matter-of-factly. Norm’s actions have spoken more loudly than his words on Salisbury Street for more than a century.

He grew up in Worcester’s Grafton Hill neighborhood, and was an ‘extern’ (commuter) to both the Prep and the College. Life at the Prep School was meticulously regimented. Norm played basketball and baseball at the Prep and the College, where each day was scheduled with classes, study hall, activity periods, meals and Mass—all ran like clockwork. As a commuter, he missed out on much of the campus activities beyond athletics, but remembers that he and all his friends were there to watch Assumption record a major upset of Holy Cross on the basketball court in 1957.

Norm put his Assumption degree in business administration to work for the family business after graduation, and married Gloria that October. They will celebrate their 50th anniversary this fall. He eventually became president of Marois Bros., after his father passed away in 1963. He retired as company chairman in 1994. Norm and Gloria have five children—Nancy Winn ‘80, Jeffrey, Barbara, Ralph ‘87, and David ‘89—and 14 grandchildren.

“My three sons and son-in-law run the business now and get along really well, which makes things easier,” Norm quipped.

Barbara, their only child not directly involved in the family business, went to the University of New Hampshire, where she became a field hockey star. She later became the face of U.S. women’s field hockey and has the distinction as the only athlete to be named USA field hockey athlete of the year four consecutive times (1991–94). She was a leading member of the U.S. Olympic field hockey teams in 1988 and ’96. Norm and Gloria traveled to six continents to watch Barbara play, which they enjoyed tremendously.

Norm has been well recognized for his many contributions to the College, which extend far beyond construction. He was just the sixth person to receive the Outstanding Alumnus of the Year Award from the Alumni Association (1972). He served on the Board of Trustees for 15 years (1975–90) and in 1987 the women’s athletic field was dedicated in his honor. Norm received an honorary Doctor of Public Administration degree from the College in 1991, was named an honorary trustee in 1994, and was an honorary inductee to the Alumni-Athletics Hall of Fame in 2003. He was also a founding father of the College’s original athletic booster club, has served on countless College committees, and Norm (and Gloria) are charter members of the President’s Council.

Norm has also been involved in numerous civic and business organizations. He has held a leadership role with Commerce Group, Inc., Commonwealth National Bank, St. Francis Home, the Harmony Club, and Mechanics Hall, among others.

NORM CREDITS THE GUIDANCE AND LEADERSHIP OF SOME OF THE COLLEGE’S FORMER PRESIDENTS, such as Fr. Wilfrid Dufault, A.A. ’29; Fr. Armand Desautels, A.A. ’30; Fr. Louis Dion, A.A. ’35; and Pasquale DiPasquale HD’80 for laying the groundwork for Assumption to grow and prosper. He has also enjoyed working with President Tom Plough these past nine years. In addition, Norm also mentioned individuals such as Ray Marion, Bro. Armand “Sugar” Goffard, and Charlie Bibaud ’55, who coached Norm at the Prep School, for their positive influence on his Assumption experience.

Today, Norm and Gloria get together several times a year with his Prep and College classmates and their wives, which Norm and Gloria really enjoy. They’ve recently been celebrating the 50th wedding anniversary of several couples … “a wonderful group of people,” Norm says.

Norm admits he never dreamed that Assumption would grow into the thriving College of present day. “But I did believe in its potential,” he admitted. Thank goodness he did.

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