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Magavern Gift Supports Teaching, Research

Samuel D. Magavern, whose family has been associated with the UB Law School for four generations, has pledged a $100,000 gift in honor of his father, the late William J. Magavern, to support special teaching and research by law school faculty members.

In acknowledging the gift, Law School Dean Thomas E. Headrick said, “We are pleased to honor William J. Magavern and the many other dedicated and public-spirited lawyers who gave their time and, more importantly, their broad learning and legal acumen to the development of this School and to the profession. Much of our current stature rests upon the solid foundation which they created.”

Under the terms of the gift, the Magavern Pool Inc., a not-for-profit corporation, will provide $10,000 a year over a 10-year period to establish the William J. Magavern Fellows Fund.

Viewed by the donor as a means to attract or retain outstanding teachers, the fund is earmarked to support special teaching and research projects in William J. Magavern’s field of property law. Recipients will be designated by the law school dean, who may supplement the salary of a single recipient or up to three recipients annually.

William J. Magavern (1866-1945) decided to become an attorney before the Buffalo law school was founded in 1887, so he studied law as a law clerk with the firm of Ford and Ferguson. He subsequently served as counsel to the developers of major Canadian mining companies as well as the mining companies themselves. In 1899, he became a partner in his firm and its name was changed to Ferguson and Magavern.

Magavern’s association with the Buffalo law school began around 1905 when he enrolled in post-graduate courses. He later taught personal property law at the school for approximately 10 years during the World War I era.

When Magavern’s son Williard, a UB Law School alumus, joined the law practice in 1925, the firm became known as Magavern and Magavern. Four members of the Magavern family presently are associated with this law firm and all attended UB Law School.

In addition to Samuel Magavern, they are William J. Magavern II and James L. Magavern, sons of Samuel, and Willard J. Magavern Jr., son of the late Willard J. Magavern. A great-grandson of the honoree, William Joseph Magavern III, continues the family tradition and is currently a student at UB Law School.