



Tennessee TECH

<https://www.tntech.edu>

<https://www.tntech.edu/engineering/news-events/news/2013-2014-coe-news/mary-anne-koltowich-tribute-to-education>

Estate Commitment Provides Tribute to Family's Love of Education

Mary Anne Koltowich's family appreciates hard work and values an education. Her Russian grandparents, all of whom immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1900's, instilled these values in Mary Anne's parents, Alex and Eileen. They, in turn, passed these down to their daughter. Now, to recognize this family dedication, Mary Anne has made a significant financial commitment to Tennessee Tech's College of Engineering to provide scholarship assistance to females pursuing engineering degrees.

Born in 1925, Alex Koltowich grew up in New Jersey, served as a Sergeant for the Corps of Engineers during WWII, and saw battle in Belgium and Germany, earning both the Croix de Guerre and Purple Heart Medals. Back home, he earned both his Bachelor's and Master's degree in architecture and engineering from Columbia and New York Universities, using GI bill benefits and working various jobs to pay for his education.

Eileen Kozak, who was born in 1922, also grew up in New Jersey. After high school, Eileen attended secretarial school in New York City and later became a secretary in her father's successful coat factory. She kept the books, administered the payroll, interacted with all the employees, and took care of company correspondence.

Alex and Eileen married in the early 1950s. Alex worked at a construction job as foreman on the New York Thruway, later to become the first interstate in the U.S. In 1955, the couple, with their baby daughter Mary Anne, moved to Nashville, where Alex opened a new office for the firm of Clarke & Rapuano, a well-respected civil engineering and landscape architect company, based in New York City. Alex's career for the next 30 years was filled with successful projects: the Capitol Redevelopment, the design and building of the interstates and parkways in and around Nashville, the redevelopment of the 21st Avenue area around Vanderbilt, and upgrading many of the downtown streets.

Meanwhile, Mary Anne was busy building the educational foundation for her career. After graduating from Hendersonville High School in the mid 1970's, she quickly enrolled in Tennessee Tech after securing a work scholarship. With the encouragement of TTU professor Jim Rose, Mary Anne was one of about 36 women to enroll in engineering, rather than another science- or math-related field. After working as a student in the Civil Engineering Department throughout her collegiate career (and even teaching freshman Civil Engineering Lab during her senior year), Mary Anne graduated with her B.S. in Civil Engineering in 1977.

Immediately after graduation, Mary Anne's career took her to Alabama for her first career job with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Working her way through several management positions, she ultimately became the Shift Supervisor in charge of all engineering, work planning, QA, warehousing, and support functions at Watts Bar during construction (over 150 people). After 15 years with TVA, Mary Anne moved on to doing environmental work for various projects, including chemical spills from train derailments, hazardous materials assessments for the U.S. Navy, and underground storage tank removals for the Department of Energy.

Around 1998, Mary Anne had an opportunity to become an independent consultant, doing work for various DOE facilities in Oak Ridge. This ultimately led to eight years of work with British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL), decommissioning and decontaminating the three gaseous diffusion buildings at the old K-25 site. The best project of all was for Mary Anne to develop and coordinate procedures, training programs, work plans, DOE readiness assessments, and major logistics for the Supercompactor project. This operation, with the largest and most powerful metal compactor in the world at the time, processed metals from these three buildings; in area, these structures amounted to about 16 football fields.

After almost 30 years of continuous work and a lot of overtime, Mary Anne retired after the BNFL project was successfully completed in late 2005. However, good friends and duty calls have changed any "retirement" plans, including six months at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant supporting scrap metal dispositioning.



Following that position, Mary Anne went to work for Isotek in 2008 at the Oak Ridge National Lab, then commercial projects work with Energy Solutions in Oak Ridge, TN until October 2012. Positions included Quality Assurance and Project Management with a primary focus on upgrading procedure programs, developing work planning programs, and performing major project assessments.

Ultimately, Alex, Eileen, and Mary Anne all fervently believe that the power of education creates a more responsible humanity and makes the world a better place. TTU was highly thought of by Alex, whose illustrious career is attributed to his engineering education and hard work. He served on the State of Tennessee's accreditation board, and he recognized the high quality of TTU's engineering curriculum. Alex was recognized after his passing in 1986 as TTU's Engineer of Distinction. Mary Anne is convinced that TTU not only provides one of best engineering educations and college experiences, but also excels on teaching a person how to think. She is living proof that successful careers are built on successful educations.

Today, Mary Anne is married to her husband of 27 years, Jim; the two of them enjoy travel in the US and abroad, gardening, volunteer work and building their own home.

The Koltowich family's dedication to education resulted in Mary Anne's recent pledge through her estate to establish the Koltowich Engineering Endowment. This endowment will provide scholarships to female engineering students. Thanks to this wonderful commitment, generations of engineering students will be able to achieve their educational dreams.

Last edited 2015.03.19 by unknown.