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Georgia and Marc Lyons Named 2024 Catholic Foundation Award Honoree

Couple embraces laity role to serve the needs of churches, schools and community

DALLAS – Georgia and Marc Lyons, South Louisiana natives, college sweethearts and long-time supporters of Catholic churches, schools and major philanthropic campaigns in Dallas, have been selected as the 41st annual recipients of The Catholic Foundation Award.

The Lyons, married 51 years, parents of two children and members of All Saints Catholic Church since 1985, are being recognized for their decades of leadership and engagement in numerous diocesan and parish-based initiatives that have enhanced the quality of life for many people.

On February 10, 2024, the Lyons will be honored during The Catholic Foundation Award Dinner at the Hilton Anatole Hotel. Jane and Don Hanratty, recipients of the 2017 Catholic Foundation Award, will serve as the 2024 Award Dinner committee chairs.

For more than four decades, The Catholic Foundation Award has recognized an individual, couple or family for their distinguished service and support to further the religious, charitable and educational needs throughout the local Catholic community.

“Georgia and Marc beautifully model how laity in the Catholic Church can make a significant impact in the way churches, diocesan schools and nonprofit organizations grow and place heightened attention in critical areas of need,” says Matt Kramer, president and CEO of The Catholic Foundation. “Raised with a strong moral compass, Georgia and Marc place their Catholic faith at the center of all they do as volunteers and leaders to promote Christian values and support Catholic education.”

The Lyons met in college as Georgia earned a bachelor’s degree in education from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, La., just south of her hometown of Plaquemine. Marc, born in Crowley, La., attended Midland High School in West Texas, then earned a bachelor’s degree in quantitative management while lettering on the Nicholls State golf team.

The two met on a Friday night blind date during their freshman year and married in 1972.

In 1973, Marc began his career in the oil and gas industry working at Texaco and Georgia began teaching at Catholic schools in New Orleans. There, they had their first child, Kristen, who was born with Down syndrome.

Kristen, now 49, earned a teachers assistant certificate from Richland College and currently enjoys a successful 20-plus year career working at a Richardson preschool. She earned silver medals ice skating at the Special Olympics World Games in Japan in 2005 and in Boise, Idaho, at the 2009 Games, plus a third silver medal playing basketball at the 2015 Games in Los Angeles. "Kristen loves life," says Georgia.

Six years after Kristen was born, Georgia and Marc had a son, Greg, who was also born in New Orleans. Greg, 43, and his wife, Jaime, have two children, Grace, 12 and Noah, 9 with whom Georgia and Marc enjoy spending time as grandparents.

After graduation from Jesuit Dallas, Greg earned his bachelor's degree in radio, TV and film from Texas Christian University and enjoys his career in the film and animation industry. He got his start at Sony Pictures, then worked with Reel FX playing a key role in the production of the film "Book of Life." Today, he serves as executive producer for Brazen Animation in Dallas.

Inspiring Others For God's Glory

In 1985, the Lyons moved to Dallas and joined All Saints Catholic Church. "We walked into the church for the first time and saw a sign that read, 'Welcome to All Saints. Your Presence is Cherished,'" Georgia recalls about their decision to join All Saints when Msgr. Raphael Kamel was pastor and Bishop Greg Kelly was assistant pastor in his first parish assignment.

Georgia's strong family roots and faith keep her grounded. She draws strength from *Mark 9:23* "... Everything is possible to one who has faith." Marc calls upon the universally recited passage of *John 3:16* as a cornerstone of his faith.

"God has blessed us abundantly and we feel called to share our gifts with others, hopefully giving God all the glory," they say. The two have served on numerous diocesan and parish level organizations and nonprofits as campaign or committee chairs, advisors and financial contributors.

Georgia devoted her time for many years as a third-grade religious education teacher, leading their church's Vacation Bible School and a Women's Bible study. For years, she has served as a Eucharistic Minister of Holy Communion, been a member of the All Saints Women's Organization, the funeral reception ministry and disabilities ministry.

Georgia co-chaired the diocesan Our Faith, Our Future campaign for All Saints and is the current co-chair for the All Saints Soiree that supports both the parish and school community. She is also a current member of the Angels of Charity, the Holy Trinity Seminary development committee and recently served on the All Saints Catholic School principal search committee.

Offering Time, Talent and Treasure

Marc's business career spanned 45 years in the oil and gas industry. For 30 years, he held executive level positions in the energy midstream sector and retired in 2017 as President and Partner of Cardinal Midstream LLC.

Marc served as a trustee of The Catholic Foundation for eight years including two years as board chair from 2018-2020. He continues to serve on the Foundation's Advisory Council. Marc is currently a board member of the Diocesan Endowment Educational Trust (DEET) and St. Vincent de Paul North Texas Thrift Store. In addition, Marc serves on the Advisory Council of Holy Trinity Seminary where he chairs the finance committee. He also finds time to coach Kristen's Special Olympics golf team.

In 2014, Georgia and Marc established The Lyons Family Fund at the Foundation. As donors, they are members of The Catholic Foundation Legacy Circle as well as the Gorman Society, a permanent endowment that underwrites the annual expenses of The Catholic Foundation.

Both Georgia and Marc firmly believe in Catholic education and have been loyal supporters of All Saints Catholic School, St. Michael Special School (New Orleans) and St. Rita Catholic School. They have also supported Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas, Cristo Rey Dallas College Prep, Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, The Jethsuby Scholarship Fund of The Catholic Foundation, The Halo Initiative Scholarship, Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), ACE Scholarships and the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land University Scholarship.

They are contributors to Holy Trinity Seminary, Catholic Charities Dallas, Catholic Pro-Life Committee, Heroic Media, In My Shoes, Young Catholic Professionals, Society of St. Vincent de Paul North Texas, the Institute for Homiletics at The University of Dallas, the Catholic Extension and other charities.

Together, the Lyons coordinated a couples bible study group that later served meals to the homeless at The Bridge for more than 12 years. They also co-chaired the Bishop's Invitational Golf Tournament, The Catholic Foundation Award Dinner Committee, the Catholic Pro-Life Community dinner, the Symphony of Chefs dinner for KidLinks, the Spes Gregis Dinner for Holy Trinity Seminary, the Texas Irish American Cup Challenge for the Ireland Funds and the Our Lady of Perpetual Help School Gala.

Table and individual reservations for the 2024 Catholic Foundation Award Dinner can be purchased later this year. Visit www.catholicfoundation.com, call 972-661-9792 or email adalise@catholicfoundation.com for more information.

The Catholic Foundation is a trusted giving vehicle for the Catholic community. Chartered in 1955, the Foundation was founded by a group of dedicated Catholic laymen with a vision that extended far beyond the charitable needs of the moment. The Foundation has spent decades building a strong community, helping donors fulfill their charitable goals, and preserving the founders' vision and philanthropic legacy. Over time, the Foundation has provided more than \$266 million in grants to religious, charitable and educational organizations. In 2022, The Catholic Foundation gave \$19.4 million through more than 2,500 grants impacting more than 800 organizations. The Foundation houses more than 540 charitable funds and trusts. For additional information about The Catholic Foundation, call 972-661-9792 or visit www.catholicfoundation.com.