

Marquette University receives \$51 million

MILWAUKEE – Marquette University is receiving \$51 million from an alumni couple to help build a new law school facility.

A university news release described it as “the largest gift ever made by individuals to a Wisconsin college or university” as well as one of the largest gifts ever given to any U.S. law school.

Raymond A. and Kathryn A. Eckstein of Cassville, Wis., and Boca Raton, Fla., said they made the gift as an “expression of gratitude” to the university.

Raymond Eckstein, a retired transportation entrepreneur, is a 1949 graduate of the law school. His wife received her bachelor’s degree in speech from Marquette that year.

“My wife and I have many fond memories at Marquette,” he said in a statement. “It was the place of our meeting and courtship and the beginning of our wonderful life together. Catholic, Jesuit education has played an important role in our lives.”

In 1958 he founded Wisconsin Barge Lines, with a fleet of tugboats and barges moving cargo up and down the Mississippi and on other inland waterways. After selling that company he started a new one, naming it Marquette Transportation.

U.S. News & World Report ranks Marquette’s law school among the top 100 in the nation. Its dispute resolution program is ranked sixth nationally and its legal writing program is ranked 26th.

Law school dean Joseph D. Kearney said that in the past 25 years the school’s faculty doubled, its student body increased 50 percent and its library collection grew about 250 percent.

The new facility, to be named after the Ecksteins, is expected to cost \$80 million. It will be on the southeast corner of the main campus overlooking Marquette

Interchange, where the two interstate highways running through Milwaukee, I-94 and I-43, meet.

The planned facility will be four stories high with 180,000 square feet and a three-story garage below it that will hold 450 cars. It is to have 11 classrooms, 12 seminar and conference spaces of various sizes, a chapel, a moot courtroom and 52 faculty offices.

Kathryn Eckstein said that when their granddaughter recently graduated from the law school “we saw once again the caring, challenging environment that Marquette continues to offer its students.”

The Ecksteins’ gift was the second eight-figure donation Marquette has received within the past year. In December anonymous donors pledged \$25 million to the university’s engineering college.