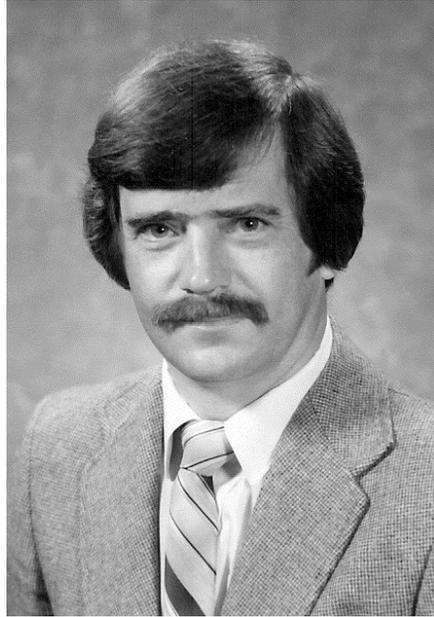


# John M. Hagen

Memorial Scholarship

1943-1990



**T**he John M. Hagen Memorial Scholarship is a living memory. *“Establishing the scholarship at UND-Lake Region [now Lake Region State College] was such a natural thing to do,”* said Sally Hagen as she quietly reflected on her life with John and their children in the Lake Region community. The scholarship is a demonstration of the love and friendship of so many who were close to John—his family, his friends, and his many associates at Ramsey National Bank and Trust Company.

John was born August 13, 1943, in Long Beach, California. He was the second son born to Orville and Ella (Ellingson) Hagen, both Lake Region natives who followed the job market to California during hard times. Ella brought her children home to Devils Lake when Orville entered the U.S. Army for a tour that took him to Japan. After the war, the family was reunited in the Lake Region but soon moved to Alabama where Orville’s National Guard unit was placed on active duty.

In 1953, the Hagen family returned to Devils Lake where Orville died two years later. Ella’s strength, courage, and most importantly, her love for her four young

sons—Robert, John, Steve, and Jim—during that difficult time greatly influenced them all.

In 1961, John graduated from Devils Lake High School and immediately enlisted in the U.S. Army. Following a three-year tour of duty, John returned to Devils Lake, enrolled at Lake Region State College, and completed an associate in arts degree. John transferred to the University of North Dakota and graduated in 1970 with a bachelor of science degree in business administration.

Throughout his school and college years, John exhibited a powerful work ethic, holding numerous jobs from paper boy to school bus driver. To finance his final year of college, John took a year and a half off and worked in a west coast paper mill.

In 1968, John married his college sweetheart, Sally Claridge from Bismarck. Sally remembers their last semester at UND. *“I graduated in May of 1969, and our first daughter, Michelle, was born in July. We kept a really hectic schedule. John came home from classes each day at three o’clock and then worked the five-to-eleven shift. I left for my night nursing job soon after he arrived home to look after Michelle.”*

After John graduated, the family moved to Minneapolis where he worked for General Electric Credit Corporation and Sally was employed in health care. While in Minneapolis, their second daughter, Dyana, was born.

The decision in 1972 to move “home” to Devils Lake happened quickly. While on a brief family vacation, John visited with Fred Hoghaug, then-president of Ramsey National Bank and Trust Company. Two months later, the family was living in Devils Lake, and John was working at the bank. *“We decided that Devils Lake was THE place to raise our daughters, a place for us all to grow and be involved in the community’s growth,”* explained Sally.

Challenged by Fred Hoghaug to seek opportunities for growth, John quickly became immersed in projects to strengthen

the Lake Region’s future. He served on the North Central Planning Council, on the board of directors for Ramsey County Senior Meals and Services, and as president of the Kiwanis Club. He was also active in two fraternal organizations, the Eagles and the Elks. In 1976, John received the *Distinguished Service Award* from the Devils Lake Jaycees. At the bank, John rose to the rank of senior vice president, and at the time of his death was a second-year student in the University of Colorado Graduate School of Banking.

Lynn Hoghaug, former president of Ramsey Bank, remembers John’s quiet sense of humor and deep concern and compassion for his customers and fellow workers. *“These endearing qualities contributed to his accomplishments in the bank and leadership role in the community.”*

John’s death of mesothelioma at the age of forty-seven cut short a bright career and deprived the community of an energetic leader. The legacy to which John was most committed was his family, especially daughters Michelle and Dyana. He took great pride in their efforts to exhibit the values he considered so important in life—pursuit of quality education, a strong work ethic, humor in daily life, courage in difficult times, and strength when faced with adversity. John was proud of his daughters and committed to helping create opportunities for others.

Through the Devils Lake Area Foundation—which John helped to create—the John M. Hagen Memorial Scholarship was established. The scholarship is awarded annually to a Lake Region State College student pursuing a career in banking, finance, or business. Sally explains, *“John’s involvement and commitment to our Lake Region and its people will continue through this scholarship. It is our way of supporting others in their educational and professional goals ... our way of saying ‘thank you’ ... our way of giving to others the opportunities we have had.”* ■