

“Never Give Up”

The Life Story of Ms. Maggie Miller

Legendary School Counselor



Maggie Miller’s motto was “Never Give Up.”

A legendary counselor, compassionate educator and advocate of college for many who never considered it until she came into their lives, Maggie died at the young age 56 in November 2008 after a valiant battle with ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease.) Before she died, the Maggie Miller Scholarship was established through MACAC as a tribute to her lifetime of contributions to college admissions counseling.

Maggie Miller, born Margaret Frances Miller in Battle Creek to two educators, Frances and Charles Miller, was dedicated to her students’ success. She believed in each student’s true potential – which is the greatest gift anyone can give to another person. She consistently said that character and service, combined with achievement and integrity, were paramount to college success. She shared her gift with thousands of Michigan students during her 30-plus-year career in education.

Her gift extended beyond the schools where she worked. College admission officers praised Maggie for her original letters of recommendations, often commenting on the humor, personal detail and thoroughness of each carefully crafted letter. Maggie was that favorite counselor, the one students remembered, the one who was invited to her student’s high school graduation parties. She attended almost every one, arriving at each with a handwritten, personal congratulations card, each based on her own relationship with that student. Maggie was full of charisma, had an incredible sense of humor and was the ultimate student advocate. She would light up every room she entered. Not surprisingly, students loved her spirit.

Maggie, known as Ms. Miller to her students, possessed an abundance of energy, humor, empathy and a keen understanding that endeared her to her students, co-workers and her multitude of friends.

She told them, “Never Give Up.”

For two decades, she served the professional associations devoted to student advising and college admissions. For her devotion, Maggie won many industry awards. The Michigan Association for College Admissions Counseling (MACAC) presented her with the Gramenz Award, its highest honor. The College of Education at Michigan State University awarded her the Crystal Apple Award for her excellence in and commitment to her profession.

Maggie began her career in education, first as a teacher at Harbor Springs High School and later as a guidance counselor at Dewitt High School and then Okemos High School; she remained at Okemos until 2006, when ALS forced her to retire. She earned both her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Michigan State University.

Outside of work, Maggie loved spending time with her partner, Stan Soffin. They preferred the beach along the shores of Lake Michigan in Ludington. Maggie made a big difference and inspired many students, colleagues, friends and family during her short life. Maggie’s legacy continues through this scholarship.