Marina Spheeris Krejci ’68



One would be hard-pressed to find an alumna or alumnus who knows University School of Milwaukee better than Marina Spheeris Krejci ’68. In 1964, she was a student at Milwaukee Downer Seminary when the three predecessor schools (Milwaukee University School, Milwaukee Country Day School, and Downer Seminary) merged to become USM. In 1985, she served as president of the USM Alumni Association board when the south campus in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin closed its doors and students relocated to the current campus in River Hills, Wisconsin.

In 2001, she served as vice president of USM’s Board of Trustees before being hand-picked by then-Head of School Ward Ghory to serve as USM’s director of advancement starting in 2002. As director, she successfully led fundraising efforts for Phase I and Phase II of USM’s $45 million The Next Generation campaign—in part during a global recession. New campus spaces were made possible by the campaign and its supporters, including Mellowes Hall, the Upper School science wing, the Middle School commons, the Preschool addition, the Marion and Verne Read Gymnasium, a fitness center, and improvements to the Polly and Henry Uihlein Sr. Ice Arena.

Marina is also credited with spearheading efforts to redesign and update the school’s logo for a more modern look. In addition, she created the tagline “Experience for a Lifetime.” “We thought it helped to reinforce the value of a USM education as an experience that lasts for a lifetime,” she said. “It is certainly true for me.”

Earning the Alumni Service Award is a full-circle moment for Marina. The award was her idea, conceived during a tumultuous period in the school’s history. “The Whitefish Bay campus held cherished memories for many alumni, so the idea of moving to the River Hills campus was difficult in the beginning,” she said. “We don’t think much of it now, but at the time, a lot of students and parents were unhappy with the decision to consolidate. We decided to create the Alumni Service Award in 1984 to celebrate individuals who live the culture of the school, which is all about service and volunteerism.”

Marina has a long history of volunteering, both at USM and in Milwaukee. Highlights include co-chairing the UPAF Ride for the Arts; St. Robert School Emerald Auction; and Salsa Sampler for Notre Dame School of Milwaukee. She also has served as president of the boards of First Stage Children’s Theatre and Milwaukee Chamber Theater. In addition to her tenure at USM, Marina has held various roles leading development and advancement for the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, and Lake Forest Academy. Fundraising for organizations she cares about has always been her passion.

Although Marina has made a tremendous impact on USM, she is careful to highlight the impact the school has made on her, too. “I do feel a debt of gratitude for the experiences I had both as a student and as a young volunteer getting started. Many people took me under their wing and gave me opportunities. I have always known that this is a really caring community, and that makes people want to be involved, because you know you’re going to be nurtured and supported, too.”

Marina and her husband, Frank, are the parents of three adult children: Elizabeth ’05, Bennett ’07, and Susan ’09 Krejci.

“Marina was always a leader. She has always been a very supportive friend, in a positive way. She has volunteered in numerous ways in the community, doing her best to improve any organization. Her influence on me has made me a better person.” ***-Janie Asmuth ’68***

“Marina is a tireless advocate for so many organizations in the community. She is a true example of excellence in service besides being a wonderful friend.”
-Julie Uihlein ’68





