



School Districts of the City of Iron Mountain and Breitung Township Schools



Dear Iron Mountain and Breitung Township School Communities,

While our two school districts often engage in friendly competition on the field or on the courts, and school colors run deep with pride in our respective communities, we are happy to announce a special occasion in which we are coming together to share some very exciting news.

Iron Mountain and Breitung Township Schools received news this past week of an incredibly generous gift bestowed upon both districts by the John V. and Frances M. Zanardi Family Trust. Words cannot begin to explain our deep gratitude and thankfulness, along with our school boards and greater school communities. To illustrate our thanks and appreciation, we'd like to share a story about a family whose quiet, reserved, and humble nature provided them with the opportunity to provide a gift that would do what mattered most to them; helping other people and paying it forward.

John and Frances Zanardi lived in Iron Mountain when they started their family. John earned his undergraduate degree from Ferris State University and completed his graduate coursework from the University of Detroit. During his time in Iron Mountain, John opened his private law practice and eventually also served as the Dickinson County prosecutor. Having the same passion for people and education as her husband, Frances earned her degree in Business from Ferris State University and hoped to be a teacher. However, plans had changed for this family, and the Zanardi's had three children together, whom Frances took care of in the home. All three children graduated from Iron Mountain Schools. John (1946), Francis (1951), and Marilyn (1957).

The oldest son, John served in the Army, spending time overseas before returning home and graduating from Notre Dame with a degree in Business and working for Chicago Northwestern Railroad. After spending time in the National Guard, Francis graduated from Notre Dame with a law degree, and eventually returned home and worked with his father in the family's private law practice. Francis also worked for the Federal Anti-Poverty Program for the State of Michigan, helping others around the state. Marilyn attended Northern Michigan University and earned a degree in Biology and Chemistry. Marilyn also earned her Master's and Ph.D. in the fields of microbiology and immunology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Marilyn spent the next 51 years teaching at the University level.

It was very evident what values and beliefs were instilled in these children by their parents at a very early age. Faith, family, and community were the pillars by which the Zanardi family built their legacy. Earning your reward through hard work and sharing your reward with others quickly became a family belief. While the entire family shared these beliefs, Francis orchestrated the ultimate demonstration of this belief with his siblings through an incredible gift to the Iron Mountain and Breitung Township School Districts.

We are truly fortunate to have the Zanardi family as part of our community and want to take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt appreciation for this generous donation. Their unwavering commitment to education has left an indelible mark on our communities and this donation will have a profound and lasting impact on the lives of our students well into the future.

Wishing you and your family continued joy, prosperity, and fulfillment.

Sincerely,

Jerome J. Sardina

Superintendent
Iron Mountain Public Schools

David W. Holmes

Superintendent
Breitung Township Schools