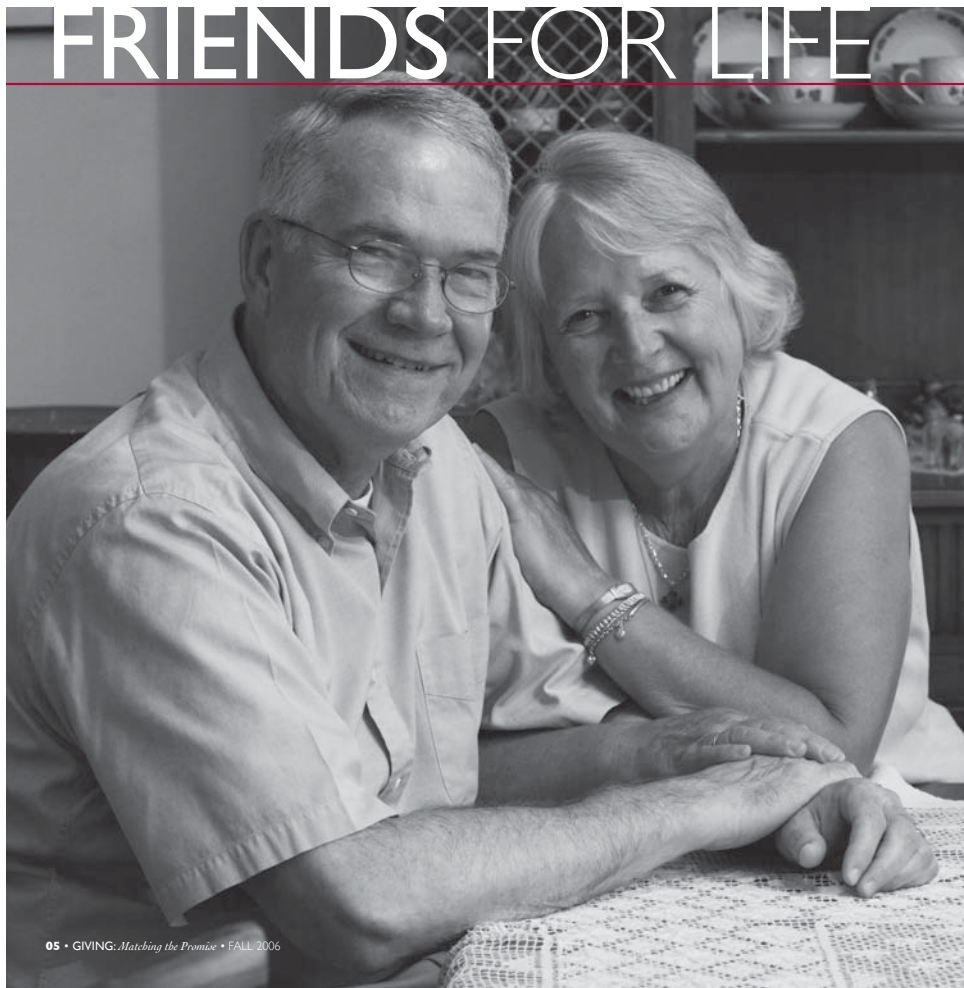


FRIENDS FOR LIFE



05 • GIVING: *Matching the Promise* • FALL 2006

THERE CAME A POINT in Gary and Mia Wiggins' lives when Cecil Richmond Jr. stopped being their friend and became family.

"Corky" was how Gary, an adjunct professor and director of the chemical informatics program in the School of Informatics at Indiana University Bloomington, knew Richmond. Mia, Gary's wife of 33 years, was introduced to her husband's lifelong friend by that nickname.

Corky passed away in 2001. But his memory warms this couple. He's the smile that comes to their lips when they speak his name. And he's the inspiration for a gift to the IU School of Informatics. "As a new school, we don't yet have that many scholarships available," Gary says. "Moreover," Mia adds, "we wanted to honor Corky."

Gary came to IU Bloomington to study chemistry and Russian and, later, library science. After graduation, he found himself at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana where he worked as a Slavic languages acquisition librarian.

One of his colleagues had a sister, Mia. Born in Montenegro, Mia was studying English. A romance grew as the pair communicated through three languages—English, Russian, and Serbian. Three months later, they married.

Gary's friendship with Corky began in 1957 during high school in Greens Fork, Indiana. They were drawn together by their love of music and formed a dance band. They also spent summers working at a service station owned by Corky's father. Both were only children. "I guess we blended our families," Gary recalls.

Corky and Mia met in 1973. There was little doubt that she would become Corky's friend as well. "He was one of the best men I ever knew," she offers. "He was so full of life."

Corky transferred to IU from the University of Wisconsin and graduated in 1965 with a degree in English. In 1969, he settled at the *Indianapolis Star* in the Arts and Drama section.

When the *Star* automated itself in the late 1970s, Corky became one of the first reporters to file a story from the field with a Radio Shack TRS-80 computer via a modem. "Corky was really tuned in to technology," Gary says. "He was one of the first people I knew to own a micro-computer."

Corky wrote his own programs for his computer. He participated in user-groups to help improve the burgeoning technology. That is the essence of informatics: the application of computer technology to different disciplines. And Corky's passion for applying new technology to journalism was a great reason to establish an undergraduate scholarship in his name.

Roberta Richardson, Corky's mother, outlived her son. In her mind, Gary was also a son to her. Still, she surprised Gary when she gave him an inheritance. Gary and Mia decided to allow generosity to beget generosity. The fact that IU would match their gift sealed the deal.

Some call family "the ties that bind." But we choose our friends. For the Wigginses, their friendship with Corky became a lifelong bond. The Cecil "Corky" Richmond Jr. Informatics Undergraduate Scholarship is the legacy of that friendship. **rh**

"We wanted to honor Corky."

—Mia Wiggins

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