The Clare: Six residents describe how life's paths led them to one community
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By Amanda Robert

The Clare at Water Tower sits in the heart of downtown, at the corner of Pearson and Rush streets on Loyola University's campus.

Nearly 110 Chicago seniors - including active and retired judges and lawyers, physicians, business executives and artists - come home to the city's first high-rise retirement community.

They are drawn to the unique 53-story residence, which overlooks Lake Michigan and offers access to the Theater District, Symphony Center and Magnificent Mile. They stay true to city living, choosing this location and its endless possibilities for dining, shopping and entertainment over a quiet retirement in the suburbs.

The Clare - a $229 million building with more than 600,000 square feet - was designed with these active seniors in mind. They encounter contemporary, golden-accented decor and nearly 90 original art pieces like fused glass and metal sculptures, mixed media paintings and photography in its common areas and hallways.

They live in private residences on the 21st to 52nd floors that include one, two or three bedrooms, balconies and wall-to-wall windows with city and lakeside views. They socialize in modern spaces, such as the four-story atrium, media and entertainment center, library, fitness and aquatic center, creative arts studio, day spa, three chapels and meditation room.

The Clare, which opened in December 2008, is sponsored by The Franciscan Sisters of Chicago. According to the organization, the senior community is "committed to ensuring its residents the utmost dignity and respect at all stages of retirement." In addition to private residences, the building provides assisted living, memory support, rehabilitation and skilled nursing.

These residents pay starting entrance fees of $527,500 and starting monthly services fees of $2,996.

We talked with six residents who started in law and found their way to The Clare. Some of these men and women always planned to become lawyers, while others eventually transitioned into the profession. One chose not to practice law at all, but found the benefit of his law degree in every bend in his career.

While they share varying reasons for moving into The Clare, they all agree that the vibrant, upscale residence encourages them to stay active and introduces them to others who share their personal and professional interests.

Making the rules
"Every trial lawyer looks up at the judge and says, 'You know, I could do that,' " Hart said. "I'm a Republican, and when President Reagan was elected, a couple of my friends who I had worked with in the government were on the bench, and there were three vacancies in the district court at that time. Some people encouraged me to be an applicant, and, fortunately, I was selected."

The 81-year-old senior judge sits in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois at least once a week and handles about 100 cases.

He recently finished a jury trial involving police officers charged with excessive use of force, and he also approved a landmark agreement allowing the mentally ill to move from nursing homes to community settings.

Hart also serves as a visiting judge for the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which sits in San Francisco, Pasadena, Calif., and Seattle.

"I like being in the courtroom," he said. "I find it interesting to see the lawyers and the witnesses, and being the judge offers you the possibility of doing some good for people.

"They're not always glamorous cases, but even things like nursing home problems and mental development problems, social security cases, they're all important. Every case is important to someone."

Born in Joliet in 1929, Hart moved to Aurora when his father became the editor and publisher of the Aurora Beacon News. He attended Loyola University Chicago and Loyola University Chicago School of Law. He graduated in 1951 and enlisted in the U.S. Army during the Korean War.

When he returned home in 1953, he started as an assistant U.S. attorney and married his wife, Kay. He later worked as an associate and partner at what was then called Schiff, Hardin & Waite - spending 22 years with the firm.

Hart considers a case involving the construction of a nuclear power plant in southern Illinois as one of the most memorable in his career in private practice. Power plants were largely controversial in the late '70s, and the case earned him an unsolicited spot on "60 Minutes," he said.

Hart presided over another memorable case, in which television news anchor Walter Jacobson was accused of libeling Brown & Williamson after reporting that the tobacco company marketed its products to children and teenagers.

Hart and his wife moved from Aurora to The Clare when it opened in December 2008. The couple, who have five daughters and 17 grandchildren, wanted to be closer to three of their daughters and their families in Evanston.

Hart walks one mile to-and-from the Dirksen Courthouse. He also rides his bicycle along the Lakefront Trail and takes yoga and Pilates classes with friends at The Clare.

"I'm happy to say that having a number of vibrant, bright people to live with was also an attraction," he said. "A lot of people here are still active and doing things outside of the building, and we have plenty to do here inside of the building as well."
Foreign influence
Alverna Wagner started working for Dr. Percy Julian when she was an undergraduate student at Mundelein College on the far North Side of Chicago.

After she graduated in 1947, she joined the famous black research chemist at the Glidden Co., a supplier of soybean oil products. She helped isolate soy protein for use in fine chemicals in its Soya Products Division.

After 10 years, she moved to Universal Oil Products, where she conducted patent research for the petroleum industry and developed an interest in studying law.

"The men were going at night, and I saw that it was a worthwhile thing," Wagner said. "It turned out to be."

Wagner attended night classes for four years and graduated from the DePaul University College of Law in 1962. She joined Langner, Parry, Card and Langner as a foreign patent attorney and worked with such clients as Eli Lilly and Co.

She wanted to move to New York City, so in 1969, she went in-house with pharmaceutical company E. R. Squibb and Sons and assisted in foreign patent work with antibiotics. She met her husband, Harold, at her first New Year's Eve party in the city. They married in 1970.

Wagner later joined Mobil as a foreign patent attorney and traveled overseas to work with the German Patent and Trade Mark Office and the European Patent Office in Munich. She also managed Mobil's London patent office.

She moved with the company to Virginia and lived there for 16 years until she retired in 1993.

Wagner, now 85, became accustomed during her career to being the only woman in the room.

"I was only the woman in the lab, the only woman at Squibb, the only woman at Mobil until the very last year," she said. "I was just used to dealing with men.

"I used to chair three committees every quarter to decide which inventions they would file patents on. There would be 22 men - I just got used to it."

Wagner, one of six children, moved back to Chicago to be closer to her family after her husband died. She has three stepchildren, four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

She loves reading on the Kindle that one of her stepdaughters bought her, recently discovering new favorites, "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" and "The Girl Who Played with Fire." She also spends time with her 8-year-old shih tzu, Lucie Ann, who lives with her sister, but visits on the weekends.

For four years, Wagner served as one of 18 ambassadors for The Clare, encouraging other senior citizens to become residents and attending monthly meetings to offer suggestions on building plans.

Wagner moved into The Clare from her former high-rise residence at 200 E. Delaware in April 2009. She praised its comfortable living, interesting people and options for assisted living and skilled nursing, but she became most enticed by its front-and-center location, she said.
"I'm a city person," she said. "It was the first high-rise retirement community that was going up, and I didn't want to be in the suburbs.

"Many of the people come from smaller towns, so they had to be introduced to the area. I had no such need."

**Live and learn**

Bernie Beazley grew up on Chicago's South Side and dropped out of high school to enlist in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II.

He chose to pursue law after developing rheumatic fever and spending his military career in a hospital bed in a base near Orlando, Fla.

"I had about six or seven months of peaceful examination of the ceiling over my bed and realized that with two years of high school, I was going to have a problem," Beazley said. "The answer to my problem, if and when I ever got out of the war, was education. I was always impressed with the law as a body of education that could serve anybody well for all sorts of careers."

He came back to Chicago in 1945 and visited with John C. Fitzgerald, the dean of the Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Fitzgerald told him that he needed to earn the equivalency of a high school diploma and finish at least two years of undergraduate study before he could consider a career in law.

Beazley completed the work and enrolled in law school in 1947. After he graduated in 1950, he began teaching business law to undergraduate students and working as a member of the trust department staff in a downtown bank.

Fitzgerald introduced Beazley to Dr. Harold Hillenbrand, the executive director of the American Dental Association, who then hired him as in-house counsel.

Beazley, who had married his childhood sweetheart, Kathleen, during his first year of law school, searched for a new job in a smaller place after the couple had six children. He moved his family to York, Pa., and became general counsel of The Dentists' Supply Co.

"The opportunity to be general counsel for a company in the dental field and a leader in the field appealed to me greatly," he said. "The small town environment was a big motivator - six kids soon became nine kids."

Beazley, now 84, helped transform the public company by changing its name to Dentsply International and growing it into one of the world's largest manufacturers of dental products.

He and several other members of management avoided a hostile takeover of the company in 1981. They bought stock, made a public offer to shareholders and took the company private. They also created an employee stock ownership plan.

"I enjoyed making those decisions and seeing the company growing around me," he said. "Our employees were doing well, and they had steady jobs and an ensured future."

Beazley retired from Dentsply International in 1986.
He continued on the board and with special assignments until 1993, when the company acquired the Gendex Corp.

He returned to Chicago and started spending a lot of time at Loyola to assist in the continuing progress of the law school.

"I feel what I usually call a keen sense of obligation to Loyola for the education that they gave me," he said. "I'm under some obligation to repay the debt."

Beazley gave $5 million to support the Institute for Health Law, which then became the Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy, as well as $2 million to endow the A. Kathleen Beazley Chair in Child Law.

"I named that for my wife, since she is a very obvious expert in child management with nine kids," he said.

Beazley moved into The Clare in March 2009 after he met one of its representatives at Loyola. He found the building beneficial for his wife, who has Alzheimer's disease and other health problems. He visits her every day in its hospital care unit, telling her about their children, 12 grandchildren and new great-grandson, and singing songs to her from earlier years.

Beazley, who has trouble with his vision, appreciates being near the heart of Chicago and his two daughters who live in the city. He also admits that The Clare's close proximity to the law school has continued to be a main attraction.

"I had been spending a lot of time at Loyola for a variety of things, and The Clare in the meantime had acquired this ground and torn down the structures that were here," he said. "The Clare was a hole in the ground when I was introduced to it, but the location was prime in terms of my access back and forth to the law school."

A woman's world
Elaine Blatt Artoe grew up in Addison always knowing that she would become a lawyer.

"As long as I can remember, I was interested in law," she said. "My father was a lawyer, so I decided that I would be a lawyer. Nobody told me then that I couldn't because I was female."

Artoe graduated from Northwestern University with a bachelor's degree in political science in 1948 and from the Northwestern University School of Law in 1951. She was the only woman in her graduating law school class.

"I thoroughly enjoyed that," she said. "I never felt as if I was being discriminated against. I didn't expect a lot. If you don't expect a lot, you're not disappointed."

Artoe also met William Blatt, her future husband, in law school. One Sunday afternoon, he took her to the Adler Planetarium in his "old jalopy."

"He looked at me, and said, 'I'm going to marry you,' " she said. "He was a freshman, I was a sophomore - we had a couple of years to work on it."

She married William in 1953, and they had two children. She practiced part-time in real estate closings and appellate work, while her husband opened his own downtown firm.
Artoe took over the firm when William died at age 50 in 1974. John Hasenmiller, a former law clerk, joined her, and the firm became Blatt, Hasenmiller, Leibsker & Moore.

"My husband had a good client base, so when John and I took over, we were very busy trying to keep track of what was already going on," Artoe said. "Little by little, we just got more clients."

Artoe primarily handled cases involving real estate, probate, collections and appellate work. She enjoyed the mental challenge and her ability to send both of her children to Dartmouth College, she said.

She married Lee Artoe, a former offensive tackle for the Chicago Bears, in 1975. When he became ill in 2003, she stopped going into the office as often and became his caretaker. He died in 2005.

Artoe, now 84, practiced law for more than 50 years.

She also served as president of the Woman's Bar Association of Illinois and continues to be active in the organization. She also remains active in the Chicago Bar Association.

Her son, William, works as a law professor at the University of Miami and clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. Her daughter, Beth, works as a playwright and lyricist in New York City. Artoe has three grandchildren.

She moved to The Clare in February 2009 from the Wilmette home that she lived in for more than 40 years.

Artoe didn’t look at many other retirement communities, instead choosing the downtown residence for its nearby theaters, restaurants and shopping. She said she also benefits from the diversity of the residents at The Clare.

"Everyone is very friendly," she said. "You have dinner with different people, and you find out about them. They're all very interesting."

Career man
Harry Rohde spent his entire 34-year career with the Chicago Title and Trust Co.

He started examining titles to real estate in the company's title division in 1958. He moved to the trust division and began handling estate planning, probate and trust law in 1969.

"The company had formed a title insurance subsidiary called the Chicago Title Insurance Co., and they were expanding nationally," Rohde said. "One thing they wanted to do in Chicago was train people in the title business and then send them to offices elsewhere. I preferred to stay in Chicago."

Rohde, now 78, retired from the company as trust counsel in 1992.

He grew up in Oak Park and took after his father, who worked in general practice. He graduated from Amherst College in Massachusetts in 1954 and from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1959. He decided to study the law further and received an LLM degree from The John Marshall Law School in 1962.

When he joined the Chicago Title and Trust Co., he also began teaching evening legal writing courses at Chicago-Kent. He worked as a part-time instructor with the law school for seven years.
Rohde served as editor of the Illinois State Bar Association's Estate Planning, Probate and Trust newsletter for 10 years. He received the Austin Fleming Award, the highest honor the ISBA can give a newsletter editor, in 1988.

He also served as justice of the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity International Chicago Alumni Chapter in 1991.

When asked why he became involved in promoting his profession, Rohde said that "things just developed."

"It would never have occurred to me to become a law school instructor if I hadn't been asked to do it," he said. "It would never have occurred to me to become an ISBA newsletter editor if I hadn't been asked to do it. I just tried to take advantage of opportunities as they came along."

Rohde traveled quite a bit in his younger years, using his vacation time to explore exotic locales such as India, Brazil, Egypt and New Zealand.

He lived at Marina City for 30 years and enjoyed the riverside residence for its convenient location, and for its health club and swimming pool.

In February 2009, Rohde moved into The Clare, because he felt it was a sensible move to make. He also thought the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago was a reputable organization, he said.

He enjoys eating with friends in the building's dining room and walking to his favorite parts of the city.

"For the good part of the year, I like to start my day with an early morning walk along the lakeshore," Rohde said. "All of the amenities of the city are also easily accessible from The Clare. Whatever you want to do, it's easy to do it from this location."

Turning to taxes
William McDermott was in the process of earning his law degree from the University of Notre Dame Law School when he decided he didn't want to be a lawyer.

He grew up in Chicago, the product of a Catholic grade school and a public high school. He joined the U.S. Army in 1945 and saw several benefits to studying law.

"I was in the counterintelligence corps, and I met quite a few people in the intelligence trade, not only from the Army, but from the FBI and other intelligence agencies, and I decided I wanted to be like them," McDermott said. "In those years, the FBI was accepting only applicants who were law graduates or accounting graduates. I decided that's for me, so I decided to go for both degrees."

McDermott started at Notre Dame in 1947 and earned his bachelor's degree in accounting. He graduated with his law degree and passed the bar in 1953, and then joined Arthur Andersen LLP as a public accountant.

McDermott worked in the accounting firm's tax department for nearly nine years and became a certified public accountant. His law degree became vital to his new profession, he said.
"It helped with understanding the law and practicing what tax law required," McDermott said. "Most of the practitioners were also lawyers or studying to be lawyers."

McDermott left Arthur Andersen to manage the wealth of a large Chicago family. He met them through his work with the firm, and for the next 30 years, he invested their assets and distributed and collected their income.

He enjoyed the family because they subscribed to high ideals and principles and sought autonomy rather than publicity, he said. He also enjoyed the evolution of his career.

"I was very fortunate that I followed an educational course both in high school and in college of diversity," McDermott said. "I was maybe not highly skilled in anything, but certainly I was broadly tutored, broadly aware, particularly in the law and accounting, which fit my ultimate business more than adequately."

McDermott, now 83, retired in 1992. Looking back over the past few years, he said he most enjoyed his family, his involvement with charities and some investment work.

He and his wife, Janet, moved into The Clare in October 2009. They wanted to be near their favorite activities and places like the Union League Club of Chicago, where McDermott once served as president.

The couple also wanted to be closer to their four children and 12 grandchildren, who all live in the Chicago area.

"My wife was the designated chef for family dinners at Thanksgiving and Christmas where everybody assembled, and I presided," McDermott said.

"They did come for our first Thanksgiving here. We had it on the top, 53rd floor - what a view."